



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 5 May 2021**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 5 May 2021**

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

**The Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge guests in the gallery, who include, in particular, Peter Styles, who is a former member of the Northern Territory Parliament and a former Minister. It is lovely to have him visiting us today, as well as other guests, including Nisin Sunito, who is the father of Georgia, who works in my office. I welcome them all.

*Business of the House*

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: CONDOLENCE MOTION

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

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

- (1) Business before the House be interrupted at 3.30 p.m. to permit the moving of a motion of condolence regarding His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.
- (2) The motion of condolence be interrupted at 5.00 p.m. for the public interest debate.
- (3) The motion of condolence may resume following the conclusion of the public interest debate.

**Motion agreed to.**

*[Notices of motions given]*

*Bills*

## PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT (JOBS PLUS) BILL 2021

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading Speech

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (09:48):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

One year ago, our State—along with the rest of the nation—was barrelling towards the peak of the most severe jobs crisis since the Great Depression. Unlike the late 1920s and early 1930s, unemployment did not rise steadily over a number of years before reaching a crisis point. In fact, before the pandemic, the unemployment rate in our State was hovering around decade lows. This time the crisis came suddenly as the world screeched to a halt in response to a fast-spreading virus. At its worst the pandemic cost over 270,000 people in our State their jobs. New South Wales gross State product contracted by 0.7 per cent in 2019-20, the weakest outcome since official statistics were first published. Recovery was always going to take time.

Yet as we are here today, the New South Wales unemployment rate has already fallen from a pandemic peak of 7.2 per cent down to just 5.4 per cent—the second lowest of the States. State final demand rebounded by 6.8 per cent in the September quarter 2020 and 2.9 per cent in the December quarter 2020. At the time of the Half-Yearly Review, the economy was on track to recover to pre-COVID levels six months sooner than expected. Economic growth is forecast to improve to 2¾ per cent by 2023-24. This is a recovery that has so far exceeded expectations. At the same time the COVID-19 virus is virtually non-existent in our State, except in quarantined overseas arrivals. Our jobs recovery and the strength of our health response have put our State in a world-leading position. While other nations remain locked down with their economies crippled by a virus still wreaking havoc, we are steadily and surely putting the worst of the crisis behind us.

New South Wales is ready to get on with the job and, from the Government's perspective, jobs are our top priority. Last year our budget took steps to restore jobs for the people of this State quickly and safely. We committed to short-term stimulus to kickstart the economy and we committed to removing the barriers to job

creation to the greatest extent possible. One of those barriers is tax. I was pleased to deliver a budget that established a payroll tax regime in New South Wales that is among the most competitive in the nation. Not only did we lift the tax-free threshold to \$1.2 million; we also implemented the equal lowest headline metropolitan payroll tax rate across Australia. As the former United States president—and the favourite of the member for Summer Hill—Ronald Reagan famously said, "If you want more of something, subsidise it; if you want less of something, tax it." On this side of the House the Government wants more jobs and greater opportunities for the people of our State. We do not just talk the talk; we have acted, with payroll tax cuts that are saving thousands of businesses thousands of dollars when they create jobs for the people of our great State.

As well as making it easier for businesses to put on workers, our Government is also determined to use our strong position to create new and better opportunities now and in the future. Many businesses around the nation and the world are champing at the bit to get moving again. When they look at New South Wales, they see safety. They see security and certainty, because our Government has shown the world what a measured, capable pandemic response looks like. Employers around the nation and around the world look to New South Wales and see a State that is Australia's gateway to the world—a regional powerhouse on the doorstep of Asia and an economy that is ready and raring to go. There has never been a better time for businesses to set down their roots in New South Wales and hit the ground running in a post-pandemic world. That is why last year we established Jobs Plus, an incentive program to encourage more businesses to call New South Wales home. Program guidelines released in December 2020 identify the eligibility criteria for businesses to qualify for this program. To be eligible, businesses must create at least 30 new full-time equivalent jobs in New South Wales, with employment activity initiated before 30 June 2022 and completed by 30 June 2024.

An employer looking to engage in the Jobs Plus Program must also be a revenue-generating business and have at least 20 full-time equivalent staff for ABN registered businesses, or 80 full-time equivalent staff for foreign-owned entities, to be eligible for support. Jobs Plus is our invitation to the national and global business community to take advantage of all New South Wales has to offer and create jobs for our people in the process. By targeting fast-growing companies from interstate and across the globe to expand in New South Wales, this program will strengthen the New South Wales economy by creating or supporting up to 25,000 new jobs. One of the key incentives in the Jobs Plus Program is a complete exemption from payroll tax for up to four years for every new job created, provided the business has created at least 30 net new jobs. This bill gives effect to that incentive by amending the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt wages of identified positions under the Jobs Plus Program from payroll tax.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Payroll tax relief will be available to employers in the form of exemptions from payroll tax for jobs identified in approved Jobs Plus agreements. This relief will be available for up to a four-year period for each position and all new staff must also live and be paid in New South Wales. Businesses that enter into a Jobs Plus agreement must comply with the terms specified by that agreement in order to receive government assistance, including the payroll tax exemption. The agreement will also include the grounds or circumstances in which their payroll tax exemption may be revoked by the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. The Minister will consider issues such as whether the business is meeting its agreed milestones and whether it has created and filled enough new jobs.

The agreement will also include a proactive process if revocation is being considered to properly engage with the businesses before a revocation notice is issued. In situations where a business is not delivering its commitments under an agreement, a written notice can be issued that may revoke a business' payroll tax exemption. In that case, the payroll tax exemption will be revoked as if it had not applied and the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will issue an assessment or reassessment notice to the business. The payroll tax exemption provided for in this bill is just one of a range of incentives in the Jobs Plus Program. Other incentives include rebates to businesses for agreed infrastructure, subsidised training programs and subsidised government-owned accommodation. It is a program that will not only spur our economic recovery to greater heights but also lay the foundations for jobs and opportunities for the people of New South Wales for decades to come.

As well as giving effect to the Jobs Plus payroll tax exemption, this bill also extends another important COVID-response payroll tax exemption for aged-care workers. In March 2020 the Commonwealth Government announced it would fund two rounds of retention bonuses for aged-care workers. Each round has consisted of two types of payments: up to \$800 for residential-care workers and up to \$600 for home-care workers. The bonus payments have been provided to incentivise the retention of crucial carers working in residential- and home-care settings. This has been vital at a time of increased need and vulnerability for older Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2020 the Parliament passed legislative amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt wages funded under the Commonwealth program from payroll tax, removing the disincentive for employers to use the program. The original amendments applied to the first two payment rounds that had already been announced, only exempting bonuses paid or payable to workers before 1 January 2021.

On 31 August 2020 the Commonwealth then announced a third bonus payment round for aged-care workers by extending the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program. This is an additional payment to the first two rounds that were paid to workers between July and September 2020. In accordance with our Government's ongoing commitment to support aged-care workers, their employers and the Commonwealth grant program, this bill extends the payroll tax exemption. To give effect to this extension, the bill will remove the effective end date of 1 January 2021 for the exemptions so that wages paid from the third bonus payment, and any future bonus payments under the program, will also be exempt from payroll tax. Removing the end date for the exemption will retrospectively exempt the third round of bonus payments paid in January 2021. Some employers may have already paid payroll tax on the third round of bonus payments. Eligible employers will receive a credit or refund for any payments already made when they lodge their 2020-21 annual reconciliation by late July 2021.

It is possible that future rounds of funding will also be provided under the same grant program. Removing the exemption end date will mean that any future payments under this program will also be exempt from payroll tax. Exempting these bonus wages supports the Government's priority to keep older Australians safe from the virus and to provide them with essential and quality health care. The bonus wages have encouraged aged-care workers to continue to serve our senior citizens during a trying and unprecedented time. This exemption is another example of the leadership that our Government has shown during the pandemic. To date, no other State or Territory in Australia has acted to exempt these bonus wages from payroll tax. But once again our Government has demonstrated by its actions where its priorities lie. We will not allow State taxes to be a barrier to job creation, opportunity or to the quality care our older citizens deserve.

The legislative amendments in this bill reflect our Government's approach to recovering from the pandemic. It is an approach steeped in the quintessential Liberal Party belief that New South Wales is not made great by government fiat but by the men and women who work to make it great every single day. In 1946, as Australia faced up to the challenge of post-war recovery, the great Sir Robert Menzies gave voice to Australians' frustration at the Chifley Labor Government's failure to put its faith in the people. Menzies said of that Labor Government:

... it seems to believe that government departments can spend our earnings for us more wisely than we can ... and therefore that it is more important to maintain government expenditure than to reduce the taxes which maintain them ... He said that Labor did not understand that "real tax reductions would be the best of all incentives to increased effort, earnings and production." That was the key to recovery then and that is the key to recovery now. At the last State election NSW Labor went to the polls pledging to increase payroll tax on the businesses of our State. We were elected on a promise to cut payroll tax. We have not only accelerated those cuts, we have gone further, making New South Wales one of the most competitive payroll tax jurisdictions in the nation. With this bill we go further again, cutting taxes to attract new employers to New South Wales to drive a strong recovery today and create better opportunities for the workers of today and tomorrow.

Our Government will faithfully fulfil its duty to lead our State and our nation out of recession and into a prosperous future. But we know our role is a supporting one and recovery will rest on the sturdy shoulders of the people of New South Wales—the people building opportunity, the people creating vibrant workplaces and communities, the people who have stood tall through the biggest health and economic crisis in a century and who are already powering a world-leading recovery. Our Government will not stand in their way. Instead we will stand by them every step of the way, removing the barriers to opportunity wherever we can. That is what this bill does and I commend it to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2021**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (10:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 continues the statute law revision program that has been in place for more than 35 years. Statute law bills have featured in most sessions of Parliament since 1984. They are an effective method for making minor policy changes and maintaining the quality of the New South Wales statute book by removing typographical errors, updating cross-references and repealing redundant provisions. I turn to the content of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill contains policy changes of a minor and non-controversial nature. The schedule contains amendments to 41 Acts and nine instruments. Those changes are for proposals that are too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill.

Schedule 1 includes amendments designed to ensure that New South Wales legislation best reflects contemporary business practices in the service of documents. They include amendments to the Animal Research Act 1985, the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986, the Food Act 2003, the Hemp Industry Act 2008, the Local Land Services Act 2013, the Poppy Industry Act 2016, the Stock Medicines Act 1989 and the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 within the portfolio of the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Those amendments will enable the service of particular documents under those Acts by electronic transmission rather than being limited to service by email to an email address, as is currently the case. The amendments ensure that New South Wales legislation recognises and provides for the evolving capacities of technology, whether it be email or another electronic method, so that the most appropriate methods of service are available.

The Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999, within the portfolio of the Deputy Premier, will also be amended to allow for the service or giving of notices to be effected by electronic transmission. The amendments to the Interpretation Act 1987 will, among other things, introduce a definition for the terms "business day" and "public holiday". Those commonly used terms appear throughout the statute book. Where an Act or instrument does not already define the term, the new definition will apply to ensure consistency and certainty in the interpretation of the term.

Amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 continue the Government's commitment to delivering user-centred digital services by providing online access to the register of aquaculture permits. Currently, that Act provides that a person may attend the place where the register is kept during ordinary business hours to inspect the register. The amendments will make the electronic part of the register available on the website of the department. This ensures online access to the register in the same way as is currently available for the commercial fishery share register under that Act.

Similarly, the exhibition of documents for public consultation under that Act will now be available on the department's website, greatly increasing accessibility. Those documents may relate to fisheries management plans, the making of fishing determinations by the Total Allowable Fishing Committee and aquaculture industry development plans, among other things. Other amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 provide that a person may show a photo of their official receipt for payment of a recreational fishing licence for the purposes of complying with the requirement for a fisher to have the official receipt in their possession when taking fish. The photo may, for example, be shown on a smartphone or other mobile device.

References across the statute book will be updated to reflect the Commonwealth's introduction of the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018, which is to replace the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989. Those Acts regulate the provision of road vehicles to the Australian market, and the remaining provisions of the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018 are due to commence on 1 July this year. The amendments will make consequential changes to refer to the new Act and also make provision for the transition from identification plates, which were required under the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989, to the new Register of Approved Vehicles under the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018. The new register will act as an online, publicly searchable database of information for vehicles approved for use on Australian roads. The amendments to be made to the New South Wales Acts and instruments will ensure that New South Wales remains in line with the current Commonwealth laws.

Schedule 2 to the bill deals with purely statute law matters consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers appropriate for inclusion in the bill. Examples of amendments in that schedule are corrections of cross-references, typographical errors and terminology. It also includes amendments arising out of the enactment of other legislation. Schedule 3 contains amendments to a number of Acts and regulations that refer to First State Super. Those amendments reflect the change in name to Aware Super Fund. The amendments include changing the name of the First State Superannuation Act 1992 to the Aware Super Act 1992. The amendments also provide for a transitional arrangement to make it clear that a reference in a document to First State Superannuation or to the First State Superannuation Act 1992 is taken to include a reference to Aware Super or the Aware Super Act 1992.

Schedule 4 continues the program of repealing Acts and instruments that are redundant or of no practical utility. In this bill the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (New South Wales) Temporary Exemptions Regulation 2016 is repealed as it has ceased to operate. Schedule 5 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions, including a provision that deals with the effect of amendments on amending provisions. This schedule also includes a provision allowing for regulations to be made that are of a savings or transitional nature. Each amendment included in the bill is explained in detail in explanatory notes. The explanatory notes are included at the beginning of the bill or beneath the amendments to each of the Acts and statutory instruments concerned.

I hope that members will appreciate the intended uncontroversial nature of the provisions contained in this bill. If any amendment causes concern or requires clarification, I ask that it be brought to my attention. If necessary I will arrange for Government staff to provide additional information on the matters raised. If any particular matter of concern cannot be resolved and is likely to delay the passage of the bill, the Government is prepared to consider

withdrawing the matter from the bill. Withdrawn proposals can also be dealt with in a second bill, by way of the procedure for splitting bills that is used in the Legislative Council, which can be dealt with in each of the Houses in the same way as an ordinary bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) BILL 2021**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 25 March 2021.**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:09):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. Before the interruption, I was telling a story of family members who are known today as the forgotten Australians. They make up tens of thousands of Australians who were in care as well as other survivors of abuse from care as was highlighted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

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, when she was a young child aged about four or five. She lived in the care—and I use that term "care" facetiously in some respects because there was no care in those homes—provided by the State, which was frequently lacking and often included harsh punishments, the likes of which horrify us today. One of the worst betrayals came through the dishonesty and lack of care the Government of the day placed on keeping families together. For a number of years my mother lived unaware that she had a sibling in such close proximity in Sydney's inner west. In fact, her brother lived in the Royleston boys' home, which was less than a kilometre down the same road in Glebe.

The discovery came by chance and it shattered and opened mum's world, as it did her brother's—my uncle. Telling this story still brings pain to her face to this day. The knowledge of that betrayal still impacts on her. Uncle Fred, as I knew him, did not know that his older sister was physically so close, but in reality they were worlds apart. The two government-run homes never thought to inform the two children that they had family and never thought to reunite them to allow them to see if the other was doing well. Both were in the homes for a number of years before they were aware of each other. In my mother's immediate family there were eight siblings, who were all separated; they were all split up. One of the saddest things was that my mother spent decades trying to find her oldest sister. She finally found out a number of months after her sister's death that she lived less than an hour's drive away.

Those government institutions should have been quite clear and told those children that they were loved. Instead, those institutions forced those children to go through the day-to-day battle. In 2017 *The Daily Telegraph* commissioned an article looking at what life was like at the Royleston Home for Boys, detailing how boys as young as six and seven were being sent out to work seven days a week, often receiving brutal floggings and sexual torture. One particular story is a truly shocking tale of a young boy. When he first arrived at Royleston he met two young twin brothers. One of the twin boys asked if he would kill them so as to relieve them of their suffering. One can only imagine the horror of daily life, if that is something a young child would request of another.

People like my mother and Uncle Fred are a part of the wider tapestry of victims that were revealed in the royal commission and, as a society, we cannot forget the horrors that were allowed to be endured across New South Wales. We know about slavery in Australia. We know that the Kanakas were taken from the New Hebrides and other places and taken into slavery in the sugarcane fields in Queensland. We know about our First Nations people on rural properties and how they were treated like slaves and not paid. What is not so well-known is that the forgotten Australians, many children in care, were also taken from their homes and put on farms throughout New South Wales and treated like slaves.

When my mother was finally taken out of the children's home, she was used as a servant by a South African family in western New South Wales. My Uncle Fred ran away from a farm near Cowra and signed up to the Australian Army at 15 years of age, using a false birth certificate. He was sent to the Korean War at 15 and was the youngest UN soldier there. He often joked after that time that he preferred the Korean War because there was less violence in that war than there was in the children's home. We must remember what happened and we must act to help the survivors.

In summary, the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 will provide hope and opportunity for the victims of abuse in State institutions to seek the justice they deserve through these amendments. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse showed the failure of government to protect the innocent and the vulnerable. Australians will not forget, nor should they. Only through understanding the pain

that was caused and the horrors that were allowed to occur can we truly hope to move forward as an advanced and compassionate society. The New South Wales Government's proposed bill comes too late for the victims who have been crying out for justice for so long. However, I am pleased that the bill is now before this House. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:16):** I also support the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. Those like me who believe in freedom and the individual's ability to determine their own destiny without government interference might be surprised that I do support the bill, which allows for post-settlement agreements to be set aside. However the common law has, for a long time, recognised that in certain limited circumstances, like for example non est factum or duress, contracts should, at the discretion of the court, be set aside. This Parliament by revolutionary legislation passed the 1980 Contracts Review Act, which expanded the court's ability to set aside or for the first time vary unconscionable or unfair contracts. Seen in this light, there has been a trend to recognise that very disadvantaged parties to agreements may be entitled, under careful and limited circumstances, to have their contracts interfered with under clear, impartial and wise judicial oversight with regard to the bargains that they have made. The bill follows in that broader legal historical trend to do justice with regard to the contracts made by very disadvantaged individuals.

In my 27 years of legal practice as a barrister and solicitor before coming to this place, I predominately practised in commercial law. But I have had a broad enough legal experience to witness the devastating damage to individuals caused by sexual abuse. One of my early cases as a barrister was a criminal case in the District Court of New South Wales in Muswellbrook, instructed by a law school friend, Mick O'Brien. The case was a deemed supply of cannabis held in the possession of a young Aboriginal man who had been self-medicating to eradicate the pain he suffered from teenage sexual abuse by a YMCA instructor who was in a position of trust and authority. I am happy to say that justice was done in that case. A not guilty verdict was secured and I understand that that young man has gone on to live a very fruitful life since that case, now well over 20 years ago.

I had other civil cases after that where good men were terribly damaged by the violation and abuse of trust they had suffered as a consequence of child sexual abuse. Having seen the devastating impact on victims of child sex abuse, I applaud the Attorney General for bringing forward sensible, measured legislation to do justice to victims under careful judicial oversight. The consultation for these reforms in New South Wales has been the most extensive of all jurisdictions that have introduced reforms to give the courts the power to set aside past settlement agreements. The Government extensively consulted on the reforms to introduce part 1C of the Civil Liability Act with government and non-government stakeholders. In March 2020 a discussion paper was released for public consultation on potential reforms. It was released on both the Department of Communities and Justice website and the New South Wales Government's consultation platform, Have your say. This helped to ensure that the discussion paper reached a wide range of stakeholders and that the views of the community were heard, which is very important in such a complex area.

The discussion paper was also sent directly to a large number of stakeholders, including survivor groups, religious institutions and multi-faith NGOs, children's service providers, legal stakeholders and the insurance industry. Thirty-three written submissions were received from stakeholders in response to the discussion paper. Survivors' submissions on these reforms echoed and reiterated what survivors had told the royal commission over the course of its five-year inquiry about the enormous challenges they often faced in negotiating claims prior to the 2006 and 2018 reforms. I must say that judicial decisions which, for example, had found the Catholic Church was not a legal entity in Ellis's case made it enormously difficult for victims to receive justice through our court system. It truly is very important, and it is something this Parliament can be proud of, that those legal barriers have been overturned through legislation in this Parliament.

In stories of unjust settlements with powerful institutions, harrowing accounts of survivors often suffering significant trauma who felt they had no choice but to accept inadequate settlements due to legal technicalities preventing them from suing responsible institutions were a common theme. Their stories helped to shape the criteria adopted in part 1C to guide and support the courts' decision-making. Under the bill, courts may consider the amount paid to the applicant under the agreement, the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement, the conduct of parties other than the applicant or the parties' legal representatives in relation to the agreement, and any other matter that the court considers relevant.

We have also learnt from survivors that settlement agreements were entered into in a wide variety of settings. Some of these include: in claims commenced in court, in direct negotiation between survivors and responsible organisations, and through privately-run redress schemes that were established and run by institutions. From survivors' submissions we learned that the manner in which a settlement was negotiated did not ultimately affect whether the claim was impacted by the limitation period having expired or there having been no proper defendant to the claim. These submissions therefore showed it is important to ensure that the bill covers the variety of ways that defendants would settle child abuse claims. The bill has been drafted to do just that. This has ensured

that all settlement agreements for claims where the limitation period had expired or there was no proper defendant are captured by these reforms, regardless of the way in which they were negotiated and entered.

Targeted consultation was undertaken on the draft bill from November 2020 to January 2021. This included providing the draft bill to a large number of stakeholders, including survivor groups, religious institutions and multi-faith NGOs, children's service providers, legal stakeholders, the insurance industry and all other stakeholders who made a submission on the March 2020 discussion paper for comment. Thirty consequential submissions were received on the draft bill. The vast majority of those submissions supported the bill. Reforms in response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse have only been made possible because brave survivors have told their stories. Over five years the royal commission was contacted by approximately 17,000 people within its terms of reference. It held more than 8,000 private sessions and 57 public hearings, and uncovered evidence of child sexual abuse in 3,500 institutions right across Australia. We continue to listen and learn from the stories of survivors to create pathways to justice and build a safer society for children and young people.

While I cannot hope to name all the survivors whose stories and whose advocacy helped shape these reforms, I think it is appropriate to take a moment to single out some of the victim and survivor groups who provided an invaluable contribution to the department's consultation process. They include Beyond Abuse and its CEO, Steve Fisher; the Care Leavers Australasia Network and Leonie Sheedy; Survivors & Mates Support Network and Craig Hughes-Cashmore; Ellis Legal and John Ellis; End Rape on Campus, and Nina Funnell and Anna Hush; Bravehearts and Hetty Johnston; Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia; Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia; Domestic Violence NSW; knowmore; and the Women's Legal Service NSW.

It certainly has been the case that some very significant legislation has passed through this House in recent times in a broad range of areas of the law. None possibly is more significant than legislation of this kind, which goes to the heart of abuses of power towards very vulnerable young people and the use of sexual assault upon them. I commend the Attorney General for driving these important reforms. I am encouraged that these reforms are being supported on a bipartisan basis so that we can pass very important legislation of this kind to benefit our community.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (10:26):** I speak on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. At the outset I acknowledge all the victim-survivors of child abuse. Without their tireless activism, without the courage and leadership that they show every day, reforms like this would not be possible. By coming forward, by telling their stories and by demanding justice, victim-survivors demonstrate their strength and resilience. To those who have yet to tell their stories, to those who may never be ready to tell their stories and to those who never got a chance to tell their stories, I would like to say this: Your strength must never be underestimated; your suffering may go unspoken, but it will not go unheard.

I acknowledge that the bill continues the reforms included in the Civil Liability (Institutional Child Abuse) Amendment Bill 2018 and the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. I spoke in favour of both bills for precisely the reason I speak on the bill today. Proposed section 7D (1) of the bill allows for a claimant to apply to have an earlier settlement agreement set aside and to commence new proceedings relating to the claim resolved by that settlement agreement, while proposed section 7D (3) outlines the factors that are to be considered by the courts in determining whether setting aside a settlement agreement would be "just and reasonable", including the amount paid to the applicant under the agreement, the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement, the conduct in relation to the agreement of the defendant and their legal representatives and other parties involved, and any other matter the court considers relevant. This goes some way towards redressing the extreme power differential between many parties to these sorts of agreements. How many times have we heard from victim-survivors of the difficulties faced when trying to get justice from powerful and deeply entrenched organisations?

I note that under proposed section 7E (1) of the bill, courts are empowered to set aside agreements alongside documents that give effect to these agreements, including contracts, deeds of release, previous court orders and judgements, with the express exclusions outlined in proposed section 7E (2). This section excludes setting aside deeds of release signed under the National Redress Scheme; agreements between defendants where the agreement settled a cross-claim between two or more defendants, or where one defendant indemnified another; and contracts of insurance. The reason for these express exclusions is to ensure that an application to set aside a settlement agreement can be brought only by victim-survivors and their duly appointed legal representatives.

This long-overdue reform will offer more victims of child abuse a chance for justice and redress through the legal system. We all know that child abuse, particularly of the kind uncovered and examined in detail by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, leaves wounds that, for many victim-survivors, can never be fully healed. Being able to seek justice and compensation through legal remedies is key to helping victim-survivors rebuild their lives.

The royal commission put the situation faced by victim-survivors in stark terms. Victim-survivors have suffered through hell at the hands of their abusers, and pursuing legal action can often re-traumatise them. The power imbalance that led to their abuse can even be replicated by the legal system, where individual claimants seeking redress are easily outmanoeuvred by the heavy-hitting legal teams retained by powerful institutions. Those institutions are often far more interested in limiting their liability and minimising settlements rather than owning up to their institutional failures and assisting victim-survivors in achieving some measure of justice.

The royal commission also made clear just how devastating and widespread this problem has been and continues to be. One submission to the royal commission revealed that more than 30 people who attended Catholic high schools in the Hunter Valley died by suicide, drug overdose or possible suicide because of links to known or alleged child sex offenders. Among those were three brothers from the one family, all of whom attended St Pius X High School at Adamstown and all of whom died of suicide or drug-related deaths. In 1984 another former St Pius X student died in a car crash when he was just 19 years old. Decades would pass before his parents would hear from his schoolmates that he had been sexually abused by priest John Denham, a convicted child sex offender. Denham's impact did not stop there. Days before he was due to start work as a teacher himself, a man took his life at Charlestown. Denham had taught him in his school days as well.

I doubt that there are many people in Australia who do not know or have not known someone who has been impacted by child abuse. I came to know Dave Owen in his late seventies. He was a neighbour of mine, a genuinely good person and a witness at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I have spoken about Dave in this place before, but his story bears repeating. Dave was born after his 12-year-old mother was raped. He was offered for adoption in a newspaper advertisement. He was physically, sexually and emotionally assaulted for years at an orphanage run by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy. In an interview with Joanne McCarthy, whose journalism was instrumental in launching the royal commission, Dave said:

The reason why people didn't believe when we told them years ago was because it was so outrageous and so inhuman, what was done to us. All I can do is tell how it happened.

...

The rethinking of it, you've got to relive it. You feel the floggings. You feel the fear and the pain. You go back to that time because it's always there.

Dave's abuse had lifelong impacts. Nothing can ever set right the wrongs done to him and to so many others who suffered through similar abuse. I join the Opposition in not opposing the bill because it will go some of the way towards rebalancing the scales of justice. I note the bill's two objectives. The first objective is to enable courts to set aside settled claims for child abuse where it is just and reasonable to do so, particularly in cases where specified legal barriers prevented victim-survivors from being fully compensated. The specific legal barriers referred to here are the time limitation periods in which to bring claims, which were amended by the 2016 Act, and the lack of a proper defendant to answer such claims, which was amended by the 2018 Act. Before those changes to the law, claims for damages were often disputed on the basis that they were brought outside of the time limitations or because there was not sufficient evidence to achieve a victory in civil litigation. Often those cases would be settled with a vastly reduced payout for victim-survivors.

The provisions of the bill will allow those settlements—the results of a system heavily stacked against victim-survivors—to be set aside and for cases to be re-litigated. The second objective of the bill is to ensure that provisions restricting compensation for injury to offenders in custody do not apply to damages for child abuse. This will remedy any unintended consequence of reforms to the Civil Liability Act introduced in 2004, which meant that children abused in the Government's care receive less compensation than those abused outside of the Government's care. I am glad to see that this imbalance will finally be set right.

Other jurisdictions in Australia have made similar changes to their laws already, though the terms of those legislative amendments are not identical to those proposed by this bill. While I note that those changes go beyond the ones recommended by the royal commission, I have some reservations that the scheme may be narrowly construed. I have said before that our role as legislators is to make New South Wales a better place for children and young people. I expand that statement now. Our role as legislators is to make New South Wales a better place for those who were victimised as children and young people. Our role and our duty is to ensure that those who seek legal remedies for their victimisation have a fair shot. I will make one last point. Should the concerns I outlined above come to fruition, we in this Parliament must be open to amending this legislation further. We cannot treat this as a settled matter. We need to be ready to act to address any further imbalances in the legal process. I do not oppose the bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:35):** On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. First and foremost, I acknowledge the stories that have been shared in this House by members on all sides, describing the levels of trauma, abuse and harm that were inflicted on children in

our community for many years. I acknowledge that no matter what we say in this place and despite how hard it is to listen to those stories, it is much harder for the people who have suffered that abuse to continue to live with that trauma. Many people have not survived through that trauma. It is important for us to remember those people first and foremost, and we must provide them with the strongest justice.

The Greens welcome the bill and accept that its intention is good, but we believe that the current draft creates a seriously limited scheme that will see many unfair settlements unchallenged and therefore will pose a significant obstacle to justice for victims. The bill seeks to make changes to improve access to justice for survivors of child sexual abuse by improving access to settlements. A new part 1C is inserted, which gives courts the power to set aside agreements to settle sexual abuse claims if the previous agreement is an affected agreement. Affected agreements include those where limitation periods had expired or the claim was against an unincorporated association. The second change is to ensure that a person who suffers personal injury as a result of child abuse in custody is able to seek damages.

The Greens have worked in consultation with experts in the sector and will move an amendment to the bill in the upper House. The amendment will ensure that settlements can be put aside where it is just and reasonable to do so. New paragraph 7C (1) (c) will specify that affected agreements include those that were settled before the commencement of part 1B of the Act and that the agreement is not just and reasonable in the circumstances. The amendment will allow unfair historical settlements—for example, when a person who was assaulted was subject to the religious hold of the institution as part of the agreement—to be set aside. Given the vast power disparity between victims and survivors and the intuitions they had to take on to get justice, it is an appropriate amendment that we hope the Government will take seriously. We have heard about the level of trauma, harm and damage done to so many people and their families as a result of child abuse in our communities. We must not hold back on anything so that we can deliver justice and support to those victim-survivors so they can now live fulfilling lives.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (10:39):** I contribute to debate on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021, which I support. I will talk specifically about the tests and criteria for the courts to apply when determining an application to set aside an affected agreement. The bill includes proposed section 7D (2), which gives courts the discretion to set aside an affected agreement if they consider it just and reasonable to do so. A clear advantage of adopting the "just and reasonable" test is that it achieves consistency with the test adopted in the New South Wales 2016 reforms to the Limitation Act 1969. The Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Act 2016 amended the Limitation Act 1969 to allow the courts to set aside a pre-existing judgement given on the ground that a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired if it was just and reasonable to do so.

An overwhelming number of stakeholders who responded to the March 2020 discussion paper on the reforms submitted that the "just and reasonable" test would ensure that the New South Wales reforms were consistent with other jurisdictions—namely, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Stakeholders were overwhelmingly in favour of adopting the test because of its consistency with other jurisdictions. Adopting the "just and reasonable" test allows the courts to apply broad principles to their decision-making and to take into account factors relevant to either party. The test strikes an appropriate balance in giving the courts the discretion to determine what is appropriate in each circumstance. The "just and reasonable" test is supported by the criteria that the court may take into account in proposed section 7D (3), which contains a non-exhaustive list that the courts may consider when determining whether to set aside an affected agreement. The courts are not required to take all or any of the criteria into account.

The criteria include the amount paid to the applicant under the agreement; the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement; the conduct in relation to the agreement of the parties other than the applicant, or the conduct in relation to the agreement of the legal representatives of the parties other than the applicant; and any other matter the court considers relevant. Proposed section 7D (3) will allow the courts to weigh up a number of factors relevant to either party when determining whether it is just and reasonable to set aside an affected agreement. The criteria have been informed by the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and stakeholder feedback on the March 2020 discussion paper. Stakeholders identified a number of factors in their submissions that related to survivors' bargaining positions and other parties' conduct, which they felt contributed to the unjustness of settlements. In some cases, that included a lack of legal representation, the plaintiff's physical and mental health at the time of the settlement and the defendant's conduct during negotiations.

It is important that the criteria are non-exhaustive so that the courts are best placed to consider the factors in each application and the circumstances that are relevant to the affected agreement that might make it just and reasonable to set aside. Moreover, the role of the criteria is to provide guidance for the courts when exercising their discretion to set aside a settlement agreement, while not limiting a court's power to exercise that discretion

and consider the factors that it deems relevant to the case presented. I thank the Attorney General for the reforms contained within the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:43):** I support the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021, which, though short, is very significant. The bill addresses the key legal principle of access to justice and can be characterised as a start for all children who have suffered sexual abuse. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse set in train a range of responses that still require refinement and correction. The bill addresses that lack of response thus far and achieves two key things: First, it enables the 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 secondly, it ensures that the Civil Liability Act 2002, which deals with personal injury claims by offenders in custody, does not restrict awards of damages for child abuse.

It does not matter where people have suffered sexual abuse; we must ensure that they have access to justice. That will start to correct the wrong. Today I will put on record some excerpts from someone whom I have known for a long time, with his permission. Robbie Daniel Neil Gambley suffered terrible sexual institutional abuse. He has been in the public eye, particularly around the area where he lives, which is up my way. He has asked me to put his story on record. Earlier I wrote to the Attorney General to request that he bring on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 sooner rather than later. The Attorney responded by saying that of course it would happen. I then wrote a letter to Robbie Gambley, who had sent me a harrowing letter that I did not know how to respond to adequately. I said to him, "I will answer your letter", even though it took a little time. I then wrote:

I have carried your letter with me, contemplating what to say in reply. Words cannot convey to you my admiration for your courage and my acknowledgement for the pain and damage inflicted on you, a child at the time.

I can inform you that I have written a letter to the Attorney General on your behalf. I can also inform you that the Attorney General has introduced the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, 17 March 2021.

The Attorney General said that the Bill will provide a clear pathway for survivors to be properly compensated for the appalling mistreatment they suffered as children. I do hope that it will be the case.

I hope that there will not be protracted legal processes when they are in the court trying to get those settlements set aside. I will now read some excerpts from the letter that Robbie Gambley wrote to me. He said: "Dear Janelle, you have helped me in the past", and he is asking me to help him again. He stated:

When I was 14 years of age I was living happily with my father on our Bottle Creek property. We bred Brahman cross cattle.

I loved my father, my horses, dogs, our cattle.

I was very happy.

He said he was attending the local school. The letter went on:

I played rugby league and other sports, I had a lot of friends.

I was an asthmatic. I had a wonderful doctor—Dr Meehan. Dr Meehan collected and restored 1910-1940 vintage and veteran cars. He had a very clever engineer working for him full-time in Bonalbo.

Robbie went on to say:

In 1974, I was 15 years old. I would walk down to the workshop where this fine man worked on these cars. One day I asked him if I could work for him and help him for free in the August-September school holidays.

This gentleman agreed, but stated that I would have to talk to my father and Dr Meehan first. That was Robbie's plan. That was how he saw his future as he loved cars. Before he had the chance to tell his father about his plan to work on the cars, he said, "I made a terrible mistake"—I make the comment that it was not his mistake; he was a young boy—"and told the sexual predator who was starting to 'groom' me, a most horrid term." He said:

The evil sexual predator stated, "NO, come to Melbourne with me, it will do the world of good."

The sexual predator he is referring to is his teacher. He continues:

This was the start of the sexual, physical and psychological abuse and my nightmare, which went on to 1976, which almost destroyed my life.

I lost any chance of the joy of working on those beautiful cars and learning a specialized skill and my beloved pop tragically died in 1975.

This is just one impact of the abuse!

If left alone, I may have owned my own car restoration business ...

Robbie tried civil action against the NSW Department of Education, which turned up to mediation in Sydney with "a legal team far bigger than mine". Robbie said, "They ran a sword through me. Why did they do that?" He then talks about some money that was received, but he had to pay back the legal fees and the victims compensation

and ended up with very little. He said that at the mediation a mediating barrister from the Department of Education put the schoolteacher predator in front of him. Robbie said that was a disgraceful and very upsetting action. We can all imagine in this place how that would be—"Again: Why did they do that?" Later, that barrister apologised to Robbie. His letter continues:

I now ask that you pass the: Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse Settlements) Bill 2020 most expeditiously when the New South Wales Parliament sits in 2021.

I received a letter from the NSW Government Communities and Justice this week ... with the background paper and draft of the bill.

I find it very hard to comment formally via [policy@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:policy@justice.nsw.gov.au). I ask that you read and take note of my letter please.

I hurt my spine badly working as a stockman one year after the "science teacher" viciously attacked me. It is very painful for me to sit at a table and write or work at a computer hence this letter is photocopied.

I have had 2 spinal operations, one, a spinal fusion. I suffer a lot of pain.

I went to the NSW Police, I worked very hard with Lismore detectives. The "schoolteacher"—predator—pleaded GUILTY.

The crimes are beyond question. I took this action to protect children!

Since my last civil action the NSW Department of Education have given me an apology in writing. They have admitted their fault, their failing.

One of the consequences of the destructive abuse is I have sadly never married and I do not have children of my own.

An aspiration most people hope and wish for.

In closing, Robbie says, "Janelle, I hope to live the rest of my life in some comfort and dignity." Let us hope that this bill goes some way towards giving Robbie and all the other Robbies Australia-wide that. I know I am not supposed to have props but Robbie gave me a photo of him with his beloved horse before the abuse took place. He keeps that as a memory of when he was a happy boy before it happened. He writes, "To dear Janelle, thank you. Robbie Gambley and Brownie, Wattle Creek Farm, 1968." I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:53):** I speak in support of the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. I thank the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, SC, Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, for introducing the bill to the House. The proposed amendments in the bill will bring about two important reforms that will directly remove legal barriers that have been in place for a long time. The changes will ensure that there is a clear path for survivors of child abuse to access justice. They will build upon reforms that were introduced by the New South Wales Government in 2016 and 2018 in line with the recommendations and findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It is no lie that the royal commission has had a significant impact on Australia, with the findings allowing the Australian and New South Wales governments to enact important change.

I take the opportunity to recognise and thank survivors for telling their stories. It is not only incredibly brave of them but also extremely important because we have now been able to propose changes to legislation to ensure that victims of child sexual assault are better protected by our justice system. The most substantial finding of the royal commission's *Redress and civil litigation report* was that survivors of child sexual assault have not had the same capacity to access compensation as other injured persons and can find the civil litigation process often distressing and challenging. The reforms introduced by the New South Wales Government in 2016 and 2018 have removed major barriers for survivors who are seeking civil justice.

I now turn to proposed new section 26B of the bill and what it will do. The reforms to introduce proposed section 26B will retrospectively remove restrictions on compensation for personal injury claims relating to child abuse that occurred in custody prior to 2018. Part 2A of the Civil Liability Act 2002 was introduced in 2004 by the Civil Liability Amendment (Offender Damages) Act 2004. It limited the damages that a person could recover for personal injury sustained while the person was an offender in custody. That includes limits on the damages recoverable for personal injury as a result of child abuse sustained while the child was in custody prior to 2018. Where a claimant's permanent impairment has been assessed as being below 15 per cent, the claimant cannot be awarded damages, either for economic or non-economic loss. If a claimant's permanent impairment has been assessed as above 15 per cent, their claim for non-economic loss is capped by what they would have been entitled to receive under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 at the time the injury arose, which in some cases is nil for purely psychiatric injury.

In 2018 the Civil Liability Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse Liability) Act 2018 introduced section 6B of the Civil Liability Act, which provides that nothing in part 2A places any restriction or limitation on an award of damages made under part 1B relating to child abuse claims. Those reforms commenced on 26 October 2018. However, as that amendment operated prospectively only, survivors of child abuse who were abused while in custody prior to October 2018 remain restricted by the part 2A limitations on damages that can be pursued. The reforms will ensure that the New South Wales Government response to part 2A claims is

consistent with the *NSW Guiding Principles for Government Agencies Responding to Civil Claims for Child Sexual Abuse*, intended to ensure a compassionate and consistent approach across government when dealing with civil claims for child abuse. The reforms in section 26B will operate retrospectively and prospectively to exempt all claims relating to personal injury from child abuse suffered in custody from the limitations and restrictions in part 2A.

That will ensure that survivors of child abuse have consistent access to civil remedies, regardless of whether or not the abuse occurred in custody or when the abuse occurred. The bill seeks to go beyond the royal commission's recommendations and build upon the reforms that were introduced in 2016 and 2018. The royal commission's findings uncovered that many survivors entered into settlements that were too low and inadequate and, due to legal technicalities, they felt forced to accept. Those settlements could have been affected by the expiry of the limitation period for the claim. In some cases, there was not a proper defendant to sue. The findings from the royal commission highlighted that there was a substantial power imbalance between the survivor and the defendant. That power imbalance was created by the nature of the trauma experienced by the survivor. Historic settlements may now be deemed unfair and unjust due to the legal barriers that were previously in place.

The bill seeks to change that and ensure that survivors are treated fairly and equally in the course of justice. It seeks to enact a new part 10 of the Civil Liability Act, which proposes to allow the courts to set aside certain settlement agreements for past child abuse claims if it is just and reasonable to do so. One of the royal commission's findings suggests that governments enact reforms to cover other forms of abuse, which the amendments in the bill seek to do. That proposal directly recognises that victims of child sexual assault have also experienced multiple and other forms of abuse, which can include grooming, psychological manipulation and so on. It has been found that other non-sexual forms of abuse, such as serious physical abuse, can also be just as traumatic for the victim. It is important that the Government recognises it so that victims are properly and adequately protected by the justice system.

The proposed definition within this bill is therefore extensive enough to cover all types of abuse associated with trauma or serious injury. The proposed amendments in the bill are the result of significant consultation with key stakeholders including survivor groups, religious institutions and multi-faith non-government organisations, children service providers, legal stakeholders and the insurance industry. This consultation was extremely important, as it assisted in providing a direct pathway for survivors of child abuse to access justice. We are pleased to be taking this important step to ensure survivors who were abused while in custody have the access to the justice they deserve.

As I said before, the bill goes further than the royal commission's recommendations as it clearly ensures that survivors who come forward and give evidence about unjust or unfair settlements they entered into before the reforms still have a way to go to access adequate justice. I acknowledge and thank again the survivors and survivor groups who have been advocates for these reforms to be enacted. They have continued to show immense courage and the Government is very grateful to these survivor groups, as well as to the legal stakeholders and law firms that have advocated for this critical reform. One of those groups, which I have had a lot to deal with in my time in this place, is SAMSN—Survivors & Mates Support Network. SAMSN looks after male survivors of child sexual abuse. It provides support groups, holds monthly meetings and conducts workshops. It is a place for men to get together with men to talk about what they experienced in their childhood. It is harrowing, it is heartbreaking, but it makes a difference in their lives and it lets them know that healing and recovery are possible. I know that this will make a great deal of difference—and I am sure Minister Roberts will agree, because I know he has met with SAMSN previously.

SAMSN tells these men that recovery is possible, but that it takes time. I know, through meeting some of these men who had experienced abuse through institutionalised care and through their childhood, that they were given settlements that they found unjust and I know that it will make a huge difference to them to have the ability to reopen those cases and to have them reconsidered. I thank SAMSN for the work it does. I have been very pleased to know the group and to attend a lot of its events and meetings in the course of the 10 years that I have been in this place. I wish the group all the best for the future because I know it makes a difference to so many lives, and I will truly say it has kept a lot of men alive by listening, and through the work it does. In conclusion, we can see that this bill is designed to ensure better access to civil justice for survivors of child sexual abuse. I thank the Attorney General, and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:02):** I speak briefly in support of the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 and commend the Attorney General for introducing this bill to the House. As the Attorney indicates, this bill gives the victims of institutional child sexual abuse an opportunity to remedy the restrictions that the law provided to those victims obtaining a reasonable amount of compensation when they were not on an even keel at the time that they attained compensation prior to a variety of amendments. Those agreements can be

set aside by application to a court under the strict supervision of the court. The provisions that the court can consider are contained in schedule 2 to the bill in the proposed amendments to section 7D (3), which states:

- (3) The court may consider the following in making its decision to set aside the affected agreement—
  - (a) the amount paid to the applicant under the agreement,
  - (b) the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement,
  - (c) the conduct in relation to the agreement of ...
  - (d) any other matter the court considers relevant.

These are important provisions. I venture to say that the provision of compensation to victims of institutional child sexual abuse can never, ever place them in the position that they were prior to them suffering that level of abuse. However, it is only fair in the Government's response to the royal commission that it gives those identified victims every opportunity to have a fair and appropriate measure of compensation.

I have indicated to this House previously, from 40 years' experience in the legal profession—nearly all of which was in the criminal justice system—my view that those victims of institutional child sexual abuse are only a small percentage of the victims that are either walking around the community or are in homes and places throughout the State. In all my years, from the hundreds of stories I have heard, very few of them have been victims of institutional child sexual abuse; much of it occurs in homes throughout New South Wales or through various other community-based organisations. Police have said to me anecdotally that they believe one in three people in society has been at some point in their life impacted by sexual abuse as a child. Those figures are quite staggering.

As someone who has been in the criminal justice system and who has appeared in too many of these cases—probably numbering in the hundreds, both defending them and prosecuting them—I know that one can develop quite a fear of how widespread this child sexual abuse is unless one applies one's objectivity, which the law enforcement agencies of this State, which in this area are enormously successful, would know. The problem is that the victims of these horrendously serious crimes do not necessarily come forward. Over a number of years I appeared in inquests and when I was counsel assisting the inquest of Arron Light, Ian Roberts gave evidence in respect of a particular matter and he said that young male children are the last people who will complain when they are sexually abused because, quoting Roberts, it is an attack on their manhood that they will not admit. Consequently, those people went through their lives as victims. Nobody survives those sorts of horrendous child sexual assaults unscarred.

The community only knows about it, and even members of this House only know about it, through the horrendous stories given to the royal commission. Fortunately, through the royal commission, that knowledge of child sexual assault is now filtering into the broad community, who are represented in the criminal justice system through juries who now understand that these things do occur. Prior to the royal commission people could not possibly conceive that it was as widespread as it is. Who wants to believe that the children in our society are being subjected to sexual assault, whether it be in their home, in their school, in their church, in their local sporting clubs or within any other community-based activity? People did not want to believe it; they did not want to accept it until the royal commission's findings were released.

I would hate this House and whoever the government of the day is to believe that, through its work, the royal commission has identified the substantial source of child sexual abuse because, as I have indicated to the House, my anecdotal experience—and I cannot say I am an expert other than a lawyer—is that that is only a small proportion. I cannot offer the House a solution because I do not have the expertise. I cannot say what should occur. But I venture to say that these horrendous attacks upon children have been occurring since the inception of humanity. Consequently, I do not have a solution. One thing is abundantly clear though from evidence given at the royal commission, that where the abuse occurred in institutions there were certain hallmarks that should have been detected by the pre-existing conduct of various offenders. Whether or not that could apply elsewhere I do not know.

What governments need to do, because there is no instant solution, is firstly to start recognising the breadth of this horrendous crime on children. When we deal with victims or appear for people in the criminal justice system and look at their backgrounds, we see that child sexual assault impacts upon victims in different ways. Some of them are never restored. Some of them become addicted to narcotics in an effort to try to get the abuse out of their minds. Some of them act out in other ways and commit criminal offences. In other cases parents do not have the skills to control their children who have not told their parents what has happened to them. Those injuries manifest themselves in many different ways. For example, when reading the psychologist and pre-sentence reports of people with substantial criminal records who are in custody, it is staggering to find that a huge percentage of them have been sexually abused as children.

It may take place at home. It may not be directly by a parent; it may have been by a step-parent, an uncle, a cousin or a grandparent. No-one is immune from it in any circumstances. The Government needs to work on ways to develop skills to be able to identify where the abuse can occur and provide mechanisms and education to the community so that they may identify the possibility. The word "grooming", which is often referred to in this area, is not widely understood. Grooming is a way in which, in a normal relationship, a person tries to persuade another into a particular romantic course. Between consenting adults, it is an even contest. But if it is not between consenting adults but between an adult and a child, it is not an even contest. [*Extension of time*]

There must be markers. There must be ways in which a community can be educated to identify those markers of grooming early and to prevent those actions. I cannot identify them, I do not have the expertise; but I am sure that within the resources of the New South Wales Government there is that expertise. I am sure that the child protection workers, who have the expertise can, somehow or other, start to distil those markers of where child sexual abuse could occur. It then involves engaging in an exercise. Schoolteachers, for example, have a responsibility to report abuse. But unless a child complains to a schoolteacher, the teacher cannot identify that the child might have been or might possibly become a victim of child sexual assault.

After we compensate those victims, the resources need to go towards trying to identify how to prevent this horrendous criminal conduct, which is permeating the community as I am speaking. As I said, I do not have the skills. If I had the ability to identify to the Government what it should do, I would certainly do so. I bring it to the attention of the House so that the Government of the day can start focusing its attention on what should occur in the future. Again, I thank the Attorney General for bringing this matter to the House. It is an appropriate bill and I commend it to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:14):** I speak strongly in support of the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. I am pleased that the bill is before the House. Similar legislation has already been passed in Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, thereby affording the victims of institutional abuse in those States fairer access to redress than they may have had in the past. The bill builds on the reforms made by the Government in 2016 and 2018 and introduces the further recommendations of the royal commission. As members know, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was largely the result of a concerted campaign in the Hunter region which shone a very intense spotlight on the historic abuse and cover-ups within churches and other institutions mainly in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland areas.

As I have done before in this House, I acknowledge the tremendous work done on behalf of victims by *Newcastle Herald* journalist Joanne McCarthy, along with abuse survivor and redress advocate Peter Gogarty and many others, including former police Minister and Deputy Premier Troy Grant. I have taken a personal interest in this issue for many years due to having attended secondary school at St Pius X High School, Adamstown and my brother Colin having attended Marist Brothers at Hamilton. During those years both schools featured as a significant part of the problem of institutional sexual abuse within the Catholic church in the Hunter region, with the Hunter now having a notorious reputation, particularly in relation to the failings of the Catholic church in this regard. While at the time I was unaware of the sexual abuse of students that was occurring, I was very aware of the cruel nature of too many of the teaching cohort and indeed an almost lustful use of corporal punishment.

Based on that knowledge, perhaps I should not be surprised that even worse happened, cloaked in darkness, protected by the church and by the teachings of the church. I know some of those victims of sexual abuse, and that has impacted me greatly, but I did not know they were victims at the time. I remain disgusted, angry and unforgiving that others in positions of power within the school and similar institutions did know, yet they failed to act to protect those vulnerable people. Here we are, still standing with those victims of sickening abuse and trying to bring those perpetrators and institutions to justice. History now records the extent of that abuse within a number of churches and institutions. They were places where many people placed enormous faith and trust. They were places where people should have been safe and protected, but too many were not. In many cases, those victims were made to feel like criminals, when the real criminals were simply moved around, relocated and hidden to protect their names and the name of the church or institution.

Some of those victims sought redress through the church or institution itself, but they were David and Goliath battles in which the victims were totally overpowered by the legal might of the organisations in question. That brings me to what I believe is the most important element of this bill. The bill will allow survivors who entered into settlements before the 2016 and 2018 reforms to have agreements set aside so that they can be afforded the same access to justice that was provided to those who brought claims after the reforms were introduced. That was a key recommendation of the royal commission's *Redress and civil litigation report*. As I indicated earlier, the royal commission found that in many settlement claims there had been a significant power imbalance between the abuse victims and survivors and the defendant. As the Attorney General has already pointed out, many

settlement agreements entered into prior to 2015 and prior to the State reforms in 2016 and 2018 might now be considered unfair or unjust.

Legal barriers have since been removed and this bill, I believe, will remove the last barrier to survivors getting appropriate and proper redress, such as can be done. The bill will give courts the power to set aside historical settlement agreements and remove legal impediments which have traditionally swung the balance well away from abuse victims. This will include agreements undertaken between an individual and an institution as well as agreements made under an institution's own private redress scheme.

I have one particular constituent who has waited a long time for this type of redress. I do not intend to name him or detail his case as it will be heard by the courts should this bill be passed. What I can say is that this individual was among many who suffered abuse at the hands of an individual within the Marist Brothers. This person is a wonderful member of my local community; a man who is compassionate and who, despite his health problems, does an enormous amount for others in the community. He was abused in a place where he should have been safe and protected. The Marist Brothers did more to protect the perpetrator than this victim.

In 2011 this man settled a claim for compensation with the Marist Brothers, but it was pitiful in dollar terms and did nothing to soften the lifelong scars of his abuse. The deed of release in this case included an agreement which prevented him from bringing any further claims against the Marist Brothers. This was the church's legal Goliath against an almost powerless and heavily compromised victim who was almost forced to accept a pitiful claim because the legal defences available to him were so poor. There was also, of course, a three-year statutory time limit on redress for crimes which had been committed decades beforehand, which has since been removed. There is no doubt in my mind that this survivor of the church's abuse and cover-ups was duded by a legal playing field which in 2011 was significantly sloped against him. In fact I have seen letters from his current legal advisers which state:

If you had brought the case today, the settlement amount would be worth a far greater amount.

Many victims have found themselves in this situation and they deserve our support in getting a fairer outcome which in some way might redress the trauma they have endured. Beyond that, I also note that this bill does not determine a set amount of compensation or redress any more than my opinion does. What it does is allow these victims to have their historical agreements set aside so that a court can again hear their case and determine an appropriate agreement that is free from the hurdles, shackles and power which restricted them the first time around. The Attorney General, in reference to the royal commission's *Redress and civil litigation report*, said:

Many settlement agreements entered into by survivors might now be considered unjust or unfair ... If ... legal barriers had not existed at the time of the settlement, those survivors would have been in a better negotiating position and may have negotiated a higher settlement amount.

As the Attorney General has already pointed out, that form of redress applies only to cases determined prior to the royal commission and not those settled under the National Redress Scheme. Significantly, this bill will allow the courts to better define abuse perpetrated against a person and, if certain abuse thresholds have been met, other forms of abuse such as psychological abuse and minor physical abuse can be considered by the court in determining the claim.

It is important that we acknowledge the need for these reforms and allow all survivors of institutional abuse to exist in a society that stands by them and offers a legal framework that is fair and just. I applaud the resilience, the courage, the bravery and the patience shown by many survivors of institutional abuse. I know that for them the trauma never really goes away and the healing process in most cases is a never-ending one. I am very confident that this bill will be an important legal reform which will assist many survivors. I strongly support this bill and I thank the Attorney General and his staff for continuing to work through this issue and bring these important reforms to us. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:24):** I welcome students to the public gallery this morning. They have just heard the member for Lake Macquarie discussing the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. By way of background for the young ladies in the gallery, the bill amends the Civil Liability Act 2002 to give courts the power to set aside certain agreements that settled child abuse claims and, more importantly, to ensure that a person who suffered personal injury as a result of child abuse sustained while in custody is not limited by part 2A in the damages that they can recover for that abuse under the Act. As the member for Lake Macquarie put most eloquently, this has been a systemic problem that has been foisted upon the most innocent of our community, being young people, and it is not a story that is unique to the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge the earlier contributions by the member for Kiama, the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Camden, the member for Holsworthy and the member for Heffron, who has an extensive legal background.

This is a pervasive, disgusting, gutless, cowardly act that has been delivered upon the most innocent of our community, and it has been systemic and has gone on for many decades. As the member for Heffron stated, the

community has rightly been appalled and shocked by this and it wants to ensure that victims of this sort of abuse are protected and looked after, and that they realise the community and the Parliament are there to support them. Again I acknowledge those who have already contributed to the debate, especially the member for Lake Macquarie, who most eloquently put forward some details while protecting the person's identity, and quite rightly, because these people have had to live with this stigma for decades. The damage that it has done psychologically and physically to so many people over such a long time needs to be addressed.

I acknowledge the Attorney General, who is present in the Chamber, and his team for this amendment. It is something that they should be commended on. It is great to see these reforms, which are part of the Government's response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission, which has obviously been discussed previously, was not without its own confronting, chilling and terrifying reports of what victims have been exposed to in what should have been some of the safest environments for young people, being schools, as we heard from the member for Lake Macquarie.

Reforms include retrospectively and prospectively removing the limitation periods for child abuse claims in 2016; introducing a prospective and retrospective requirement that a proper defendant be appointed for cases brought against unincorporated organisations, removing what was known as the Ellis defence; and two new prospective statutory liabilities for child abuse in 2018. Similar reforms have been introduced in Western Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Tasmania and these jurisdictional reforms have provided a framework to allow people to sue responsible institutions in cases where they were previously impeded from doing so by the limitation periods. The effect of the legislation in these jurisdictions is similar in that it gives courts the power to set aside settlement agreements where the claims were previously statute barred, that is, prior to the removal of the limitation periods, a good example of which was mentioned by the member for Lake Macquarie. However, there are some differences in the legislation of other jurisdictions, particularly relating to the scope of settlement agreements covered by the test for the court to apply.

The New South Wales bill operates essentially to the same effect as similar reforms in other States in relation to allowing settlement agreements that were previously impacted by the limitation period. However, New South Wales is the only jurisdiction that has clearly articulated in its legislation that persons who were unable to successfully bring a case of action because an organisation was not incorporated—that is, there was no proper defendant to the claim—are also able to apply to the court to have their settlement agreement set aside. In this way, New South Wales will have some of the broadest, most survivor-friendly reforms in the country for setting aside child abuse settlements, building on the Government's comprehensive response to the recommendations in the *Redress and civil litigation* report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I again acknowledge the great work done by the Attorney General and his team with regard to these reforms.

Another key difference between jurisdictional legislation is the test and criteria for the courts to apply when determining whether to set aside a settlement agreement. The legislation in Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria, and the Northern Territory gives the courts the discretion to set aside a relevant settlement agreement if it is just and reasonable to do so, whereas the legislation in Tasmania allows the courts to do so if it is in the interests of justice. This bill adopts the "just and reasonable" test. As suggested by a large number of stakeholders, adopting this test ensures that New South Wales' legislation is consistent with Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria. Tasmania is the only jurisdiction to have included criteria that the courts are required to consider. Proposed section 7D (3) of the bill provides similar criteria to that used in Tasmania; however, the courts in New South Wales will have the discretion to apply this criteria as opposed to being required to do so. This is because the view has been reached that, with respect to determining whether to set aside an affected agreement, the courts should have a broad discretion to determine the factors relevant to whether it is just and reasonable to do so.

It is not for Parliament to tell the courts what factors are relevant and must be applied in each and every case. The criteria that is being proposed in section 7D (3) is the result of extensive stakeholder consultation. Again, I acknowledge the Attorney General and his team for that broad consultation. The amount paid to the applicant under the agreement is one of the criteria, as is the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement. As we have heard many times before, it was a David versus Goliath battle. Massive institutions were able to bring a large amount of legal firepower to bear on this issue to protect their interests rather than that of the victims. Other criteria include the conduct in relation to the agreement of the parties other than the applicant or the legal representatives of the parties other than the applicant and, importantly, any other matter the court considers relevant. I want to highlight that. That gives a court that broad ability to look at all of the criteria.

Earlier we heard submissions from some of the members in this Chamber, including my good friend the member for Holsworthy. She mentioned and highlighted the organisation Survivors & Mates Support Network [SAMSAN]. I know the member for Lane Cove and Minister is also aware of this organisation. SAMSAN is there to

assist all male survivors of child sexual assault, who should know that abuse was, of course, not their fault. Healing and recovery are possible, but we know it takes a long time. Regardless of the victim's ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, or expression of male gender identity, any man can contact SAMSN for that support. I urge anybody who has been a victim of this systemic and disgusting abuse to reach out for that support. It is so important that men get the safety mechanisms, backing and support that they need. They are often very embarrassed to talk about these situations because they are so personal, but again SAMSN is there to help provide that protection. I seek a brief extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank members for their indulgence. SAMSN has been developed through collaboration between survivors and professionals and operates within a trauma-informed framework. It works to break down that stigma and the myths associated with childhood sexual abuse by raising public awareness, upskilling frontline service providers and advocating for the implementation of the royal commission's recommendations. SAMSN was founded in 2010 by a small and dedicated group of male survivors who were searching for that support group to meet other male survivors and deal with the effects of systemic child sexual abuse in their lives. Unable to find such a group, these courageous men started SAMSN. Working alongside professional counsellors with experience in working with male survivors, it commenced an eight-week group program for men. This professionally facilitated peer support program for men has provided a much-needed safe space for men and was—and still is, unfortunately—in great demand.

These groups have provided a place for men to come together and meet other male survivors and find that support, understanding and learning about child sexual abuse and its far-reaching impacts and, very importantly, what helps in recovery and healing. As we heard earlier from the member for Heffron, the psychological and social effects on the victims are far reaching and, in some cases, truly devastating. Since 2011 SAMSN has run over 60 groups across Sydney, regional New South Wales, Adelaide and Canberra. It is increasing the understanding of these impacts on men. The need for male survivors for what helps recovery has led SAMSN to establish ongoing, professionally facilitated monthly meetings in a number of locations so that men have a safe environment to continue their peer support and long recovery journey. SAMSN has also recognised that the trauma effects of abuse can make negotiating life's challenges even more difficult, as was outlined by speakers before me. I acknowledge the great work being done by SAMSN and congratulate it. We know that it will be there to help provide ongoing support for the victims of these heinous acts.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the great work being done by the Attorney General's office and staff, including the stakeholder engagement. This has been a long and difficult road for the victims, but now they can see that they are being protected and supported, and this is important. I acknowledge Sean Robertson from the Attorney General's office, who has picked up the baton with regard to this piece of reform. I also highlight the outstanding work done by the Attorney General's former staffer Mary Klein. Mary joined the office in 2017 and has helped draft approximately 60 pieces of legislation—not least of which is this one—that have brought about some incredible reforms. Mary should be very proud of the legacy that she has left in the New South Wales Parliament and the work that she has contributed to.

Again, I congratulate both Sean and especially Mary for the contributions that they have made to this place and the life-changing pieces of legislation such as the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. The reforms and mechanisms bring safety to so many victims. As I said at the beginning of this speech, these crimes were perpetrated on the youngest and most innocent of our community. They should never go unchallenged. They need to be dealt with and have the light of day shone on them in every possible way. I am very proud to be part of a government that is dealing with this issue head on. I congratulate the Attorney General and commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Before I call the Attorney General in reply, I officially welcome students from Morisset High School into the gallery. I thank them for attending. I hope it is a good day for learning about the Parliament and what goes on.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (11:38):** In reply: I thank those members who have spoken in this debate for their contribution—from the Opposition, the member for Liverpool, the member for Prospect, the member for Charlestown, the member for Lismore, the member for Newtown and the member for Heffron; from the crossbench, the member for Lake Macquarie; and from the Government, the member for Kiama, the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Camden, the member for Holsworthy and the member for Terrigal.

The member for Liverpool requested that I indicate whether any redress is available to survivors who did not settle their claims and lost in court. As I understand it he is referring to survivors whose claims were heard by a court but the court action failed—that is, the court delivered a judgement against the claim. There are three potential scenarios to address in response to the member's question: judgements that the limitation period for the cause of action had expired, judgements that the defendant named in the cause of action was not the proper

defendant and judgements that the cause of action was not made out. I will address each of those in turn. First I will address judgements that the limitation period for the cause of action had expired. In 2016 Parliament passed reforms to remove limitation periods for causes of action relating to child abuse. As part of those amendments, the Limitation Act 1969 was amended to provide:

- (1) An action on a previously barred cause of action may be brought even though:
  - (a) a judgment on the cause of action has, on the ground that a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired, been given previously, or
  - (b) a judgment in respect of legal professional negligence has, on the ground that a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired, been given previously, or both.
- ...
- (3) If an action on a previously barred cause of action is brought ... the court hearing the action may, if it decides that it is just and reasonable to do so, do any or all of the following:
  - (a) set aside any such judgment already given on or in relation to the cause of action,
  - (b) take into account any amounts paid or payable by way of damages under any such judgment,
  - (c) take into account any amounts paid or payable by way of costs in connection with any action in which any such judgment was given.

See the Limitation Act, schedule 5, part 3, section 10. The courts may therefore set aside a judgement that the limitation period for a child abuse claim has expired in a similar way to the courts' ability to set aside a settlement agreement for a past child abuse claim under this bill. The second scenario is where there have been judgements that the defendant named in the cause of action was not the proper defendant. In relation to claims where there was no proper defendant, it is not necessary for the courts to be able to set aside a judgement that a defendant named in proceedings was not the proper defendant to the cause of action. A judgement of this nature precludes the plaintiff from commencing further proceedings against the organisation, organisations, person or persons held not to be the defendant to the cause of action.

The judgement would not preclude the plaintiff from commencing proceedings against another organisation, including the organisation put forward as the proper defendant under part 1B, provided there is no other judgement ruling that the cause of action cannot be brought against that organisation. The third scenario is a judgement that the cause of action was not made out. The third category relates to judgements that are not able to be set aside under any legislation. Those are judgements that the cause of action was not successful because the courts did not find on the balance of probabilities that the defendant was liable. Those judgements are not covered by this bill because if a case was heard on its merits and was not successful, setting aside the judgement would not cure the issues with establishing liability in that case if brought a second time.

The member for Liverpool requested that I indicate what the financial impact of these changes will be on the State of New South Wales. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse acknowledged that its recommendations for civil liability reform may have financial impacts on institutions. The discussion paper on the bill released in March 2020 also acknowledged that the reforms would likely have a financial impact on both government and non-government organisations. Historically, institutions have entered into settlement agreements for child abuse claims with the expectation that the institution was forever released from liability for that claim. Many institutions have also run their own redress schemes, which operated outside of the civil liability system but may have required survivors to agree to release the institution from further liability.

The Government acknowledges that the bill is likely to have a financial impact on both government and non-government institutions if they entered into settlement agreements in the past that the court would be minded to set aside under the bill. The New South Wales Government's liability for child abuse claims is covered by the Treasury Managed Fund [TMF], which is managed by icare. The TMF provides funding for the State's self-insurance scheme, covering participating government entities for their insurable risk exposures. The TMF receives contributions from New South Wales government entities and holds assets to meet the cost of liabilities when they arise. NSW Treasury will continue to monitor the performance of this fund. The performance of the TMF and any payments to or from the TMF are disclosed in the annual report of icare. I am advised that the New South Wales Government's potential liability under this bill will be monitored as part of the fund and will be included in icare's reporting on the fund.

The member for Liverpool reflected that the bill may be regarded as narrower than some other jurisdictions' legislation by tying it to two specific legal barriers. He described the bill as "somewhat more prescriptive than in other jurisdictions". The member for Charlestown described it as "narrowly constructed". Western Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Tasmania have introduced legislation to give the courts the discretion to set aside past settlement agreements—for child sexual abuse causes of action in Western Australia and for child abuse causes of action in Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. Other jurisdictions have introduced

reforms to their relevant limitation Acts to allow the courts to set aside settlement agreements for previously statute-barred causes of action where it is just and reasonable to do so, or in the case of Tasmania where it is in the interests of justice. The legislation in those jurisdictions and the New South Wales bill are similar in that they all give the courts the power to set aside historical settlement agreements, particularly where claims were previously barred by statute. However, there are some differences in the legislative regimes relating to the scope of settlement agreements covered and the test for the court to apply.

One key difference between the New South Wales bill and other jurisdictions' legislation is that proposed part 1C clearly articulates that the courts may set aside settlement agreements for claims that were impacted by the expiry of a limitation period or where an organisation was not incorporated and there was therefore no proper defendant to the cause of action, or both, if just and reasonable to do so. New South Wales is the only jurisdiction that has clearly articulated in the legislation that the courts may set aside settlement agreements that were impacted by both of those legal barriers. In this respect, New South Wales goes further than at least most other jurisdictions. By doing so the bill ensures that the types of settlements that are covered by the reforms are clear to survivors, their representatives, potential defendants and the courts. This avoids the parties to an application to set aside an affected agreement needing to engage in lengthy arguments about whether or not the settlement agreement is one that can be set aside. This drafting will ensure that New South Wales has one of the broadest, most survivor-friendly reforms in Australia for setting aside child abuse settlements.

The member for Prospect reflected that abuse survivors from State institutions that made unfair settlements prior to the proposed reforms will finally have the same access to justice and redress that survivors of abuse and other non-State institutions were entitled to. To clarify, this bill will allow affected agreements entered into between both government and non-government institutions to be set aside if the court finds it just and reasonable to do so. The aim of the bill is to allow survivors who entered into settlement agreements before the 2016 and 2018 reforms to have the same access to justice as those who brought a claim after the reforms. The 2016 reforms retrospectively and prospectively removed limitation periods for child abuse. The expiry of the limitation period affected child abuse causes of action relating to government and non-government organisations. It is clear from the evidence given to the royal commission that the expiry of the limitation period may have been a factor in settlements with both government and non-government organisations.

The 2018 reforms amended the Civil Liability Act 2002 to introduce a requirement that a proper defendant be appointed for cases brought against unincorporated organisations, removing what was known as the Ellis defence, and introduced two new prospective statutory liabilities for child abuse. This legal barrier largely applied to unincorporated religious institutions and some not-for-profit organisations. It did not apply to government defendants because the State has always had legal personhood, making it capable of being sued. The royal commission heard evidence from many survivors about the impact of the Ellis defence on negotiations and the settlements entered into with some non-government organisations. The purpose and function of this bill is not to address claims for abuse in different types of institutions. Rather, the bill ensures the same access to justice, irrespective of when the claim is made, that is, before or after the 2016 and 2018 reforms.

The member for Prospect suggested that the New South Wales Government has been slow to provide clarity for survivors and stakeholders with these reforms. Similarly, the member for Charlestown described these reforms as "long overdue". The New South Wales Government has acted swiftly and comprehensively in response to the recommendations of the royal commission. In 2016 and 2018 the New South Wales Government implemented an extensive package of reforms in response to the royal commission's findings. These included retrospectively and prospectively removing limitation periods for child abuse and introducing an updated Model Litigant Policy and Guiding Principles for Civil Claims for Child Abuse 2016. The package also included amending the Civil Liability Act 2002 to introduce a requirement that a proper defendant be appointed for cases brought against unincorporated organisations and two new prospective statutory liabilities for child abuse. The 2016 and 2018 reforms completed the official response and enactment of the recommendations of the *Redress and civil litigation report*. Together, these reforms removed significant barriers to seeking civil justice for survivors.

New South Wales was also one of the first jurisdictions to announce it would join the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. New South Wales was the first jurisdiction to refer legislation to the Commonwealth to enable the redress scheme to be established. In 2019 I responded to stakeholder correspondence relating to this issue of setting aside child abuse settlements and confirmed that I initiated a policy development process to consider these reforms. A discussion paper was published for public consultation in March 2020 on the possible reforms. This included circulating the discussion paper to a large number of stakeholders, including survivor groups, religious institutions and multi-faith non-government organisations, children's service providers, legal stakeholders and the insurance industry. A draft bill was then provided in November 2020 to the same large group of stakeholders for comment. New South Wales has undertaken the most comprehensive consultation on these reforms of any jurisdiction. This consultation has informed the development

of a bill that covers settlement agreements impacted by the expiry of the limitation period and where there was no proper defendant to the cause of action, going further than other jurisdictions' legislation.

The member for Newtown described the scope of the bill as "seriously limited". She alluded to the bill excluding some survivors from accessing justice and also alluded to amendments being moved in the Legislative Council. While the substance of this amendment will be addressed in the Legislative Council, I will address the matters raised by the member for Newtown. The 2016 and 2018 reforms removed two significant barriers to justice for survivors pursuing civil remedies. We do not know with certainty the number of settlement agreements that were impacted by the expiry of the limitation period or by there having been no proper defendant to a claim. However, the average time for a person to disclose the circumstances of their abuse and the issue of some religious institutions not being able to be sued would indicate that a large number of settlement agreements entered before the 2016 and 2018 reforms could have been impacted by one or both of these legal barriers. We are therefore confident that these reforms will impact a large number of survivors who entered into settlement agreements which might now be considered unjust or unfair.

There may be other avenues for unjust or unfair settlement agreements to be set aside. Depending on the circumstances, a party to such a settlement may be able to have the settlement declared void on grounds at common law and in equity including misrepresentation, mistake, duress, undue influence and/or unconscionable or unconscionable conduct. While I cannot comment on the circumstances of individual cases, this could include settlements entered into under a misrepresentation by the defendant—for example, in situations where a survivor entered a settlement agreement on the basis of misrepresentation by the defendant that they had no knowledge of or could not reasonably have been expected to have knowledge of the abuse at the time. It may be that over the course of time evidence has made clear that the defendant did in fact have knowledge of the abuse and the settlement was therefore agreed on the basis of a misrepresentation.

The Government has concerns about expanding the reforms to other circumstances. Expanding the reforms to other circumstances may require the courts to consider very subjective matters when determining whether the relevant circumstances were unjust or unfair and would impact the certainty of settlement agreements for claims that were not impacted by the expiry of the limitation period or there being no proper defendant. Introducing broader, undefined circumstances into the legislation may mean that it is not clear to survivors or those representing them whether their settlement agreement is in fact one that a court could or would set aside.

Expanding the reforms to include broader types of settlement agreements without being specific about the settlements that are captured could require survivors in New South Wales to act as test cases for others. This could expose them to protracted and adversarial proceedings and possible appeals. This could potentially increase the overall legal costs associated with applications to set aside settlement agreements, including for survivors, without guaranteeing that the courts would find it just and reasonable to set aside a settlement agreement in relation to those circumstances. This risks exposing survivors in particular to the legal costs of an unsuccessful application, including possible orders to pay a defendant's legal costs for the unsuccessful application. This is contrary to the intention of these reforms, which is to provide clear and unambiguous access to justice to survivors who entered into agreements that were impacted by legal barriers which no longer exist.

To avoid further re-traumatisation of survivors through civil proceedings, these reforms should encourage the parties to an affected agreement to renegotiate an agreement where it is clear that it is one that a court would consider just and reasonable to set aside. Changing the bill to describe settlements in a broad and unspecific way may not facilitate those negotiations between the parties. Instead, it may encourage potential defendants to take a more adversarial approach in order to avoid having settlements set aside in circumstances where they were not subject to the expiry of a limitation period or there having been no proper defendant to the claim. In other words, a concern with the amendments proposed in the other place and widening the circumstances where an agreement can be set aside risks re-traumatising victim survivors in circumstances where they are exposed to significant cost orders and face a very high risk of failure, in contrast to circumstances where there was a limitation period or a proper defendant issue that had been part of the matrix of circumstances in which an unfavourable settlement was made.

The member for Lake Macquarie raised questions about setting aside settlement agreements which have been taken into account as relevant prior payments by the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse or deeds of release signed when accepting a redress offer. The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse was established on 1 July 2018 to recognise and alleviate the impact of past institutional child sexual abuse and related abuse. Redress is an important alternative to civil litigation for claims regarding past child sexual abuse occurring before 1 July 2018. In its *Redress and civil litigation report*, 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 child sexual abuse.

Under the national redress scheme, redress includes monetary payment of up to \$150,000, access to counselling and psychological support and a direct personal response from participating institutions responsible for the abuse. The royal commission recommended that people who have already received monetary payments through other redress schemes or through some other settlement should remain eligible for redress under the national redress scheme, provided that any previous monetary payments are taken into account in the redress payment. Under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 of the Commonwealth, any relevant prior payment is adjusted for inflation and deducted from the redress payment. A relevant prior payment includes the payment made to the person by or on behalf of the responsible institution in relation to the abuse for which the institution is responsible. The redress Act expressly provides that once a person accepts an offer of redress and signs a deed of release, the responsible institution or institutions is or are released and forever discharged from civil liability for abuse.

Some survivors in New South Wales with prior settlement agreements may have already accepted an offer of redress. The draft bill does not allow the courts to set aside a deed of release signed in acceptance of an offer under the scheme or an agreement taken into account as a relevant prior payment in the accepted offer. As noted in the *Discussion Paper: Setting aside settlement agreements of past child abuse claims*, the New South Wales courts cannot be given the discretion to set aside these types of settlements. This is because under the redress Act the responsible institution is released from civil liability when a redress offer is accepted. As the redress Act is Commonwealth legislation, it would override the bill. I appreciate the various points that have been raised in this House by members about the bill and, in particular, that it captures settlement agreements entered into in circumstances other than those that were subject to a limitation period that had expired or there being no proper defendant at the time.

I propose to maintain a watching brief over this issue, including liaising with other jurisdictions about their approaches, and whether there is any proposal to change the scope of the reforms in those jurisdictions. To conclude, this bill creates greater access to justice for survivors by allowing those who entered into affected agreements before the 2016 and 2018 reforms to have the same access to justice as those who brought a claim after the reforms. The Government's reforms in 2016 and 2018 provided a clear pathway to access to justice for survivors of child abuse. This bill goes beyond the royal commission's recommendations. It builds on the 2016 and 2018 reforms by ensuring that those survivors who came forward and gave evidence about the unfair and unjust settlements that they entered into prior to the royal commission have a pathway to justice. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Budget

## BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021

**Debate resumed from 4 May 2021.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:02):** In the middle of January 2020 media began reporting atypical pneumonia cases outside of the People's Republic of China. This was the first indicator that the now identified COVID-19 virus would travel across the globe. By the end of January 2020, the virus was confirmed to be in 18 countries outside China. Four countries had evidence of eight cases of human-to-human transmission, outside China—Germany, Japan, the United States of America and Vietnam, which is just 5,000 kilometres from Australia. By 11 March 2020 the World Health Organization had declared the public health emergency a pandemic. At this time, no-one in government, industry, the services sector or our communities could have comprehended the enormous challenges, disruptions, uncertainty and loss that would follow. Only a week before this pandemic declaration had the Black Summer bushfires been extinguished. This intense and catastrophic bushfire season wreaked havoc, caused devastation and the loss of lives, livestock and livelihoods. Five and a half million hectares burned over 240 consecutive days, destroying 2,476 homes, \$900 million of infrastructure and, most significantly, taking 26 lives. The economic and human impact could not even begin to be calculated, let alone the additional impact of the worst drought in living memory. At one stage, 99.9 per cent of our State was declared to be in drought.

So 2020—the beginning of a new decade—began with our communities reeling from a triple shock of significant challenges: drought, fire and a pandemic. The pandemic response in New South Wales was firstly centred around public health and bolstering capacity in the New South Wales health system in readiness for a worst-case scenario. Whilst lockdowns and economic shutdowns were a necessary first response to, in a sense, buy time to allow us to prepare for the impact of the pandemic and limit the spread of the virus within the community, the consequential impact on business, industry, employment and livelihoods was extreme. This led to the most significant economic shock in living memory and caused our nation to slip into its first recession in 30 years. Images of people outside Centrelink offices, queued up around the street corners, brought back memories of the Great Depression. Commentators were discussing whether this recession would lead to a second great depression, such was the severity and global impact of the economic shock. The New South Wales Government took strategic and speedy action to respond to the health and economic crisis.

The Government invested heavily in bolstering health services and infrastructure with an additional \$3 billion that saw a quadrupling of intensive care capability in our hospitals; resourcing highly effective testing and tracing team capabilities; employing effective hotel quarantine procedures; purchasing more than \$1 billion in personal protection equipment to keep frontline workers safe; establishing mobile and convenient COVID-19 testing sites; and ramping up local manufacturers to produce essential COVID-19 supplies. These actions, and the fact that the people of New South Wales largely followed health advice and directives, led to the best health outcome in the world. New South Wales has been labelled the gold standard for COVID-19 management. We were able to identify and isolate infected persons quickly, and provide expert care for those who needed it, whilst also balancing the need to keep the economy open and functioning as much as it was safe to do so. We allocated \$1 million to the Working for NSW fund that would provide the avenues to sustain business, create cash flow and retain employees from across New South Wales government and non-government businesses.

We also announced \$6 billion in waived or deferred taxes, fares and levies, including payroll tax and licensing and registration fees to support businesses. There was much more targeted support to emergency areas, including charities, homelessness responses, victims of domestic and family violence, refugees, temporary accommodation for international students and much, much more. When the pandemic crisis in New South Wales was beginning to settle, the New South Wales Government released a COVID-19 Recovery Plan, a blueprint that would chart a refocus on areas that would help rebuild our State after the pandemic. The Government has announced a \$29 billion recovery plan, including new stimulus measures to kick-start the economy and create jobs, while laying the foundations for sustained growth with a plan for reform. There are six pillars to focus the delivery of our post-pandemic recovery plan. The first pillar is "Building a better NSW", which includes a \$3 billion Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund to boost maintenance and capital works in government facilities, including courts, police stations, national parks, botanical gardens and Crown land portfolios. The second pillar is "Investing in our people and their future", which includes \$380.6 million over two years in the Skilling for Recovery program.

There will be a focus on employment for women which will link our economy by ensuring trades skills pathways. The third pillar is "Delivering quality services for the people of NSW" with \$29.3 billion in recurrent and capital funding in the New South Wales health system; a \$73 million mental health package for enhanced services to support those in need during the pandemic; \$169.4 million over four years for vital mental health support, including community-based mental health clinicians, virtual mental health services, well-being and in-reach nurses for schools; and a \$33 billion transport budget. A little later in my speech I will expand on the details of some of these programs and how they will affect the people in my electorate. There is more than \$100 million for community support for our most vulnerable.

Fostering and encouraging the growth of businesses, of whatever size, is crucial to ensuring a sustainable and prosperous New South Wales. This Government brought forward by one year the \$1 million increase to the payroll tax threshold. It also cut payroll tax to 4.85 per cent for two years, commencing from 1 July 2020. Digital vouchers worth \$1,500 were introduced to cover government costs for small businesses that do not pay payroll tax and the very popular Dine & Discover vouchers. Funding to the Business Connect program was extended to ensure that small businesses or someone considering starting a small business can easily access the best advice about how to create and grow their small business.

The fifth pillar is "Strong local industry, big global outlook." We are committed to attracting domestic as well as international businesses through payroll tax relief and other support as part of the \$250 million Jobs Plus Program. As part of our global strategy we have a \$179.8 million commitment to increase the presence of New South Wales businesses across the globe. The sixth pillar of our post-pandemic reform is "Economic reform for lasting prosperity." We will continue to progress tax reform. We are focused on increasing the streamlining of a timely planning system. We want to ensure that we have long-term labour force flexibility, including mid-career teaching pathways, as well as the automatic mutual recognition of occupational licences so that people can maintain their jobs after moving across borders.

I turn now to the Mulgoa electorate, which I proudly represent in this place. I will focus on the continuing investment in the electorate as well as the new investment. In 2014 former Prime Minister the Hon. Tony Abbott announced that the Federal Government would commence building Sydney's second international airport, which has been the catalyst for the significant reform happening across western Sydney. The transformation is breathtaking. The announcement has been the turning point for prosperity opportunities for residents of western Sydney. I do not think anyone can yet completely comprehend the lasting opportunities and growth as well as the subsequent investment in infrastructure, business and employment that the new airport will deliver for our communities. It will be a transformation the likes of which we have never seen.

As part of the commitment to build the airport, significant funding has been allocated to upgrade the roads servicing the airport. Many roads, including the Northern Road, are currently being expanded. It is taking a number of years because the infrastructure project is so significant. Part of our western Sydney infrastructure plan includes increasing access to the M4, Kent Road and the Werrington Arterial Road. The key feature I really love about the work happening across western Sydney is that we are committed to not only building the infrastructure necessary to ensure that people can get to the airport quickly when it opens but also planning more roads and rail.

This budget has \$810 million allocated to the planning and construction of the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport rail line, most of which goes through my electorate. It is at stage one. Sydney Metro is doing a lot of work now to negotiate with landowners in relation to the construction of the metro stations in that vicinity. I cannot let this opportunity pass by without saying again that I stand in this place to speak on behalf of the 19 families impacted by the construction of the metro station at Orchard Hills. Again I place on record that I continue to stand up for their specific and difficult situation. Sydney Metro has identified 65 acres of land that it wishes to compulsorily acquire for the metro station at Orchard Hills. It is a significant area of land. I say again to the community of Orchard Hills that I continue to stand with them.

This morning I was speaking again with Christine Vella—the lady speaking on behalf of that community. I will continue to work with her, the transport Minister and the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney to ensure that they get a fair deal. We thank that community for working with us as they have done for many years in trying to identify the pathway for the rail corridor. We recognise that this is a very difficult time for that community and their neighbours. This is their homes, superannuation, investment and inheritance they had planned for their children. I acknowledge this is a difficult time. I stand with them in this process of negotiating with Sydney Metro to ensure that they get a fair deal for their homes so that they can continue living in the local area and their kids can continue attending their schools and their businesses will not be interrupted by relocating.

The Nepean Hospital \$1 billion investment is a breathtaking development. As part of stage one, this budget allocated \$221.3 million to continue the building works, including redeveloping the integrated ambulatory services. A couple of weeks ago, my daughter and I caught the train into the city. As we went through Kingswood station, I said, "Take a look out the window at Nepean Hospital." When driving along the Great Western Highway, we cannot see the scale of stage one of the redevelopment of Nepean Hospital but when we looked out the window we could see it was a mammoth building. She was gobsmacked when she could see what was being constructed on the site. I am excited to be the member for Mulgoa in the Liberal-Nationals Government because this Government has carefully and very cleverly developed and protected its finances and investment strategy to allocate \$1 billion to my local hospital.

We have also seen \$10 million allocated to the Western Sydney Construction Hub at Kingswood TAFE. This Government continues to invest in TAFE in targeted areas because we are already beginning to see some shortages in construction skills, and we are addressing those shortages by building the Western Sydney Construction Hub. We are investing in not only rail projects, hospitals and TAFE education programs but also road upgrades. Only those who live in western Sydney can understand the area that it covers. Families need cars to get around their communities, to get to train stations, to drop kids off at care before or after school so that parents can work, and to travel to weekend sport and community events. Therefore, our road network needs to be safe and should be increased to accommodate the growing community that will call western Sydney home in the years ahead.

The budget provided an allocation of \$300 million to continue planning the M12 motorway between the M7 and the Northern Road, \$15.5 million to continue to design the upgrade of Horsley Drive between the M7 and Cowpasture Road and \$13 million to continue planning the upgrade of Elizabeth Drive from the M7 to Badgerys Creek. A speedy upgrade to Elizabeth Drive is desperately needed. Thousands of cars and trucks travel along that pothole-filled goat track every day. Because of the significant construction to the west of Elizabeth Drive at the airport site, a plethora of trucks, including B-doubles, are essentially tearing up that road. I put on record that I urge the Government to fast-track the upgrade of Elizabeth Drive.

A number of intersections are planned to be established along Elizabeth Drive, particularly at Kemps Creek, and a number of schools are set back by one road from Elizabeth Drive. When parents, families, business

owners or farmers want to turn onto Elizabeth Drive it causes unbelievable queues along Devonshire Road. I have seen cars heading east along Elizabeth Drive stop when they see a gap in the cars travelling west so they can let those cars turn onto Elizabeth Drive. That is a real pinch point. It is very heavily congested. Some very risky driver behaviour happens at that intersection. It is absolutely critical that we upgrade Elizabeth Drive. It must be prioritised and completed very quickly. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

The budget has allocated \$10.4 million to complete those much-needed intersection upgrades along Erskine Park Road at Explorers Way, Peppertree Drive, Coonawarra Drive and Bennett Road. The Erskine Park and St Clair communities continue to expand, let alone south of Erskine Park, with the Erskine business park and development growth in that area. An ever-growing volume of trucks are driving along Erskine Park Road to access the M4, making it quite dangerous for residents who are turning onto Roper Road or Erskine Park Road as they try to get out of their communities. Some of those trucks do not drive at 60 or 70 kilometres per hour. They do not all abide by the speed limit. The risk to those families who drive in sedans and small cars is significant at times, so it is good to see that those upgrades are nearing completion because the safety they will provide to local residents cannot be underestimated.

The budget has allocated \$18 million to plan for the upgrade to Mulgoa Road between Glenmore Parkway and Jeanette Street and between Blaikie Road and Jamison Road. I have spoken previously in this place about Mulgoa Road, which is west of the suburb of Glenmore Park. There is only one way to turn west out of Glenmore Park and onto Mulgoa Road. That access point is a roundabout and only one turning lane takes people either north into Penrith or north onto the M4. The morning traffic backlog into Glenmore Park goes for kilometres because there is only one lane out of town and those cars have to give way to people travelling south along Mulgoa Road. I urge the transport Minister to accelerate the upgrade to that section of Mulgoa Road as quickly as possible. The installation of traffic lights and the addition of two lanes to that right-hand turn will provide a fairer, safer and quicker exit for residents who live in Glenmore Park.

The Government has done a stellar job of responding to the cost-of-living pressures that our residents face by providing over 70 options for families and households to save money. In response to the pandemic and in order to help small businesses, particularly in the Sydney CBD, it is very exciting to see the rollout of the Dine & Discover vouchers. I have downloaded my vouchers. I hope everyone in this place has downloaded theirs and I hope that they use those vouchers to support small businesses. Please be aware of the deadline of 30 June. However, the Government may be persuaded to extend that deadline—you never know. I just put that out there. Those vouchers encourage people to support local businesses such as restaurants, cafes and movie theatres. After a really tough 18 months in New South Wales, it is nice that the Government is giving families, couples and seniors a little bit of money to get out of home and have some relief. A little bit of fun does not have to cost the earth.

The Government has also announced \$337 million to provide tutors to every public school and selective non-government school for 2021 to ensure that no students are left behind. That is a great announcement, particularly given that students needed to stay home in term two last year as a result of the COVID lockdown. We want to ensure that the disruption to those students' education is not sustained. It is crucial to identify and address if children have missed out on important information in any academic area. The Government has invested \$120 million into future generations by providing 12 months of free community preschool. That will ensure that our little learners are well prepared to start school. It has been a very tough and unprecedented time in New South Wales and across the world. The Liberal-Nationals Government has done an extraordinary job throughout the worst drought in living memory, the devastation of the catastrophic Black Summer bushfires and then the pandemic on top of that. The Government has had to navigate the unknowns of the pandemic, which has been changing every day. It was a huge challenge for most people in our communities and our bureaucracy.

Hindsight will teach us all what could have been done better, but if we look at where we are just 12 months later we see that most of the restrictions have gone, most people are back at work, schools are operating, events are happening and all members of Parliament are present in the Chamber during question time. Compare that with the situation overseas. Other countries have suffered catastrophic loss of life and devastation, particularly India and Brazil. We have achieved so much in New South Wales under the leadership of the Government and with the cooperation of the people of this State. Everybody ought to applaud themselves for working together to achieve the standard of living and the status quo that we now experience. I say thank you to my community for coming together during that really tough time. I thank the individuals and schools who were involved in gathering donations to provide to families who suffered not only during the bushfires but also during the recent catastrophic floods in the Hawkesbury and Nepean Valley. A lot of my community was spared the impact of the floods, but some of our infrastructure was damaged. Our community responded by helping communities to the north of us with the recovery. That ought to be highlighted and commended.

I am deeply honoured and proud to be the local member for Mulgoa in this place and for having the opportunity to meet the volunteers who work so hard in their area of interest—be it sports, a men's shed, a Landcare association or a progress association. They are all run by volunteers and they all do what they can to make our community a great place to live and raise a family. I am honoured that I get to know and work with those people and that I can use my influence in this place to help them in return, which is ultimately helping our community. It is an amazing honour. In March this year I ticked over 10 years of being the member for Mulgoa. I did not think that would be the case when I was first elected because it was a matter of taking each elected term I was given and working hard for it.

In looking back on what has been achieved, particularly the efforts of our Government during the global pandemic, the flooding, the bushfires and the drought, we have a great team in New South Wales helping and leading our communities. A lot more is to come for the future of the western Sydney airport. The building of a brand-new city is being planned, the likes of which we cannot comprehend now. My role in this place is to help our communities by providing the information they need to navigate that process of significant change and to ensure that we have the best standard of living in western Sydney. My community needs to have not only jobs but also careers and professions located in western Sydney so that families and individuals can enjoy a magnificent natural, multifaceted and brilliant environment in which they can proudly live, work and raise their family.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:32):** It gives me great pleasure to speak about the budget for the Heathcote electorate. It is an honour—as the member for Mulgoa said—to represent the good people of Heathcote. I will highlight some of the things that the last budget supplied for my electorate in the hope of making their lives a little bit easier and more convenient. But I will also highlight some of the issues we have had with infrastructure not being delivered on time. Hopefully it will not be too painful for the transport Minister. Schools were a highlight of the last budget and we completed the \$1 billion school maintenance backlog. One school that benefited from having all its issues fixed was Heathcote High School, which received \$1.3 million to fix leaking roofs and gutters as well taking care of the trees that were interfering with classrooms. It is fantastic to see that that money has now been expended. There is a lot more work to be done at Heathcote High School. From memory it has about 405 large gum trees on the property, so it is a major issue to just keep those under control.

Members might remember a couple of years ago a young lady was hit by a widow maker—a branch from a gum tree at Heathcote High School—which nearly killed her. It is top of mind to keep that tree maintenance going at that school. Engadine High School and Stanwell Park Public School have been promised school halls, which are progressing well. Those two schools were lucky enough to benefit from that announcement prior to the last election. I recently spoke to both principals, who are thrilled with the consultation that has occurred. The department has gone out of its way to make sure that it is fitting for each school. Engadine High School is a large high school and Stanwell Park is a very small school so the use of their halls will be vastly different. The consultation involved the school community and they are very happy with the planning at the moment.

Bundeena Public School in my electorate was one of the first schools to receive air conditioning in the first tranche of the rollout, which gives us a good start to rolling out air conditioning through the Heathcote electorate. The State Government has also allocated some money for building programs at St Patrick's Catholic and St John Bosco schools. I was shocked that, from memory, it was \$5.2 million for St Patrick's. I went past the school the other day and the building is massive, which is the result of 50-50 funding with the Catholic system. That money has been well used for that new senior school study area. It looks like a fantastic building and I am looking forward to attending its opening. St John Bosco school also has a new building program. A new meeting room and activities area has just been completed, which is fantastic. The Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads is in the Chamber. We have a commitment of \$35 million for an investigation into the widening of Heathcote Road to four lanes. That has been coming for decades. It has now been committed that we will have four lanes all the way through from Liverpool to Heathcote.

Previous budget money was allotted for a bridge and the widening of Heathcote Road. Unfortunately, that will not be four lanes, but the plan is that we will have an investigation into a point-to-point valley crossing. Hopefully—fingers crossed—that will be the outcome of the investigation, which would be welcomed by the people of Heathcote, Holsworthy and Liverpool. I am sure the member for Liverpool, who is in the Chamber, would accept that Heathcote Road has been an issue for many years and we need to fix it. Planning for car parks and additional spaces has also been a long process and, again, the Parliamentary Secretary's eyes must be rolling back in her head when we talk about car parks. I will leave it at saying that they are still planning the additional car spaces for Engadine. The widening at Kirrawee, which is part of the Miranda and Heathcote electorates, has had a 12-month delay on roadworks due to an accident with high power somewhere else in the State—I think at Barangaroo. All works with high power were stopped for 12 months so there is now a 12-month delay. Unfortunately, that project has fallen well behind but a new team is working on it day and night to hopefully get that fixed prior to next Christmas.

I spoke to Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] many years ago about Linden Street. It asked, "Is there anything we can fix for you?" I said, "There is: Linden Street." Every morning on the radio at about eight o'clock it is announced that the traffic is bumper to bumper at Linden Street, Sutherland. I asked whether the nearly \$3 million worth of investment for a pedestrian bridge that was going nowhere because no-one really used it could be used for Linden Street, and it was. They came up with a plan, and the theory is that it will knock four to five minutes off a trip, which is quite a substantial saving at peak hour in the morning. Those works will start in the last quarter of this year.

Currently the biggest investment in my electorate is the Waterfall train siding. It sounds exciting—it is not, but it is work that needs to be done, and it is part of the More Trains, More Services program. If we do not have a siding at Waterfall, going from the Illawarra into the city is going to be difficult. Trains will be able to be stacked at Waterfall and can be sent either north or south. That will have a big impact on how many trains can go along that line. It will cost \$160 million for a train siding, and I say to people that it is not sexy—train sidings are not sexy—but it is needed, and it will be a big step forward for train travellers in the Illawarra and in the Heathcote electorate.

We are halfway through the Gateway to the South Pinch Point Program. Alford's Point has had some major upgrades to make sure that traffic flows. Acacia Road at Sutherland is also part of the Pinch Point Program and that is making traffic flow easier. The whole objective of the Pinch Point Program is to keep the traffic flowing and to stop drivers becoming frustrated. At this stage the program is working and I congratulate the team there on delivering that.

In relation to traffic management upgrades on rail and digitising the T4 line, the total program across Sydney and the State is funded at \$88 million and is part of the More Trains, More Services program. It is progressing very well and it will revolutionise train travel in southern Sydney. It allows trains to be automatically separated so there will not be any issues with trains coming together at any stage. Members will remember many years back the Waterfall train accident. The cause of that accident was mainly speed but it was also caused by the need for the train involved to move away from the train that was coming up behind it. That is an issue that will not happen now with the new system.

In relation to commuter car parking within my electorate, I gave a private member's statement about three years ago in which I spoke about not needing to worry about overdevelopment of units in Sutherland in my electorate, but I said that we would have to worry about commuter car parking. I said that if you build a commuter car park more people will come, and that is exactly what happened. Sutherland CBD will be full of car parks if we continue down the path we are on. We need an answer to this, and part of that is a commuter car park, a Park&Ride using the Opal card. At the last election I was approached by a gentleman who said, "You can't start putting a time limit on car parking. I've got five cars at Sutherland commuter car park—that's where I park my vintage cars." People are allowed to park for 16 hours at the car park and after that time it goes through onto their Opal card and they are charged a fee. He was not too impressed with that, but commuter car parks are for commuters, not necessarily for residents.

Heathcote is renowned for the amount of parkland it has. We have 409 square kilometres of land mass and about 80 per cent of it is national parks or State parks. A lot of money is going into that parkland—probably more money than I need to speak about. One project that has been very popular is the Royal National Park Coast Track program, which had funding of \$11 million in the last budget. Unfortunately, due to a fire that went through, the first tranche of that coast track program—a fibreglass walking track on a lifted platform—was burnt.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Members*

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly on Thursday 6 May 2021 at 10.30 a.m. for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. John Ajaka. I direct that the joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of a member of the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 6 May 2021 as appointed in Her Excellency's message dated 5 May 2021.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:45):** As Chair: I am pleased to speak to the *Final report into support for drought affected communities in NSW* of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development. The committee commenced this inquiry in September 2019 at a time when New South Wales was experiencing one of the most severe droughts in our State's history. The committee wanted to examine what support our communities needed during that difficult time and, importantly, what support is needed to recover and prepare for future droughts. Today, over 80 per cent of the State is classified as non-drought. Whilst this is good news for our rural and regional communities, the combined impact of the drought, the Black Summer bushfires and now COVID-19 reminds us that more needs to be done to ensure that the State is prepared to manage the impact of drought and other natural disasters.

Evidence to the inquiry raised a number of issues including the effectiveness of and eligibility for Commonwealth and New South Wales Government support measures; the reliability and financial sustainability of town water supplies; and strategies to promote resilience and economic diversity. The committee addressed many of these issues in the interim report, which contained 10 recommendations and 10 findings. The committee was pleased to learn that all of the committee's recommendations were either supported or supported in principle by the New South Wales Government. The Government also indicated that work is underway in the three priority areas of critical water security, support for businesses and communities, and on-farm support.

The interim report highlighted two issues that we felt needed further examination, namely, the need to ensure reliable and financially sustainable town water supplies and the detrimental impact that drought and other natural disasters can have on mental health. The committee's final report discusses these issues and makes an additional two recommendations. First, the committee recommended that NSW Health encourage primary health networks and local health districts to work collaboratively in providing mental health support partnerships in rural and regional communities in New South Wales. Such partnerships can provide many benefits to rural and regional communities—in particular, assisting people to find and access services available to them.

Secondly, in order to support sustainable resilience-building in rural and regional communities, the committee recommended increased ongoing funding to the Department of Primary Industries' Rural Resilience Program to strengthen their team and provide support to the work that they do. We will be monitoring the Government's commitments in these and other areas discussed in our two reports, and look forward to the Government delivering on its commitment to providing support for businesses, farms and communities in times of drought and other natural disasters.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank the individuals and organisations who made a submission, appeared at one of our hearings or briefed the committee at one of our roundtable discussions. Their contributions have been extremely valuable in helping us to understand the issues and formulate our recommendations. I also thank the committee staff and my colleagues—the Deputy Chair, Mr Peter Sidgreaves; Mr Clayton Barr; Ms Steph Cooke; Mr Phil Donato; Mr David Harris; and Mr Geoff Provest—for their dedication to the work of this committee. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:49):** I will make a brief contribution on the *Final report into support for drought affected communities*. I acknowledge the committee Chair and his summary of the work we did during that inquiry. As the Chair said, we focused on two areas in particular in the final report: town water security and rural and remote mental health delivery. We were very lucky to have a report that was done by the Audit Office of New South Wales, which in September 2020 did an inquiry into support for regional town water infrastructure. The Auditor-General reported that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment had not effectively supported or overseen town water infrastructure planning since at least 2014.

The Auditor-General's report made seven recommendations, which the committee supported. We were then able to speak to the department, which had indicated that it was addressing many of those issues. It was already well down the track in supporting the seven recommendations, so that was good news. In its response the Government noted that more than \$275 million in funding had been allocated to water initiatives aimed at improving water supplies across numerous towns and communities. That was welcome. We hope that even though drought has passed for many areas, when drought comes again—and inevitably it will—we are in a better position than we were in this time around. In the area of rural and remote health, the Government indicated that \$26.3 million had been invested in mental health drought initiatives since 2018-19.

It was good to hear about some of the programs, which included the farm gate counsellors. We did get to speak to some of them. It also included the drought support workers program, an expansion of virtual mental health services, Aboriginal wellbeing services, an enhancement of the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program, and the Far West connections program. Communities out there were looking after themselves. There was good news in that many local community initiatives were put together, such as Our Healthy Clarence, which was running around Grafton; Muswellbrook Healthy and Well; Lithgow's Mayor's Mental Health Taskforce; and Mindful Margaret River. There is some good news on that front, but we have to keep a focus on that area.

I acknowledge my fellow committee members who are here today. Under the leadership of the member for Albury, Mr Justin Clancy, we worked well as a team. It was bipartisan and we were focused on making sure that our recommendations help rural and regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the hard work of the secretariat in supporting the committee, particularly during COVID-19, which was a hard time. I think we were one of the first Zoom conferences during that time. I urge people to read the report in full. I again thank, as the Chair did, those people who made a contribution. We need to make sure that this remains a priority. Drought has moved on at the moment but we have to be ready for the next drought. We have to be focused on the overall benefit for rural and remote communities and not get caught out navel-gazing instead of putting in place appropriate programs.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:53):** I support the last two speakers, particularly the Chair and member for Albury, from the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development. The inquiry was about support for drought-affected communities, which is a very difficult issue. I know drought has been discussed in this Chamber on many occasions. Fortunately a number of packages are out there for drought. The other week the committee members went to Dubbo, Gilgandra and Parkes. It was good to see large silos full of grain, fattened cattle and farmers with a different air about them. They did it really tough. I will focus on a couple of things within the report, such as the Government's response to water. At the moment, more than \$275 million in funding is allocated to water initiatives aimed at improving water supplies in numerous towns and communities.

It was not long ago that we were trucking water into a lot of those communities. Some of them were on the final countdown; there were so many days of water left and that was it. It was good to see the rains come. Water sector reform work is underway to better support local water utilities and improve the water sector's performance. Additionally, water infrastructure investment, such as a Government commitment to prioritise dam projects, is being supported under the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. Often the water utilities are run by the local councils and they need all the support they can get. Interestingly, we concluded that the guidelines and approval processes for water management programs are complex and restrictive. We recommend that a review be conducted to remove duplication and improving timeliness and readiness. That is really important. A lot of members deal with our local councils that look after water and that is a common complaint. We can simplify it.

Finally I will talk about mental health, because it is a big issue. We noted that \$26 million, including for the farm gate counsellors, is out there. That has been a big plus because traditionally farmers are tough. They do not complain; they put their heads down and get on with the job. Now, they are reaching out to a lot of those organisations. The commission stated that under the Towards Zero Suicides investment in New South Wales, funding of \$25.1 million is dedicated to the Alternatives to Emergency Department Presentations initiative over three years. Under the initiative 20 new services will be established across New South Wales to provide alternatives to going to an emergency department for people experiencing a suicidal crisis. That is a great plus because that is there after five or six years of drought. The more we can do to assist in that area, the better. Finally, I thank our Chair and fellow members. The member for Cessnock and the member for Wyong are in the Chamber. It was a pleasure to come together for the good of the wider community. I thank them for their assistance and I look forward to further inquiries.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:57):** I will start my contribution where the good member for Tweed left off, by acknowledging the membership and cross-party nature of the committee, and the broad bi-, tri- or quad-partisan position that we took on the report, given that we all come from different political and philosophical backgrounds. On the issue around drought and the need for support for communities in drought-affected areas, we heard some of the most compelling stories. We heard stories of great strength and great tragedy. We acknowledge the emotional integrity of those stories and the empathy and compassion required to process those stories. We are an industry, investment and development committee, but you cannot have any of that without human compassion.

Everyone in this House and every member who has ever represented anywhere across New South Wales—or even in the upper House, where they do not really represent anyone—knows that the committee secretariat is fantastic. It really is at the core of much of the work members do. I acknowledge a couple of particular issues in the final report. Two issues caused us to pause finalising our report because we wanted to do a bit of further

exploration into them. I will start with mental health. By and large the issue of mental health is well and truly not understood enough, not respected and not dealt with adequately. In times of crisis, like during drought, bushfires, floods or the COVID pandemic, the issue of mental health quickly rises to the fore, in not only farming communities but also town communities and for children, the elderly, tradespeople in town and small business operators. They all have to deal with the issue of mental health.

Here is the thing: We know the next crisis is coming. We do not know if it will be a flood or a pandemic or fires or drought, but we know it will arrive. We know that it always has and we know that it always will. Some of the recommendations in this report are about making sure that we have ongoing funding into these communities for this purpose. The worst way to spend our precious taxpayers' money is in responding to a crisis without a particular or well-informed plan. We end up wasting a whole bunch of money because we are in crisis, we do not have the infrastructure in place and we do not have the intelligence in place; we do not know exactly where to spend the money or how best to spend it, but we know we have to spend it. We know the next crisis is coming, so I implore the Government to take on board the recommendations, which are about building ongoing services and practitioners in all of these communities so that the next time there is a crisis we will be ready for it.

I want to talk about the importance of town water supplies. It is clear that in a changing climate we need to hold back more water in our water supply networks for longer drier periods. There is nobody in this Chamber, hopefully, who would argue against that. For the agricultural industry, water held in a dam is wasted, but from a community perspective water held in a dam is essential for the future. These are complex issues. We have to deal with them. I commend the report.

**Report noted.**

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND EQUALITY) BILL 2020**

**Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:01):** As Chair: I am pleased to address the House regarding the inquiry report of the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 tabled in the Parliament on 31 March 2021. The inquiry into that bill was referred to the joint select committee by both Houses of this Parliament. Specifically, we were tasked with inquiring into and reporting on whether the objectives of the bill were valid and, if so, whether its terms were appropriate for securing its objectives. The bill proposed to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a person's religious beliefs or activities. It did this by inserting a number of provisions that outlined the type of action that would constitute religious discrimination in a number of areas of public life, including work, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation, registered clubs, State laws and programs.

I say at the outset that this was an inquiry that sparked broad public debate, and indeed debate amongst the committee membership. There were a number and a broad range of views represented through the inquiry's evidence, hearings and submissions. We received 192 submissions, 19,502 responses to the online questionnaire and evidence from 57 witnesses across 47 organisations at our public hearings. We also had regard to the relevant legislation and consultation reports, including the recommendations of the expert panel chaired by the Hon. Philip Ruddock in the *Religious Freedom Review* report, and the draft Commonwealth bills regarding religious discrimination and religious freedom. In noting these consultations we were mindful of the delays in the introduction of protections at the Commonwealth level and the relative discrepancies in protection from religious discrimination between New South Wales and other States and Territories. We were also mindful that the expert panel recommended that New South Wales should amend its Act to make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of a person's religious belief or activity.

After considering all of the evidence, the committee was strongly of the view that there was a gap in the protection from discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs and activities in New South Wales. A majority of the committee found that there was also a need to protect not-for-profit religious organisations from discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs and activities when they engage in certain conduct because of their religious doctrines, tenets, beliefs or teachings. A majority of the committee also recommended that the best way to implement these changes was through the introduction of a bill by the New South Wales Government containing these protections by the end of 2021.

In making and backing in this recommendation of the majority or supermajority of committee members, I urge the Government to have regard to the report and the evidence that we received. In particular, I note that there were concerns raised that some of the terms of the bill may not be compatible with the framework of the Anti-Discrimination Act and whether it preferences religious beliefs and activities over other protected attributes

within the Act. Stakeholders also raised concern that the bill may have unintended consequences of permitting discrimination if such an action was motivated by religious beliefs or activities. I urge the Government to be mindful of the concerns that were raised during the evidence taken by the committee.

I also urge the Government to consider two other issues raised by multiple stakeholders during the course of the inquiry: firstly, that there is a need for protection from vilification on the grounds of religious beliefs and activities, which the bill does not provide in its current form; and, secondly, that there is a need to review the Act established in 1977 to examine any inconsistencies that have arisen from previous piecemeal amendments and any changes that may be needed if the proposed Commonwealth legislation is in fact enacted. I note that the Committee made a recommendation along these lines, that there be a broad-based review of the Act but that it should not delay the introduction of a government bill. It is my strong expectation that the findings and recommendations of this report should form the basis of a government bill addressing the issue of protection from religious discrimination in New South Wales.

On behalf of the committee I extend my sincere and deep gratitude to the extensive list of individuals and organisations that contributed to the inquiry in its work over about 12 months. These contributions were extremely valuable in furthering the committee's understanding of the issues and in preparing this report. At times it is difficult for stakeholders to appear before committee hearings when contentious issues are being aired and they are contested hearings, and I really did value many of the stakeholders taking a step inside what were sometimes very contentious and contested hearings of the committee. They did inform our considerations. I thank my colleagues, many of whom are in the Chamber today, for what was essentially a collaborative approach during this inquiry around a very contested issue. I thank the Clerks and the magnificent secretariat; they were so generous in their assistance and so professional in relation to the inquiry, and indeed in the tough job of preparing a report for the committee's consideration. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:07):** I contribute to the take-note debate as a member of the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020. I thank my parliamentary Labor Party for the opportunity to be a member of the committee, and indeed Parliament. Briefly, in 2018 the Ruddock *Religious Freedom Review* recommended that New South Wales adopt legal protections against religious discrimination and now, based on 10 months of work by the committee, 192 submissions and four days of hearings with evidence provided by 57 witnesses from 47 organisations, this report echoes the same sentiments, underscoring the necessity for enshrining legal protections against religious discrimination. New South Wales is the most religious State in the nation with more than 65 per cent of people identifying as religious and yet, alongside South Australia, it is one of only two States that do not have protections against religious discrimination in State law.

Religion is central to the lives of so many and is integral to the Australian spirit of multiculturalism. Indeed, many of Australia's fastest growing religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are being driven predominantly by first and second generation migrants, particularly in my area of western Sydney, where 74 per cent of people identify as religious. As such, in 2019 I formed the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedom with colleagues from across the political divide. This body has since worked to ensure that a platform is provided to the issue of religious freedom. This report is part of that broader conversation, but we should not consider it, nor any bill that may result, the final word.

Notably, this report finds that there is definite need to protect both individuals as well as not-for-profit religious organisations from discrimination on the grounds of religion. The report also finds that public opinion strongly favours these protections, as the committee received over 19,502 responses to its online survey, of which 73.53 per cent supported such a bill. The committee has made four clear recommendations in this report. First, the New South Wales Government should introduce by the end of 2021 a bill inserting discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or activity, where that activity is lawful, as a protected attribute in the Anti-Discrimination Act, using the definitions outlined in section 22K of this report.

Second, this bill should include equal weight for all protected attributes while also recognising the special characteristics of religion; reference to international instruments that protect these attributes and consideration of the relevant recommendations of the Ruddock review; defined terms for religious beliefs, activities, and religious organisations; protections for not-for-profit religious organisations from discrimination on the grounds of engaging in lawful conduct because of their religious beliefs; and provisions that balance the participation of religious organisations in State functions or programs and universal access to publicly funded goods and services. Third, the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board should be sufficiently resourced to ensure that it can properly discharge its functions. Fourth, there should be a broad-based review into the Act, which also assesses the effectiveness of religious vilification provisions.

I take this opportunity to thank the committee's chair, the member for Vacluse; the deputy chair, the member for Liverpool; all of the committee members for their commitment and hard work; and all of the staff.

I also thank the many organisations that attended committee hearings and all the different groups, including religious leaders and organisations, that made many submissions to the committee and responded to the online survey. It is now a matter for the Government to respond to this report and it will need to do so by 30 September. It will also need to pass a bill before the end of 2021. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:12):** I am pleased to be part of the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 that tabled a report recommending protections for religious discrimination. Religious organisations and individuals inspired by religious values have always contributed and continue to contribute so much to society. Religious teachings across all faiths inspire organisations and individuals to provide shelter, clothing, food and water to those who are homeless and hungry. Religious institutions provide education to many of our children, form the basis of sporting teams and provide countless volunteers from all walks of life who assist those in need in many different capacities. The values and morals that guide adherence to all faiths contribute to the civility and hardworking nature of society.

The value that religious organisations and individuals guided by faith provide to society is priceless although, if one did want to try to calculate any price, one would have to think of the cost to the taxpayer if volunteers and religious organisations were not donating food, clothing and shelter to those in need, or using faith to guide someone away from a life of crime, drugs and alcoholism towards the teaching of a faith. Nevertheless, the reason we need to provide protection from discrimination to individuals and religious organisations is not because of the priceless value they bring to society; rather it is because of their inherent right to live free and in accordance with their faith. Recent high-profile cases highlight the need for protection. My interest also extends to protecting the silent majority who might not have the resources and wealth to jeopardise their employment and fight a battle to quote scripture.

The role of our committee has been to inquire and report on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, including whether the objectives of the bill are valid and, if so, whether the terms of the bill are appropriate for securing its objectives. We have had to regard existing rights and legal protections contained in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1997 (NSW) and other relevant New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation; the recommendations relevant to New South Wales from the Expert Panel Report: Religious Freedom Review 2018; the interaction between Commonwealth and New South Wales anti-discrimination laws; and the desirability of consistency between those laws, including consideration of the draft Religious Discrimination Bill 2019 from the Commonwealth, which has been released for public consultation, and the Australian Law Reform Commission's Review into the Framework of Religious Exemptions in Anti-discrimination Legislation.

During our work our committee consulted with key stakeholders as required. There was very strong community engagement, with 192 submissions received, 19,403 online survey submissions received and evidence from 57 witnesses across 47 organisations at the public hearings. It was found that there was a strong need to protect people from discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs and activities. A majority of the committee also found that there was a need to protect not-for-profit religious organisations from discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or activities when engaging in certain conduct because of religious doctrines, tenets, beliefs or teachings. I strongly agree with these views. They are commonsense views shared by the vast majority of my constituents in the Hawkesbury electorate. Judging by the submissions received and extensive consultation, the need to protect people and not-for-profit religious organisations from discrimination is definitely a widely held view across New South Wales. Of the 19,403 responses to the committee's online survey in July-August 2020, 68.1 per cent supported the bill and 5.8 per cent— [*Time expired*]

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR BANKSTOWN**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bankstown may be at a birthday lunch because it is a special day to celebrate. In her absence we offer the congratulations of the House on her birthday.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I warmly welcome the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie from Morisset High School, who are watching question time from the McKell Room. I welcome deputy principal Evelyn Wilson,

teacher Leonie Brann and school leaders Kaylee Bercli, Taiah Burbage and Destiny Schuck. I also welcome the participants of the Introduction to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar, whom I met this morning and who are now watching question time from the Macquarie Room. I thank the Government Whip, the Opposition Whip, the member for Balmain and the member for Lake Macquarie for presenting at today's seminar.

*Rulings*

**DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

**The SPEAKER (14:18):** Yesterday there was too much noise in the Chamber, which resulted in a couple of members being asked to leave the Chamber for a short time. I warn members that if that behaviour continues today, they will be asked to leave the Chamber under section 249, which means they will not be back in the Chamber today. I ask members to not put me in that situation. Yesterday some members commented to me that they could not hear properly and that they could hear inappropriate comments, which I will listen out for today. Before I call for questions, I note that there is already too much noise in the Chamber. Members will remain silent.

*Question Time*

**AUSGRID**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Ausgrid has slashed 5,000 jobs since the Treasurer sold half of it in 2015, including hundreds of jobs in the Hunter region. How many more jobs will be lost when he sells off the rest of Ausgrid?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:19):** The member for Strathfield has a hide to come into the Chamber and ask this Government about job creation. She wants to talk about regional jobs creation. We are in the middle of a pandemic, and at the outset of the pandemic in regional New South Wales the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent. Over the course of the past year that peaked well above 5 per cent, and what is it today? It is 4.9 per cent, the same rate that it was pre-pandemic.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The asset recycling approach, which has been opposed by those opposite every step of the way, has been able to unlock capital to drive infrastructure investment to create hundreds of thousands of jobs right across the State. When the Premier spoke yesterday about the investment in schools and hospitals—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was specifically about Ausgrid and about how many more jobs will be lost when the Treasurer privatises Ausgrid.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will continue. He is being relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** He sold half, he is going to sell the next half. How many jobs are going to be lost?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Obviously I am being relevant, because jobs have been created through the asset recycling approach.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Leader of the Opposition will be on a warning soon. Since coming to office we have created over 100,000 new jobs in regional New South Wales. And why has that been the case? That is because unlike those opposite, who ran at the last election on increasing payroll taxes on businesses right across the State, we have lowered taxes.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer went to the last election saying he would not privatise anything.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is being relevant. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Treasurer will continue.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** How many jobs will be lost now that the Treasurer is privatising the rest of the electricity network? The Treasurer broke his promise.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have not broken anything. All we are doing on this side of the House is creating more jobs than any other State. We have created more jobs in regional New South Wales than any other region across the country combined. That is because we make better use of what we have. The asset base

has grown. The privatisation of Ausgrid has created jobs by unlocking capital and investing in infrastructure right across the State.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is specifically about the privatisation of Ausgrid.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How is this not relevant, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is talking about jobs and is being relevant. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Ausgrid has lost 5,000 jobs and hundreds in the Hunter region because of the Treasurer. How many more jobs when you privatise Ausgrid? How many more jobs, Treasurer?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Ausgrid has created jobs because we are unlocking capital to invest in infrastructure—\$107 billion in infrastructure right across the State.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time. This is her final warning. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is more schools, more hospitals, more roads and more rail projects. The only job that is in trouble in this State is that of the Leader of the Opposition, based on the performance by those opposite in the Upper Hunter. Our philosophy here in this State—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has been creating jobs right across the board.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not hear the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent. What did we say at the start of the pandemic? We said that success was getting as many people in jobs as possible, and keeping as many businesses in business as possible. The reality is that one does not just create that foundation. One cannot just come into a pandemic and have strong jobs growth. It is the foundation that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, and the Barry O'Farrell Government, laid year after year. It started in 2011 with the changes we made by cutting taxes, cutting red tape, recycling assets—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We are talking about people's lives in the Hunter region. Hundreds of jobs were lost—5,000 jobs—when the Government privatised electricity.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 79. There are certain circumstances in which a member can interrupt someone else. They include taking a point of order but they do not include making a substantive speech.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold that point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock. I am generally tolerant, but the Leader of the Opposition is standing at the lectern and is making speeches after I have asked her to stop. If the Leader of the Opposition has a point of order, she should make it to me. The Leader of the Opposition gets a little more leeway than others, but this is my final warning to her: You are on three calls to order. I will not hesitate to remove you from the Chamber.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We know on this side of the House that we stand for creating more jobs, whether that is in the city or whether that is in regional New South Wales. We are not going to play the Opposition's hypothetical games.

#### COVID-19 VACCINE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:25):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government continues to keep the community safe?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. I must confess that when she asked me this question I assumed she was asking about thanking all the emergency service workers, especially during the recent floods, and in particular those on the North Coast, the mid North Coast and in the Hawkesbury-Nepean regions, who went out of their way—over and above—to keep our community safe during that horrific natural disaster. As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services would know, at the time there were more than 14,000 requests for assistance, more than 1,000 flood rescues and more than 1,500 volunteers on the ground, supported ably by all our emergency services agencies led by the SES. Once the floods came and went we had 33 evacuation centres across the State, which were open to assist more than 2,500 people who were temporarily or permanently left without a home. I thank all members of Parliament on all sides of the House who supported their communities during this difficult time. It was but another challenge that we had to withstand. Again we turn our minds to all those who are still carrying the trauma—people who suffered damage or lost their homes, or people who saw others suffering hardship, which, in itself, is a difficult thing to come to terms with. I thank all our frontline workers and all our volunteers. I also acknowledge the efforts—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the third time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I also acknowledge the work of the Deputy Premier—he has the recovery ministry in addition to his other responsibilities—in ensuring that our Government coordinates its support activities to assist all those who are recovering from that natural disaster. It is important for us to make sure that, even though we have the challenges of the pandemic, we do not forget bushfire victims and flood victims who are still going through difficult times.

Unfortunately, just a few hours ago NSW Health advised me when we were all in a meeting that we had an additional case of community transmission in New South Wales. It is too early for us to ascertain how that person acquired the disease but we know a number of things. Firstly, he did the right thing in coming forward and getting tested. He did the right thing in using his QR codes and within just a few hours we were able to notify a whole range of people at various venues that they should make sure either they got tested and isolated or they should watch for symptoms, depending on the health advice. This case reminds us that we are still in a pandemic and, no matter what our circumstances, we cannot be complacent. I have the wonderful opportunity of visiting all parts of the State. I have to confess—I am as guilty of it as much as everybody else—that there is always a degree of complacency, with people shaking hands, kissing and hugging. As we do not know the source of the current case we all have to be on our guard, we all have to be vigilant and we need to ensure that our communities are on high alert.

I suspect there will be a number of other cases over the next few days. I hope that is not the case, but until we identify the source and until we get more information from our outstanding health detectives we need to make sure that we are all on guard. Minister Hazzard and I have already provided community information as to where people can get tested and we will provide updated information on available venues this afternoon. It reminds us that every day—currently we have over 100 COVID patients in our system—frontline workers are putting themselves on the line to protect us all by working in our quarantine system, in border protection, in our hospital system and in emergency departments. Our job is to keep emergency workers, transport workers, cleaners and people in the community safe. That is why we are keen to ensure that as many people as possible are vaccinated as quickly as possible. NSW Health is not only supporting the police in their quarantine efforts; it is also making sure that in 100 sites across the regions and across five major hubs—there will be a sixth one from Monday at Homebush—the public and various categories of workers have access to the vaccine.

I ask everybody to come forward and to get vaccinated when it is their turn, as it is really important. As soon as the vast majority of us are vaccinated it will reduce the incidence or likelihood of serious illness and disease, which at the end of the day is what we need to maintain. It does not mean that people who have had the vaccination—I have had one jab and I am waiting for my second one—will not get the disease or pass it on; it means that we will not become seriously ill. Vaccination has been shown to be effective insofar as it prevents us from acquiring the disease and it reduces transmission. It is important that as many people as possible get vaccinated. [*Extension of time*]

I am pleased to update the House. This morning I met with two key people in our GP network, along with Minister Hazzard and Dr Chant, to make sure that we are all on the same page in New South Wales. From Monday 17 May anyone over 50 who wants to get the AstraZeneca vaccine should, as their first port of call, go to their GP and then a week after they can go through our health system. Many people have underlying health issues and many people have questions. I implore everybody over the age of 50 to contact their GP in the first instance and to get the jab—the doses are there—or they should contact us. I also implore those who have been asked to come

forward and get tested from next Monday to do so. Once we have our mass vaccination hub in Homebush up and running, which complements the five other hubs we already have, as well as the 100 sites across the State, we will be able to do around 60,000 jabs per week just in NSW Health alone, complementing the outstanding work the GP network is doing.

I have also requested information from NSW Health and I am pleased and grateful that it has provided it. Every day every citizen in the State can go online to look at how many jabs have been administered in New South Wales. Currently, nearly three-quarters of a million people have had a jab. One-third of those jabs have been done through NSW Health and two-thirds have been done through the GP network. Traditionally, in the past the GP network has been the main way that people have been receiving the flu vaccine and other jabs. It is really important for us. If our aim is to provide at least 10 million jabs by a certain point in time—in order to vaccinate five million people we need to do 10 million jabs—the GPs need to be at full capacity. We also have to make sure we get at least 60,000 doses done every week through the NSW Health system. I thank the member for her question, which gave me an opportunity to thank all those who are trying to keep us safe and who are putting their own wellbeing on the line in order to do that. On behalf of the people of New South Wales I say how grateful we are for that.

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

### REGIONAL JOBS

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:33):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Eighteen months ago he promised that there would be no more job cuts in regional New South Wales. Why is he selling off what is left of our electricity network, consigning people in the country to more job cuts, higher prices and longer blackouts?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:33):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question about jobs and the importance of jobs in regional and rural New South Wales. Let us look at what we have achieved over the past decade, especially the past few years, in regional New South Wales. There has been record investment in infrastructure, which was paid for by the recycling of assets in this State over the past few years. That has enabled us to unlock the potential of the regions and to build the infrastructure that has made a difference and that has helped us to withstand drought, floods, bushfires and the COVID pandemic. At this stage we are having a boom in regional and rural New South Wales.

We have created jobs in the regions—public sector jobs, private sector jobs, jobs in small businesses and jobs in farming and mining—in those industries that have always underpinned our regions. Only 12 or 15 months ago, at the start of the pandemic, the unemployment rate was about 15 per cent. Today, because of the management of the New South Wales Government and, of course, the Federal Government, we see an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent. The New South Wales Government is also committed to changing the way that it advertises public sector jobs. As we have said, where we can advertise a public sector job in the regions as "regionally preferred" we are doing so. We are leading the way and we are encouraging the private sector to do the same.

Government investment in special activation precincts is creating new jobs—jobs of the future. Inviting new industries to the regions is why we are seeing investment there. As to our utilities, I was the one who spoke about what was happening around electricity jobs. You know what the reality is? Whenever there is an election, those opposite wheel out the privatisation policy, the attack and fear campaign. That is the usual go-to for the Labor Party. But I tell you what, how dare the Leader of the Opposition come into this House today and talk about job security when her own candidate for the Upper Hunter, Mr Jeff Drayton, sold out the jobs of the casualised workforce? Now there are questions for Mr Drayton: What happened to the \$307,000—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This is about the privatisation of the electricity network that the Government is going to undertake. Don't try to deflect, because you know that there are hundreds of jobs that are going to be lost in the country. Answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough on the point of order. I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier has been speaking overwhelmingly about jobs. I will allow a slight diversion.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The question is about jobs. So what happened when Mr Drayton privatised the enterprise bargaining agreement that he negotiated, where casual workers could be sacked in one hour?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier is being relevant.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Sorry, relevant to that question?

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Did you hear a different question, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** I heard the answer. The member for Keira will resume his seat.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Labor is campaigning on jobs and the casualisation of jobs in the mining industry. The Labor candidate came out with this magic pudding policy that has not got a lot of support. It was actually leaked by the Construction Forestry Maritime Mining And Energy Union [CFMMEU] against one of its own.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I am happy to read the question. The question was "Why is the Deputy Premier selling off what is left of our electricity network, consigning people in the country to more job cuts, higher prices and longer blackouts?"

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied the Deputy Premier is being relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You're kidding me, right?

**The SPEAKER:** No, I am not. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It is about jobs and Mr Drayton selling the EBA to another company—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Coward's castle, John!

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It's in the papers, mate! Read the papers today.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is failing to answer the question at all.

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on that point of order. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. I place the member for Port Stephens on two calls to order.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** It's about accountability for your candidate! You guys are amazing.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Oxley to order for the first time. I have ruled on relevance. The Deputy Premier is being generally relevant to the question. I do not want to hear another point of order on relevance unless he changes tack.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** This is in today's *The Daily Telegraph* by two very good journalists, James O'Doherty and Anna Caldwell. They are trustworthy journos who know the facts and get them right. I bet you they will be followed by the other journos in the gallery today who will continue to prosecute the case.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: Yesterday the Deputy Premier stood here and said—

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

**Ms Kate Washington:** Standing Order 73. The Deputy Premier said members should not criticise somebody who is not in this Chamber. And here he is today having a big crack at somebody who is not in this Chamber and cannot defend himself.

[*Members interjected.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Standing Order 73 relates to members of this Chamber. It is not relevant. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I am only reporting on and updating the Chamber on what was in *The Daily Telegraph* today. Mr Drayton does not want to directly answer the questions and the CFMMEU was not aware of the \$307,000.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The only job that the Deputy Premier has created is that of a legal officer to protect a comedian who has had a go at him on YouTube.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. The member for Swansea will resume her seat. The next member who takes a spurious point of order—

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** You want to go there, do you? You want to back in Jordie, do you? Go for it.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I am just saying that is the only job you have created.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** This is about jobs. The question to me was about jobs in the Upper Hunter—where Mr Drayton, when he had his company in 2017, allowed casuals to be terminated within one hour. And then what did he do? He sold the enterprise bargaining agreement to another company.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Let's get control of this place. This is ridiculous. He is being completely irrelevant and has been for several minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the member for Keira taking a point of order? The member for Keira will resume his seat. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** They asked a question about jobs. They don't like the truth. They can't handle the truth. What we have in Mr Drayton is another Labor fraud.

**Ms Kate Washington:** This grubbiness, that is why you lost the seat.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. If she is removed from the Chamber today, she will be out overnight.

### STATE HIGHWAYS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:40):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on plans to invest in our highways to deliver a safer, stronger New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:41):** I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. The member follows in the footsteps of the late Ian Armstrong, who represented communities like Cowra and who was very passionate about safer and more reliable journeys for those crossing the mountains. Two years ago the Deputy Premier and I announced that the New South Wales Government was committing \$2.5 billion towards duplicating the Great Western Highway from Lithgow all the way through to Katoomba. This is going to transform journeys for those who travel through the mountains. From day one we said that we were prepared to look at a tunnel under Blackheath, to protect the unique heritage and character of the community.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Why don't you put the tunnel under Bathurst, mate?

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** This week the Deputy Premier and I announced that we would go even further—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Go knock down people's houses.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** —and look at building tunnels under Blackheath and Mount Victoria.

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

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Stand up, Tooley!

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the third time. If she persists, she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Investigations are underway right now about linking those two tunnels to create an 11-kilometre tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley. This would be a history-making project, delivering Australia's longest road tunnel. It would allow motorists to avoid those pinch points that we see around Blackheath in the east and Little Hartley on the western side of Victoria Pass. We would not have announced this tunnel if we did not think it was feasible, and early investigations have already come back quite positive. We have geotech teams working along the side of the highway, drilling below the earth's surface right now, and all investigations are coming back positive. For far too long crossing the Blue Mountains was put into the too-hard basket but we can make this project a reality.

**Mr Paul Scully:** What is the toll going to be?

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Our upgrade is going to deliver a safe highway for everyone while preserving and protecting the unique character and the beauty of the Blue Mountains community.

**Mr Paul Scully:** A toll road!

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** By delivering a carriageway over the mountains, we are separating light and heavy vehicles to improve safety, we are creating access for emergency services so they can respond faster to incidents, and we are keeping the highway moving by allowing traffic to move to the other side of the road when one side is closed because of an accident. You would think those opposite would be excited about this project. This upgrade will improve the highway and make it safer. This is a huge investment in road infrastructure. This will be the biggest project the Blue Mountains have ever seen.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** It will create 2,500 jobs. Are members opposite supportive of it? No, they are opposed to the project again. Where is the excitement about this project from the member for the Blue Mountains? We do not hear anything from her. We are creating jobs for her community. There has not been a word from her about the project. Even in Labor's own press release, which they put out this week, about our visionary plan for the Great Western Highway—250 words of pure fiction—they are so embarrassed that they will not even put their logo on it. I have read the release.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I again note the member for the Blue Mountains is absent from the press release. The release says we are going to put a toll on the road. We ruled out a toll two years ago. I was asked the question at budget estimates, not once or twice but seven times. We ruled out a toll.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The press release talks about a Bells Line expressway.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant and may resume his answer.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member is out of touch with her community. I have met with them, who are telling me this is something they want to see happening. [*Extension of time*]

I was in Blackheath on Monday and met with some of the locals who are part of the Blackheath Co-Design Committee. They helped to shape the plans needed for the upgrade of the highway. They want this upgrade.

**The SPEAKER:** That is enough from the member for the Blue Mountains.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** This is what they said. The member for the Blue Mountains should listen. They have said this is going to make travel so much easier and quicker. They said, "Thank you for listening to us." The Blackheath Highway Action Group said, "It's a great result for our community." John, who is from Mount Victoria, said:

Just do it ... for all of us 6000 at Mt Vic and Blackheath ... and the 6 million who depend on this roadway for our food and hence livelihood.

That excitement is shared over the mountains. The *Western Advocate* says it is a legacy project for the Central West and evidence of this Government being genuinely focused on regional New South Wales. This Government is investing in safer highways right across this State, including the New England Highway, which is now being supported by those opposite, who have just now made a sudden appearance in the electorate of Upper Hunter. Previously they were not there at all. We have promised bypasses for Scone, Muswellbrook and Singleton, and we are delivering. The Scone bypass opened to traffic six months ago, ahead of schedule. Now we are delivering the bypasses of Singleton and Muswellbrook. When Labor was in government, it delivered none of those bypasses. The Liberals and Nationals in government are delivering a safer and stronger regional New South Wales.

### HOUSING STRATEGY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:48):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Her new housing strategy says that she will allow stakeholders to identify opportunities and submit proposals for the use of land owned by the New South Wales Government. We all know that means privatisation. Why is the Minister swinging the door wide open for property developers to buy even more public land on the cheap?

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, we will wait for silence, including from the Treasurer. The member for Cessnock will remain silent.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:49):** I thank the Opposition for its question. The question highlights that members opposite have no ideas, no plans, no strategies and no engagement with the entire sectors of the housing community that can deliver more opportunities and more housing for the people of Sydney and regional New South Wales. If members opposite had been listening to the people of New South Wales, they would understand that the subject of housing is on everybody's lips.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** There are 10,000 waiting on a list.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** There is no point in interjecting if I am going to provide a decent answer dealing with a housing strategy. We are doing the heavy lifting when it comes to providing housing—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The Premier requested that this State for the first time have a housing strategy, which we have developed, to deal with homelessness and social housing and—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This is a document and a live strategy—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Swansea to order for the third time. That is her final warning.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It actually deals with the future of housing in this State, in a way that engages the entire community housing sector, providers, local councils and builders. All factors involved in housing have developed this strategy. Mr Speaker, I find it very hard to be able to address this very important issue with the constant noise and interjections on the Opposition side.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The Labor Party has no plan. We have increased the amount of social housing and opportunities in New South Wales by 10 per cent. We have increased the budget for social housing in New South Wales this year by \$900 million, increasing it by 80 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will remove herself from the Chamber overnight.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You are very unbalanced.

**Question time interrupted.**

#### *Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR SWANSEA**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea has been named and will leave the precinct. She has the opportunity to address the House, as the member for Campbelltown had on a previous occasion. I will put the question immediately. I name the member for Swansea for being guilty of disorderly conduct and for persistently and wilfully disregarding the authority of the Chair. The question is that the member for Swansea be suspended from the service of the House for two days, as per the standing orders. The member named may make an explanation limited to five minutes. No debate, adjournment or amendment will be allowed. I remind the member that I have the discretion to withdraw the naming, depending on what she says.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 72. The Speaker has the power to intervene and stop disorderly conduct. During the last debate the water Minister strongly baited the Opposition and then said that she could not understand why there were interjections. She was very argumentative, which contributed to the interruptions. The Speaker may want to reconsider his decision in light of that.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard the point of order from the member for Maitland. The member for Swansea knows why I named her. She may address the House.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:55):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not believe that my actions warranted me being named in this place today. I have been in this place for six years and I was most surprised by your response. I was merely saying that I felt you were unbalanced in asking me to leave the Chamber for the whole day, given the behaviour that went on yesterday. What I said to you was not in any way spiteful, vengeful or nasty, and I think you would have to agree with me that that was the case. I merely made the points that I felt very harshly done by and that you were not making a balanced assessment in asking me to leave the Chamber for the rest of the day today, given what I observe in this place on a regular basis and particularly yesterday.

Mr Speaker, I respect your position in this place. I always have and you know that I have been to speak to you personally on a number of matters if I have felt that there has been an injustice done to others. Now I have

the opportunity to talk about what I think was unjust for me. I have expressed that view to you already and I hope that you will consider that. But I do respect your position in this place and I will respect your decision at the end of the day. Excuse me, Mr Speaker, but I am trying to speak to you. I am sorry, but is that not rude?

**The SPEAKER:** I apologise. I am listening. The Treasurer and the health Minister will resume their seats. The member for Swansea may continue. Order! The member for Swansea will be heard in silence.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Mr Speaker, I say again that I do respect your position and I respect the decisions that you make in this place. I am happy to accept the decision you come to and I will do as I am asked in this place.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Swansea for addressing the House. I will withdraw the naming, but the member for Swansea will leave the Chamber for the rest of the day.

*[The member for Swansea left the Chamber at 14:53 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Prospect to order for the second time. I remind members that the Minister for Water, Property and Housing has the call. I make it very clear that it is not about me; the authority of the Chair in this House is important. When I make a decision or ask a member to do something, it is not about me; it is about the House respecting the authority of the Chair on behalf of the Parliament. I do not expect members to express dissent or criticise me for making a ruling on their way out of the Chamber. I will not talk about what was said, but I have accepted the sentiment from the member for Swansea. She has been removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day and she will not be named.

### *Question Time*

## **NSW HOUSING STRATEGY**

### **Question time resumed.**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I ask Minister Pavey to continue with her answer, I ask all members of the Chamber to respect each other because an undue amount of disrespect is being shown. The Minister may continue.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** To that point, we are respecting all of those in New South Wales who are delivering homes to the most vulnerable and to our first home buyers by allowing them to be part of the strategy going forward. Whether it is the Community Housing Industry Association, Bridge Housing or Women's Community Shelters, they have come to us with really good ideas about temporary, "meanwhile" use—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. I call the Treasurer to order for the first time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. I call the Treasurer to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The delivery of housing to our most vulnerable and to our first home buyers is an important tenet in the future of New South Wales and that is what we are delivering. The Government is proud of the \$900 million in stimulus funding that has been provided for social housing in New South Wales. We are increasing—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Coogee to order for the second time.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** If we want to compare and contrast the Labor Party's record when in office, it sold 1,800 homes and did nothing about improving supply. The Government is doing that and it will work with the community housing sector to provide temporary support and accommodation. "Meanwhile" use, that is forward thinking; that is working towards using every opportunity to improve housing supply. Today I was told that in 2007 Labor leader Kevin Rudd suggested that they create a register of Federal land in order to improve housing supply. That was a good idea and that is what we are doing with our index of government land.

If there are better things that we can do for the community with land that is owned by the Government, it would be lazy not to do anything with it. We are putting solutions forward and working with the community. It is important to improve and increase housing supply going forward. The Government has plans; the Opposition has criticisms. We take a forward-looking approach to the private sector when dealing with the builders, tradies, plumbers and electricians who are intricately involved with providing housing. We are very proud of the work we are doing and we will continue to do it.

## **REGIONAL JOBS**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:02):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on regional employment and on what the Government is doing for regional workers?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:02):** That was a great question from a great—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Let's not test the numbers!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We've got the numbers; we're fine. That was a great question from a great regional member who stands up for great regional jobs. Talking about the numbers, let's start with the upper House last night, led by Dennis Denuto. Its biggest success in 10 years has been to install a white, male, soon-to-be-ex-Liberal conservative into the presidency over a progressive woman, a trailblazer for women's rights in the Liberal Party. Anyway, there has been a lot of interest from members on both sides of the upper House on their payout.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Not from The Greens but from a lot of Labor members. They want the money; they want the payout. Overnight Treasury calculated \$35 million a year in direct cost savings. I have asked for the indirect, deadweight costs of the upper House on the New South Wales economy. Treasury will come back to me tomorrow. I will share who is the most interested: Taylor Martin. He is asking about indexation and about whether it goes all the way to 65 or above.

*[A member interjected.]*

He was asking for a friend. Anyway, unemployment has never been lower. As the member for Clarence would know, unemployment in regional New South Wales has fallen from 7.2 per cent. I spoke earlier about the fact that we have got the unemployment rate in regional New South Wales back to where it was pre-pandemic. It hit a peak of 5.8 per cent but a lot of jobs growth has come off the back of infrastructure investment. As the health Minister knows, regional hospitals like the one at Dubbo, which we have seen, will provide not only a great service to the people of Dubbo once it is completed but also jobs growth for locals during construction. Since the height of the pandemic 52,000 jobs have been recovered in regional New South Wales and an extra 101,000 jobs since this Government came to office. So whatever people are doing—running a business, working the land, operating a mine or looking for work—New South Wales is the engine room of the nation. Growth is forecast to increase to 2¾ per cent by 2023-24 and we are driving more jobs.

I was in Quirindi with the Deputy Premier and our great candidate David Layzell—I love the upper Hunter—to announce \$100 million for the Regional Job Creation program, which is a partnership between the private sector and the New South Wales Government. It is a 50-50 arrangement where businesses will invest to create 5,000 jobs in regional New South Wales over three years. It is good that the Deputy Premier finally learnt the name of that new program—because he has so many. A \$1 billion investment in five economic precincts in regional New South Wales will create 18,000 jobs. The member for Wagga Wagga knows that the special activation precinct in Wagga Wagga will create 6,000 new jobs. The Shoalhaven regional plan 2041—the member for Kiama loves that one—will create 30,000 new homes and 45,000 new jobs over the next 20 years. We are also building the hospital—which Labor loved but could never build. But they all support it. What a great hospital that will be.

This morning in this place we introduced the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill, which will provide a capped exemption for four years for businesses that create 30 full-time equivalent jobs a year in New South Wales. That is the difference between those opposite and the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government: creating an economic and regulatory environment for more investment, more opportunity, prosperity and jobs. That is what it means to be a friend of the worker in regional New South Wales.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Only 0.3 per cent of it.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Talking about not being so friendly to workers in the bush, I read this great article by James O'Doherty. All his Labor contacts are contacting him. James, who is leaking to you? Who are the ones against the candidate? Come on, just point. He is not saying, but we know.

**Mr Christopher Gulaptis:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Clarence was on his feet first, so I grant the Treasurer an additional two minutes. I ask him to direct his comments through the chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** So this guy Drayton, as the Deputy Premier has raised—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You're really worried about him, aren't you?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Well, you have made the whole campaign about yourself. You have made this a referendum on you. I would not have taken that tactic in a by-election; it is very courageous. On my

Instagram I chose choccies over chippies. This guy allows casuals to be terminated with one hour's notice, no entitlement to annual leave, no entitlement to carers leave, no entitlement to compassionate leave. And what was his response? Labor's candidate said, "Exploitation of casual labour hire workers in the mining industry is a disgrace but it is currently not unlawful." Those are the ethics of the current Labor Party: It is disgraceful, it is shocking, but it is not unlawful so it is all okay. This is the guy running for the so-called workers and the Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union. He should be a member of the casual exploitation of workers union—how about that one? I was on Sportsbet about the Upper Hunter. If you got a bet on the National Party three weeks ago, David Layzell was paying about \$5.40. In the past three weeks up goes the Leader of the Opposition to the Upper Hunter and they are now \$1.50. There is an inverse correlation: The more they see her, the higher our votes.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The longer she is there, the shorter our odds.

**Ms Kate Washington:** We have been incredibly patient on this side of the House—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Unlike Labor, we will always—

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Ms Kate Washington:** —but this is clearly totally irrelevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —stand up for workers in this State because we are the party of the worker.

**The SPEAKER:** Treasurer, have you completed your answer?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yes.

#### **PUBLIC LAND REGISTER**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:10):** My question is directed to—

*[Members interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is the member for Bankstown's birthday. Let us be kind to her on her birthday.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister admit that her new register of government-owned land is just an à la carte menu for property developers to feast on even more cheap public land?

**The SPEAKER:** Before the Minister commences, I remind the House that the following members are on three calls to order: the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Maroubra, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Canterbury and the Treasurer. The following members are on two calls to order: the member for Wollongong, the member for Coogee, the member for Prospect, the member for Cessnock and the member for Kiama. The Minister has the call.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:11):** I can assure the birthday girl that our property index, like the Commonwealth property index that is available for all sections of the community to read—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I can tell the House that our government property index will give everybody an opportunity, whether it is our community housing providers—

**The SPEAKER:** Although it is the member for Bankstown's birthday, she is pushing it.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** As I was saying, our government property index will give everybody in New South Wales the opportunity to see what is available in their communities, whether it is community housing—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** —or whether it is for our most disadvantaged or for our first home buyers. To be able to provide housing and meet the housing demand, we need more opportunities across New South Wales. That is what we are working towards. Just like the Federal Government has a property register available for people to understand and learn—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This is about having information available to all sectors of our community to understand what is there and who they might be able to partner with. I have had conversations with organisations across New South Wales. On the mid North Coast Legacy is keen to expand its footprint and developments to provide more accommodation to the most vulnerable.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wollongong to order for the third time. That is his last warning.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This gives everybody an opportunity—whether it is our aged care sector, Legacy or community housing providers—to understand what property might be near their development so that they can expand their footprint and their opportunity. It is about everybody understanding that there are opportunities out there to encourage those conversations, and there is nothing wrong with that. That is appropriate. It is the people's land. It is not the Government's land; it is the land of the people of New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Just like we have conversations with people such as those at Wollongong council, who have come forward with plans and ideas for temporary accommodation, we will work hand in hand with whoever we can to provide more housing and more opportunities for those across New South Wales. That is a concept and a policy idea that those opposite cannot get their heads around because dealing with property developers is what they did in the bad old days when they took the money and there was the corruption. They did the work with the Medichs; they did the work to ensure that ICAC was filled with case after case of improper dealings. We are doing this in an open and transparent way.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We are not them. We do not have their standards. We have appropriate authorities and we have appropriate practices in place to ensure that we can have conversations with all those who are providing housing in New South Wales. That is why our advisory panel will have the community sector, the local government sector and builders, and we will be having conversations about how we can do more housing in a more timely way so we can deal with affordability and access. We are proud that we have grown our social housing estate by 10 per cent in a year. We are proud of that work and we know we have a responsibility. We have plans and good ideas to work with those community sector providers to put more housing into New South Wales. We stand by those plans and our partners in doing that work.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:17):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is keeping the community safe in regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** Before the Minister begins his answer, I warn members that a number of them may be ejected during this question and answer because they have reached a point where I believe it is the only way for me to convey the message that they need to pull their heads in.

**Mr Ryan Park:** On both sides?

**The SPEAKER:** Any member who is in the Chamber. The Minister may proceed.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:18):** I thank the member for Albury for his question. I note his very strong support for our first-responder agencies and his keen interest in their welfare, which I am very grateful for and I know they are very appreciative of. I very much look forward to joining the member for Albury very soon when I visit his electorate and take the time to meet the fantastic police and emergency services who work tirelessly there and across the State to keep us safe, which is only possible through our record investment into our frontline services, with \$4 billion for our police and \$1.8 billion for our emergency services—funding which is not just tied up in the cities, which is not tied up in Macquarie Street, but is record funding for frontlines services across regional New South Wales.

I have been all around the State in recent times, taking every opportunity as Minister for Police and Emergency Services to speak to those frontline agencies and to our men and women in uniform. Last week I was in the Hunter, and then I visited the Monaro with the Deputy Premier, where we opened the new \$31 million Queanbeyan police station. The week before I was with the member for Goulburn at the police academy to see Class 346 graduate, and the Premier and I watched 208 proud new probationary constables march off the parade ground. Last month I was in Moree, in the Hawkesbury with the Treasurer, and then in Dubbo. Everywhere I go I see a government investing to ensure that we bolster community safety in every aspect.

In the south we have seen investment like never before in our regions, and this is evident whenever I am on the road, particularly with the member for Albury. The NSW Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA] has started rolling out its fleet of brand-new rescue trucks, thanks to the Government's \$18.8 million commitment. New vehicles are being delivered in Corowa, Leeton, Wagga Wagga, Narrandera and in the wonderful city of the member for Albury. The VRA has a strong presence in the south and that presence will be even stronger when they don their new uniform, made possible through a \$1.2 million investment, which I had the pleasure of launching last week. When we look to Fire and Rescue, I note that the member for Albury has a new \$1.1 million fire station in Henty, which was delivered only a couple of years ago. But there is investment all across the Riverina.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Blue Mountains will remove herself from the Chamber now and overnight.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I do not know what interest she has in emergency services. She has never asked me a question about it. If she has got a question about emergency services she should ask me. Two years she has allegedly been the shadow Minister.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Go and check Broken Hill—they can't fit their truck inside and the roof is leaking

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blue Mountains will remove herself immediately without further contribution.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** They made a complaint that you visited Broken Hill; I have to act up on that. You turned up unannounced and ate all their biscuits.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** I'm disappointed that there weren't any left for you.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Blue Mountains left the Chamber at 15:22.]*

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Since we came to government, Southern Region has received 111 new police positions. These positions were given some of the biggest logistical challenges in living memory when the pandemic hit. From 8 July 2020 to 23 November 2020, police facilitated the movement of tens of thousands of vehicles every day crossing the New South Wales-Victoria border, with 27 checkpoints in operation. This high-visibility operation had police from across New South Wales working alongside Australian Defence Force [ADF] personnel to facilitate safe and lawful crossings along the border. I take this opportunity to once again thank the NSW Police Force for its exemplary response to border closures as they have happened, often at very short notice. This was a highly complex and highly important operation that displayed the whole State's operational response support for the Albury and neighbouring police districts.

Whether it be bushfire, flood or pandemic, our Government's investment into our operational agencies has ensured that regional communities across the State are prepared to deal with whatever challenges lie ahead. Elsewhere in the State, yesterday I answered a question from the member for Lake Macquarie on investment that has been made in his electorate, but there is more to be said for the greater Hunter region. For Fire and Rescue we are building new fire stations and upgrading local fire trucks to support thriving communities in the Hunter.  
*[Extension of time]*

I have inspected the site of the new \$3.1 million Muswellbrook fire station and I am looking forward to opening the new \$2.2 million Dungog fire station. Both projects are tracking well and will add to the list of new stations delivered in that region, including the new \$1.1 million Murrurundi fire station, and the \$3.8 million Wallsend fire station. We have seen new trucks delivered to Murrurundi, Muswellbrook, Quirindi and Scone, with \$1.6 million of investment in the Upper Hunter alone. Only last week I was in Newcastle handing over the keys to a brand-new 45-metre aerial ladder platform—the highest-reaching ladder truck in Australia—reaching new heights thanks to the Government's record \$900 million budget for Fire and Rescue.

We have also seen significant investment in the NSW Rural Fire Service in the Hunter. We all know how important hazard reduction is to ensuring the safety of communities right across regional New South Wales. That is why we invested in an additional 100 mitigation crew members to accelerate the hazard reduction program, with 10 of those based in Singleton—that is 10 new jobs in that city. I have met with those new crews in area command offices and at hazard reduction sites across the State.

As a snapshot, since coming to government we have built 23 new brigade stations and delivered 57 new appliances to local brigades in the Upper Hunter. We currently have more than doubled the fleet budget, delivering new and refurbished appliances across the State. Our world-class SES rescue vehicles are rolling off the production line thanks to a \$16 million fleet replacement program which will see the deployment of 270 new vehicles, 124 marine vessels and 95 trailers across four years. In the first half of the financial year the fleet replacement program delivered 90 new vehicles and vessels to the New South Wales SES, including seven

medium rescue vehicles, 24 light storm vehicles, five medium storm vehicles, 48 general purpose vehicles and six bow loader vessels and trailers.

In the Hunter, keys to new vehicles have been handed over to Cessnock, Liverpool Plains, Gloucester and Dungog. Indeed, I took the time to be in Dungog not long ago to hand over the keys of their new vehicle. Police numbers are at record levels with 17,000 officers serving the State. The Government has committed \$583 million in funding for the recruitment of the 1,500 extra police officers we promised at the last election. Only the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government will continue to see our frontline agencies thrive with that record funding. As a result, we will see our regional communities in this great State thrive.

#### LIVERPOOL PLAINS COALMINING

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:26):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. On 22 March he stated that paying Shenhua \$100 million to end the Watermark project was about banning and ending any chance of mining in the Liverpool Plains. Does the Deputy Premier therefore intend to revoke Whitehaven's Vickery coalmine extension project on the Liverpool Plains?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:27):** I thank the member for her question. It gives me an opportunity to update the House that I had an opportunity, along with the Treasurer and the planning Minister, to travel to Breeza, where we made an announcement that the New South Wales Government was able to come to an agreement for \$100 million to buy back and ask the China Shenhua Energy Company to relinquish its mining lease application. We were able to cancel exploration licence 7223, which means that there will no longer be any mining under the Shenhua lease over the Liverpool Plains. That was an opportunity that we were able to negotiate over the past six months.

We inherited this many years ago and there is no question about it: This was a win for the community that we have been working with. Last year when I released the Future of Coal statement, for the first time in this State we identified areas where coalmining can happen and where coalmining should not happen. That gave some level of certainty and comfort to some communities. It is never going to be perfect, but in relation to the question of the Vickery coalmine extension I assure you this: They have an approval which the Independent Planning Commission granted for Whitehaven Coal. If the member is asking if the Government will cancel that lease, which would jeopardise 450 jobs and \$600 million in investment, the answer is absolutely not.

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is implementing new road safety measures to save lives and keep our community safe?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:29):** I thank the member for Miranda for her question. In all seriousness, this question is critically important because quite often what happens in this State is that someone is sitting at home waiting for a loved one to walk through the door, the police turn up, knock on the door and, lo and behold, they have lost their loved one forever. To think that 297 families went through that last year—there is no doubt that we will have to continue the effort to drive down the road toll. A lot of those deaths were preventable. As the Minister, I was presented with a report last year that showed what we could do as a community, with my regional counterpart, to save up to 43 lives. We took that decision.

When you consider that the economic cost of road trauma is about \$7 million per fatality—let alone the incredible social impact—there is no doubt that we did the right thing instead of doing what might be popular. There is no doubt that we have to change our thinking around speeding. Last year we saw a bump up to 50 per cent of fatalities that had speeding as the main contributing factor causing death. We have done it with drink driving. We have done it with mobile phones. It is really important that we do it with speeding, which is why we have seen some changes to the mobile speed cameras. I am happy to report that in the first four months of 2021 we have had the lowest number of fatalities since 1936. I thank the community for listening and responding. I thank our highway patrol teams for their work that keeps people safe. That is 23 fewer deaths than the past three-year average during the same period.

In the first four months of this year, speeding-related deaths have dropped from 49 per cent to 39 per cent, so it is having an effect. In February, mobile speed cameras detected 116 drivers exceeding the speed limit by over 30 kilometres per hour and 21 exceeding the speed limit by over 45 kilometres per hour. They are the worst offenders, and I can give some examples. In Keira—I know Mr Ryan Park will be interested in this—a driver was clocked doing 123 kilometres in a 50-kilometre zone. In Greenacre, someone was doing 140 kilometres in a 60-kilometre zone; in Kurmond, 187 kilometres in an 80-kilometre zone. In November a driver in Casula was

detected doing 163 kilometres in a 70-kilometre zone. We have one camera on the Hume Highway at Casula that detected 10 vehicles doing over 120 kilometres in a 70-kilometre zone, and that is in three months.

There is no doubt that those people deserve to lose the privilege of having a licence; they are lucky they did not kill themselves or somebody else. We have to make sure we are all as one on this. The Hon. John Graham—who I think, with the best intentions, wants to take the politics out of it—got a brief about the way the Community Road Safety Fund works. I take issue with anyone who says that this is revenue raising because the fine revenue goes into the Community Road Safety Fund. Earlier today Mr Paul Toole and I announced that \$135 million will be used for audio-tactile markings on the sides of roads, for getting rid of some nasty curves in some country areas and 47 urban intersections that we know are dangerous, and for widening the centre lines on a lot of regional roads. We want to make sure that we address road safety.

I also report to the House there is no doubt that there has to be a change in policy and thinking across the community. We have seen it with mobile phones; we can do it in other areas of road safety. In relation to the criticisms levelled about mobile speed cameras, I say this: Prior to the camera changes about 70 per cent of people had zero demerit points on their licence. The pleasing thing today is that 70 per cent of people still have zero demerit points on their licence, which means that those who are undertaking speeding on a habitual basis are the ones who are getting caught. I ask them to reflect on that and to change their behaviour. [*Extension of time*]

An important thing to note is that New South Wales was the only State that had the signs in place. Pleasingly, when Victoria made its changes, there was a 25 per cent drop in fatalities. We are on track to achieve that and I hope that, by the end of the year, that is the case. I know there are challenges and I know these are easy political arguments, but ultimately everything we are doing in this space is designed to ensure that people can get home every day and their families do not endure some of the experiences that those 297 families endured last year. Road safety measures have saved 1,500 lives in the past 10 years. That is very significant. Every year, road trauma puts 11,000 people into a hospital bed for one night or more. We are now starting to reduce our road toll, based on a three-year average. Think about what that means we can do in terms of health savings with hundreds of people not having to be in hospital beds.

I acknowledge a number of members in this place have been working with the Abdallah and Sakr families, in particular Geoff Lee and Jihad Dib. No-one should have to go through what those families went through. Last Friday the Wanderers and Sydney FC joined forces to launch the Towards Zero round alongside those families, who were two of 297 families who had to go through incredible trauma last year. I recognise what those members are doing and what those football clubs did to try to send a message. We have a long way to go. Let us keep at it, let us take the politics out of it and let us save lives.

#### *Business of the House*

### CONDOLENCE MOTION

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:25):** Earlier today the House resolved to suspend standing and sessional orders to deal with a condolence motion for His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and to interrupt business at 3.30 p.m. By leave: I move:

That the earlier resolution regarding the motion of condolence regarding His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh be amended to now interrupt the business of the House for its moving after the conclusion of items 8 to 14 in the routine of business.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Petitions*

### PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

#### **Firearms and Weapons Legislation**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly and the Government ensure that the final draft of the Firearms and Weapons Legislation Amendment (Criminal Use) Bill does not criminalise legal firearms owners and that citizens of New South Wales are not subject to the loss of civil liberties because of the bill, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

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

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE OF GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that on Thursday 6 May 2021, during the time provided for consideration of general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills), precedence be given to general business notice of motion (general notice) No. 2272 [Rotary Club of Sydney Centenary], standing in the name of the member for Heathcote.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Condolences***HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHILIP THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:38):** I move:

That:

- (1) This House agrees to the following Address to Her Majesty The Queen conveying our condolences on the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip The Duke of Edinburgh:

'To Her Majesty Elizabeth The Second, Queen of Australia —

May it please Your Majesty —

We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the devoted life and service of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, whose death we mourn. We extend to Your Majesty, and other members of the Royal Family, our heartfelt sympathy.'

- (2) That Her Excellency the Governor be requested to forward the above address to Her Majesty.

Today I pay tribute to the life and service of the late Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was born on the island of Corfu, Greece, in 1921. His father was Prince Andrew of Greece, which made him nephew to the King of Greece. Family circumstance meant that he grew up in Great Britain and completed his education at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. From January 1940 to the end of World War II he served with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean and the Pacific, but his role was not one of a pampered officer in a cosy shore-posting. His earliest assignments involved traversing the Indian Ocean, escorting troopships of the Australian 6th Division bound for the Middle East. He later fought in the Battle of Crete, also involving Australians and New Zealanders; and the Battle of Cape Matapan, with HMAS *Perth* and HMAS *Vampire*.

Prince Philip took part in the naval actions in support of the Allied invasion of Sicily and, later, southern France, before sailing to the Pacific for the war against Japan. There he took part in operations in the Indonesian archipelago and fought in the last great naval battle of the war, the Battle of Okinawa. By all accounts he was an outstanding naval officer who drove himself as hard as his men and remained cool in moments of crisis. There was little doubt Philip had the potential to rise to the very top of the Royal Navy. The late Terry Lewin, who served alongside Philip when both were junior officers, went on to become First Sea Lord. It was once suggested to Lord Lewin that, had the Duke remained in the navy, they might both have been competing for the top job. Lord Lewin told the BBC:

I don't think the competition would have been very strong. He would have walked it.

In the normal course of events, that would have been Prince Philip's lot in life—a minor noble from a deposed family making his way as a promising young officer in the Royal Navy—but then he fell in love with the woman who would change his life. The royal watcher "Chips" Channon noted that when he signed the visitors' book at Coppins House, where Princess Elizabeth was staying, he noticed "Philip" written constantly. He concluded, "I think she will marry him." He was right.

In 1947 Philip became a British subject, renounced his right to the Greek and Danish thrones, and took his mother's surname, Mountbatten. He took these irrevocable steps to marry Princess Elizabeth, and did so in Westminster Abbey on 20 November 1947. On the eve of his wedding he was designated a Royal Highness and was created a Knight of the Garter and Duke of Edinburgh. Soon afterward he returned to naval life and was posted to Malta, which brought many happy times for the newlyweds. In 1950, after being promoted to Lieutenant Commander, the Duke finally took command of his own ship, the frigate HMS *Magpie*, but within a year his naval career was over. He found himself having to support Princess Elizabeth when she took on more royal duties as King George VI's health declined. He later said:

At that time I had not thought that was going to be the end of a sort of naval career. And that sort of crept upon me and it became more and more obvious that I could not go back to it.

With typical stoicism, he concluded:

But it's no good regretting things. It simply didn't happen. And I've been doing other things instead.

From 6 February 1952, he shared the Queen's official and public life. In that role, he attended an average of 350 official engagements a year on behalf of the royal household. While much of his time was spent fulfilling the duties of his office, Prince Philip engaged in a variety of philanthropic endeavours. He served as president of the World Wildlife Fund from 1981 to 1996. He created the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which has allowed more than six million young adults to engage in community service, leadership development and physical fitness activities.

The Prince had a long relationship with New South Wales, starting with his first visit to Sydney in 1940 as a midshipman aboard the battleship HMS *Ramillies*, and then four visits in 1945 as second-in-command of the destroyer HMS *Whelp*, part of the British Pacific Fleet. He went on to visit us on more than 30 occasions, sometime solo and sometimes with the Queen—most notably the Royal Tour of 1954 and the Silver Jubilee Tour of 1977—and was always warmly welcomed by the people of New South Wales. The Prince was in this very building on two occasions: when the Queen opened a session of the New South Wales Parliament in February 1954, and 38 years later, in February 1992. In 2011, to mark his ninetieth birthday, the Queen conferred on him the ancient title and office of Lord High Admiral, the titular head of the Royal Navy. In May 2017 it was announced that Prince Philip, who was one of the busiest royals with more than 22,000 solo appearances over the years, would stop carrying out public engagements in August that year.

We often speak in this place of a lifetime of service and, in the case of Prince Philip, we not only acknowledge this lifetime of service but also what he gave up, what he sacrificed, the alternative lives that he may have led but for his love for and devotion to the Queen and but for his love for and devotion to his responsibility. Today we remember the life and service of a man whose devotion to his country, his wife and his Queen knew no bounds: His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. May he rest in peace.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:44):** I extend my condolences to the Royal Family and the people of the United Kingdom on the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Regardless of whether we are monarchists or republicans, we can all respect the decades of public service life that Prince Philip gave to the people of the United Kingdom and the many nations of the Commonwealth, including Australia. We can all acutely appreciate the human dimension of what has happened. A family has lost a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. I was particularly struck by Her Majesty the Queen's dignified bearing in what must have been very difficult circumstances at her beloved husband's funeral: sitting alone, as required by COVID restrictions, at a time when we expect to have loved ones as close as possible. Her isolation at such a terrible time was felt around the world. Her Majesty has lost not just her life partner but also her most important supporter in public life—a person who has been at her side for more than half a century, helping her deal with the unique and often difficult circumstances she has faced as a sovereign in the modern era. Our hearts go out to Her Majesty and to the Royal Family.

Prince Philip served his country and the Allied cause with great distinction in the Second World War. He helped keep Australian troops safe as they travelled to the Middle East via sea and fought bravely in the Mediterranean. In the decades since the war's end, his distinguished service has been a point of pride for the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, particularly for those who have served and their families. We should all be grateful for Prince Philip's support of Australia's armed services, and the men and women serving in them. We honour his service in wartime and his continued support for our armed services personnel in the decades that followed. We also honour his significant contribution to many community organisations across Australia over a long period of time. His Royal Highness served either as a president or patron of over 50 organisations across Australia. Many people across our community will recall him in his role as chairman of the World Wildlife Fund, as well as his strong advocacy for environmental issues and the conservation of Australia's unique flora and fauna.

The more than 770,000 Australians who have participated in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the 65 years since its inception will be forever grateful for a program that gave them the opportunity to participate in sport, be involved in community service and experience the great outdoors. We honour Prince Philip's patronage and support for this fantastic initiative, which is now active in 140 countries and has around eight million young participants. We acknowledge His Royal Highness' continued interest in Australia, borne out by the fact that he visited this country more than any other member of the Royal Family—more than 20 times in his life. Amongst other things, this was reflected in his support for and interest in Australian art, including Aboriginal art and the work of Albert Namatjira, as well as the work of other great Australian painters: Sidney Nolan, Donald Friend and William Dobell. As NSW Labor leader I pay my respects to the Royal Family and recognise a life spent serving his queen, country, Commonwealth and community. Our condolences are with Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family and the countless people across Australia, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth who admired and respected Prince Philip for his many decades of public service.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:47):** I support this motion and will say a few words about the person, the public life and the achievements of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and consort to the Queen. These were but a few of the myriad titles and honours that decorated Prince Philip. Signing up with the Royal Navy at 18 in 1939, Prince Philip saw significant and distinguished active service during the Second World War, winning half a dozen campaign honours at least, being mentioned in dispatches and growing a full beard. We are told a picture of the hirsute naval officer or midshipman, Philip Mountbatten, graced Princess Elizabeth's bedside table for the duration of the war. By the end of that terrible conflict, the Princess, as she then was, had turned 19. Friendship between Philip and Elizabeth blossomed to the love that endured for most of last century and a goodly portion of this one. I urge members to google Elizabeth and Philip's engagement photographs. The expressions of joy in each other on their faces seem to illustrate the foundations upon which this lifelong partnership was built to weather seasons of happiness and turmoil.

There can be no doubt that Prince Philip's death has left a void in Her Majesty's life that she will find challenging. I am not the first to reflect on the Queen's remarks on the royal couple's golden wedding anniversary, when she described her husband as her strength and stay. Prince Philip accepted at Her Majesty's coronation, when pledging to be her "liege man of life and limb", that from that moment until his last much of what the Duke of Edinburgh did or achieved would be viewed through the permanent prism of his relationship to the Queen. But he did make an important difference to the world in his own right. As co-founder of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature in 1961 and the Australian Conservation Foundation in 1963, Prince Philip put conservation and caring for our environment into the mainstream. No longer was saving the planet solely the province of hippies, beatniks and the member for Hornsby. The very spouse of the apex of constitutional power in Great Britain and a number of Commonwealth nations, including our own, declared the interdependence of all life on earth. He said:

We depend on being part of the web of life. We depend on every other living thing on this planet, just as much as they depend on us. If we as humans have got this power of life and death, not just life and death but extinction and survival, we ought to exercise it with some sort of moral sense.

Prince William was right to assert in his documentary of last year, *A Planet For Us All*, that his grandfather was well ahead of his time. Rather than well-meaning hand-wringing, the Duke of Edinburgh urged action to protect our environment. In a speech to the Australian Conservation Foundation in 1973, he acknowledged the presence of factions in the environment movement but encouraged all who hold this planet dear to unite. He said:

... our only hope of making any impression on public, industrial or government opinion and outlook is to do our homework and to do our best to work together.

The Prince's advocacy in this area was not without mixed messaging. There was a hunted tigress in Nepal in 1961, which he claimed was lame, his fondness for fox hunting and his remark in a 2011 BBC interview:

I think that there's a difference between being concerned for the conservation of nature and being a bunny hugger.

That is an approach to conservation, at least with respect to foxes and rabbits, that I am sure would find much favour in our Coalition partner's party room at times. In all seriousness, though, the effect of Prince Philip's passion for conservation is no doubt still reverberating through our international fora as the literal fate of the world is decided by our nations' leaders. Today is not the day to reflect on the appropriateness of current constitutional arrangements. Regardless of our views about the continuance of those arrangements, all of us should admire and respect the Duke of Edinburgh. A supporter of modest reform can still be, and must be, a creature of and respecter of the institutions we have. The generations, including mine, that have lived in the reign of Elizabeth II can count themselves fortunate indeed that their monarch is a remarkable woman of unparalleled capacity for industry with an undiminished reservoir of integrity. All her life—as she pledged when thrust towards the throne at such a young age—has been dedicated to her service as Queen.

I suggested earlier that much of Prince Philip's deeds and words would always be seen through the prism of his role as first supporter of the monarchy and his monarch. This is perhaps unfair. The childhood of Philip, Prince of Greece and Denmark, was beset by drama. Amidst the expulsion of his father he was evacuated in a fruit box at barely 18 months of age. At age nine in some ways he was almost orphaned by a deserting father and a mother challenged by serious difficulties with her mental health. He found his feet at secondary school at Gordonstoun in Scotland—a harsh place that he credits with making him, and not a place for everyone, as his son Charles discovered when a reluctant pupil there. His distinguished navy career was his own. No wonder he cut such a dashing figure for a young Elizabeth. Prince Philip came into British royal life already having known true service to his adopted country—a valuable precursor to a life of devoted service to his queen. It is almost a relief to learn that this royal pairing endured some of the same challenges that some of us commonfolk experience with our own life partners. I am particularly fond of this quote that gained quite a bit of re-broadcasting after the Duke died. He said:

... tolerance is the one essential ingredient of any happy marriage. It may not be quite so important when things are going well, but it is absolutely vital when the going gets difficult. You can take it from me that the Queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance. If you have seen the video of that quote, you have to look very closely at the Queen to detect just the slightest upturn of her lips. One suspects that one might not have been amused when one arrived home. That said, although he was always two steps behind, the bond between those two people was unmistakable. Few could fail to have been moved by the sight of the lone figure of Her Majesty the Queen seated in St George's Chapel at Windsor on the day of Prince Philip's funeral. She was not only attired in a widow's black but also adorned with the gravity of her service across seven decades to the Commonwealth as sovereign, with the love of her life at her side for all of that time.

I pay my condolences to Queen Elizabeth II, her children, her grandchildren and all of the Royal Family on the passing of Prince Philip. He was a remarkable man, a great conservationist, a dedicated mariner in the defence of freedom and a worthy and excellent consort to the Queen. I adopt the words of Her Majesty, who said of her husband that we "owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know". I commend the motion to the House.

**The SPEAKER (15:55):** I acknowledge the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. He was the longest serving consort of a reigning British monarch, steadfastly supporting Her Majesty the Queen through seven decades of marriage. A dedicated military man, he was known for his charisma, forthrightness and penchant for action. As has been noted, he established the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in 1956 as a way of recognising well-rounded growth and development in youth and young adults. Many thousands of people in New South Wales have benefited as a result. The Duke made an enormous contribution through a lifetime of service to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, including Australia. Like Don Bradman with his batting average, he did not quite make it to 100. However, his legacy is substantial and enduring. I recently signed a condolence book at New South Wales Government House conveying the Parliament's sympathy and appreciation for his life to Her Majesty and her family. Vale, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:56):** I join in the motion extending to Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family and the people of the United Kingdom our deepest sympathy on the loss of Prince Philip. His service to the United Kingdom and to the Commonwealth will never fully be understood because of the close relationship that he had with Her Majesty the Queen. However, I do make this observation: In the history of the Royal Family since 1066, Her Majesty the Queen will probably be regarded as one of the finest monarchs produced by the United Kingdom—with a keen understanding that the Royal Family only exists in that country with the consent of the people, a keen understanding of the constitutional arrangements and a keen respect for the decisions that the British people make under their constitutional arrangements as to who is to lead their nation.

The success of her reign is due in no small part to the contribution of the longest serving consort in British history, the Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was born in 1921 on the dining room table of a villa on the Greek island of Corfu, born into the royal families of both Greece and Denmark. He was baptised Greek Orthodox in Corfu and later exiled, as has been observed by the Attorney General, in a fruit box at the age of 18 months. He was educated in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. His Royal Highness joined the Royal Navy in 1949 at 18 years of age, where he served with great distinction in the Mediterranean and Pacific fleets. He continued even after World War II to serve in the Royal Navy.

He renounced his royal titles in 1947, when he and Princess Elizabeth were engaged, and he continued his service in the Royal Navy until the passing of George VI and the elevation of then Princess Elizabeth to the throne in 1952. From then until his passing he served as her consort. He was an essential part of the British monarchy and provided essential support. I suppose the reign of Queen Elizabeth II has been the most difficult for the British monarchy since 1066 because of the scrutiny of the world media and of television. No act of the monarch, her consort or any of her children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren has escaped the close attention of the media or the British press. One could imagine that providing stability in those circumstances has caused great difficulty in the determination to preserve the monarchy in modern times.

The monarchy has been an inspiration for the British people at times of crisis and an example of stability for their nation. It certainly could not have occurred without His Royal Highness' contribution. After all, Her Majesty became Queen at the age of 26 on the passing of her father and no doubt found the task somewhat daunting—something that she could not have done without the support of His Royal Highness Prince Philip. In 1956 Prince Philip established the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which is a scheme to provide for young adolescents the skills of leadership, community service, volunteerism and social justice.

In some respects Prince Philip was a great opponent of modern-day political correctness and railed against those sorts of concepts. Nevertheless, he will be remembered as somebody who contributed substantially during World War II in the interests of the freedom of the British people and who provided steadfast support to probably the finest British sovereign—certainly the most scrutinised British sovereign. He will be remembered as someone who had to manage the difficulties that the Royal Family has faced in relation to Her Majesty and Prince Philip's

children, again under the scrutiny of the media. It is scrutiny that most people could not withstand but that His Royal Highness and Her Majesty had to withstand because it was essential for the successful survival of the monarchy, which is an essential part of the British system of government. Prince Philip will be remembered as a man who made a great contribution to that nation, to the Commonwealth of Australia and to the Commonwealth generally. He was a man regarded with considerable affection within the United Kingdom and he will be sorely missed by all British citizens. I extend our condolences and deepest sympathy to Her Majesty and to the Royal Family on the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:03):** As the Government Whip, I make a contribution to debate on this condolence motion. Jill and I were both deeply saddened to hear the news of the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh late on Friday 9 April. Today gives us an opportunity to reflect on Prince Philip's nearly 80 years of service to the Crown, his country and the Commonwealth. Prince Philip began his public service as a naval officer in World War II. Like so many of his generation, Prince Philip endured many difficulties and dangers that are completely inconceivable in today's society.

During the Second World War he continued to serve in the British forces, while two of his brothers-in-law, Prince Christoph of Hesse and Berthold, Margrave of Baden, fought on the opposing German side. Philip was appointed as a midshipman in January 1940. He then spent four months on the battleship HMS *Ramillies*, protecting convoys of the Australian Expeditionary Force in the Indian Ocean. This was followed by shorter postings on HMS *Kent* and then HMS *Shropshire* in British Ceylon. After the invasion of Greece by Italy in October 1940, he was transferred from the Indian Ocean to the battleship HMS *Valiant* in the Mediterranean Fleet. On 1 February 1941, Prince Philip was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant after a series of courses at Portsmouth, in which he gained the top grade in four of the five sections of the qualifying examinations.

Among other engagements, he was involved in the Battle of Crete. He was mentioned in dispatches for his service during the Battle of Cape Matapan, in which he controlled the battleship's searchlights. He was also awarded the Greek War Cross. In June 1942 he was appointed to the destroyer HMS *Wallace*, which was involved in convoy escort tasks off the east coast of Britain as well as the Allied invasion of Sicily. His promotion to lieutenant followed on 16 July 1942. In October of the same year he became first lieutenant of HMS *Wallace* at 21 years old and one of the youngest first lieutenants in the Royal Navy. As the second in command of HMS *Wallace* during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, he saved his ship from a night-time bomber attack. He devised a plan to launch a raft with smoke floats that successfully distracted the bombers, allowing the ship to slip away unnoticed. In 1944 Prince Philip was moved to the new destroyer, HMS *Whelp*, where he saw service with the British Pacific Fleet in the 27th Destroyer Flotilla. He was present in Tokyo Bay when the instrument of Japanese surrender was signed. Prince Philip returned to the United Kingdom on HMS *Whelp* in January of 1946 and was posted as an instructor at HMS *Royal Arthur*, a school for petty officers in Corsham, Wiltshire.

For those contributions alone, Prince Philip—like all of our veterans—is owed a significant debt of gratitude. For many this would quite rightly have been the pinnacle of their service, but for Prince Philip this was just the beginning. I am referring to the Prince's 74 years of marriage to Her Majesty the Queen. Prince Philip will be recorded in history as the longest serving British consort. In addition to this, he became the oldest ever male British royal in February 2013 and the third longest lived member of the British Royal Family, following Princess Alice, the Duchess of Gloucester, and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, in April 2019. The Prince made it very public that he was not enthused about living an extremely long life. He remarked in an interview in 2000 when he was 79 that he could not imagine anything worse and had no desire whatsoever to become a centenarian, saying "bits of me are already falling off". This goes to show the Prince's sense of humour and the ability to laugh at himself. Unlike modern times, it was very difficult and very different to be the husband of a powerful woman through the twentieth century. Yet Prince Philip was devoted to supporting the Queen in public and in private.

I also note Prince Philip's special connection with our country. He was a true friend of Australia. He visited on more than 20 occasions over his lifetime. Prince Philip had a special connection with the Australian Defence Force, given his military service. I understand that he served alongside some Australians during World War II. He also served as the patron, or president, of more than 50 Australian organisations. For 65 years, Prince Philip's Duke of Edinburgh's Award has enabled over 775,000 young people in Australia to develop leadership potential, to be trained in skills and to volunteer for causes that are larger than themselves.

It is also beholden on me to outline some of the Prince's Honours and honorary military appointments during his long years of service. The Duke of Edinburgh was appointed by King George VI to the Order of the Garter on 19 November 1947, on the eve of his wedding. Since then, the Prince has received 17 different appointments and decorations in the Commonwealth, and 48 from foreign states. Upon his wife's accession to the throne in 1952, the Duke was appointed Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, Colonel-in-Chief of the British Army Cadet Force and Air Commodore-in-Chief of the Air Training Corps. The following year he was appointed to the equivalent positions in Canada and made Admiral of the Fleet, Captain General Royal Marines, Field Marshal

and Marshal of the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom. Subsequent military appointments were made in New Zealand and, of course, Australia.

In 1975, he was appointed Colonel of the Grenadier Guards, a position he handed over to his son Andrew in 2017. On 16 December 2015, his role as Honorary Air Commodore-in-Chief was handed over to the Duchess of Cambridge. To celebrate his ninetieth birthday, the Queen appointed him Lord High Admiral, as well as to the highest ranks available in all three branches of the Canadian Armed Forces. On their seventieth wedding anniversary on 20 November 2017, the Queen appointed him Knight Grand Cross, GCVO, of the Royal Victorian Order, making him the first British national since his uncle Earl Mountbatten of Burma to be entitled to wear the breast stars of four orders of chivalry in the United Kingdom.

Prince Philip retired from his royal duties on 2 August 2017, meeting the Royal Marines at his final solo public engagement at the age of 96. Since 1952 he had completed 22,219 solo engagements. At the time, then Prime Minister Theresa May thanked him for a remarkable lifetime of service. On 20 November 2017 he celebrated his seventieth wedding anniversary with the Queen, which made her the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum wedding anniversary.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the sadness of many monarchists on the Central Coast, across the State and across our country, upon hearing of Prince Philip's passing. But we also have much to be thankful for. Prince Philip lived a very long life—99 years, as we know. I also echo the words of Her Majesty the Queen, who so eloquently remarked, nearly a decade ago, that Prince Philip has been her "strength and stay". On behalf of the Central Coast community, I thank Prince Philip for his decades of service to the Crown, his country and the Commonwealth. He was a truly remarkable figure from a remarkable generation. I also extend our deepest condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family. May he rest in peace. Vale Prince Philip.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:13):** I pay tribute to His Royal Highness the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip will be fondly and long remembered for his lifetime of service to his country and to the Commonwealth, for his distinguished military career and for his enduring contribution as the longest serving royal consort. In particular, I celebrate his immense contribution to our youth across the world through the establishment of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. After the Second World War in Britain, he wanted to give young men opportunities for self-development between leaving formal education at 15 years and entering national service at 18 years. Drawing on his own educational and life experiences, Prince Philip established the Royal Duke of Edinburgh's Award in 1956. Now the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an international youth development program that aims to inspire millions of young people between the ages of 14 and 24. It is a program for all young people, regardless of their circumstances.

To earn an award, each young person must learn a skill, improve their physical wellbeing, volunteer in their community and experience a team adventure in a new environment. Participants choose to do the award and whatever activities they want to benefit most from. The award is aimed to challenge individuals personally through tapping into and building their perseverance and determination. Over 130 countries globally have adopted the award program, with over eight million young people having participated worldwide since the award was first established. In Australia, over 775,000 young people have participated in the award, with an average of 40,000 each year for the last 60 years. Currently, 45,000 young Australians are undertaking the challenge and 60,000 active volunteers are supporting their work. I should say that volunteers are the lifeblood of the award, often supervising and ticking off that various accomplishments have been met by participants to meet the relevant levels of the award.

I specially mention national CEO Peter Kaye, AM, and national chairman the Honourable Gary Nairn, AO, for the fantastic work they do with the award nationally. Before I came to Parliament I had the pleasure of working with them over the years. I thank other national board members, including deputy chair the Hon. Sandra Nori; secretary and treasurer Tom Mould, AO; the Hon. Joseph Francis; Elizabeth Gilchrist, AM; Stephen Hauville; the Hon. Daryl Manzie, AM; Celia Murphy; Bob Rutherford; David Sanders; Cameron Smart; and Sue Lloyd-Williams, AO. I thank members of the national award management team, including executive manager Kathleen Hewitt, senior manager Tania Etuale, fundraising and ambassador manager Jo Bush, and national strategic projects manager Kelly Wood. I thank members of the Friends Board of the National Duke of Edinburgh's Award who I have not already mentioned, including chairman the Hon. Larry Anthony; deputy chairman Andrew Murray, AM; Charlie Buchanan; and Angus Wilson.

Having served as deputy chair of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Australia from 2005 to 2011, I know the award is an amazing program and have seen the transformative effect it has on the lives of so many young people in Australia and across the world. I thank John Pascoe, AC, CVO, who encouraged me to serve on the board. John, who has been a mentor, was a member of the board of the International Award Foundation that operates the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award from 1998 until 2006. Between 1995 and 2004 he was national chair of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Australia. John is a distinguished

Australian and has served the award nobly over the years. In 2016 he was awarded a Gold Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of a lifetime of support for the award. As deputy chair I was afforded many opportunities to represent the award, including through a delegation to Daegu, South Korea. Such was the power and reach of the award that even at that time it had tipped over into countries outside the Commonwealth. It has a real ability to reach across the cultural divide.

In September 2019, we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia and were joined in Sydney by His Royal Highness Prince Edward, who has served as chairman of the Trustees of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation since 2015. Prince Edward achieved his own gold award in 1986. The following year he became a trustee of the award and was chair of its international council for 17 years. In 2019, Prince Edward attended 11 gold award presentations while he was in Australia. There were many festivities to mark the occasion, including a memorable one that I attended at Sydney Town Hall where youth from across New South Wales had the privilege of meeting Prince Edward and having their gold awards presented by him.

Students from two of my local schools, Ascham and The Scots College, were among those students. Each year at The Scots College end-of-year assembly I have the privilege of presenting to the gold awardees. The Scots College must lead the nation in the number of awardees who achieve a gold award in record time. I salute their efforts. Late last year—when COVID restrictions prevented me from attending in person—I made a video recording with words of support and congratulations to the boys so that I could continue the strong tradition of supporting them in their efforts and achievements with gold awards. I am so proud of The Scots College and the many other schools in my electorate that are taking up gold awards. Those schools include Ascham, Kambala, Rose Bay Secondary College and Cranbrook. I do not know of one that does not participate in this award. I salute their efforts.

There is no doubt that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is one of Prince Philip's strongest, noblest and most personal legacies. It will live on as a gift to youth in Australia and across the world. Undoubtedly, his death has been a profoundly difficult time for the Royal Family and the people of Britain and the Commonwealth. For his unwavering loyalty to the Queen and country, and his legacy as a man of purpose, determination and above all a sense of duty to others, we will remember him. May he rest in peace.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:21):** I speak on the condolence motion celebrating the life and service of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. It is hard to imagine a world without the Queen's faithful partner, just two steps behind our sovereign. His passing at 99 marked the peaceful ending of an incredible era, and I join millions of others in offering my condolences to the Queen and the Royal Family. The death of Prince Philip is a sad reminder that we are losing the Second World War generation, who are a remarkable group of men and women who stood up against fascism—the idea that might is right and strength is the only valuable virtue. Instilled in them was a sense of service, duty, a responsibility to others and an incredible willingness to do their part. This is even more impressive when we understand how young so many of them were.

Prince Philip was only 18 years old when the Second World War broke out. He was the number one naval cadet in his course. His wartime service forged the first of his lifelong connections with Australia. As a midshipman on his first battleship he spent four months protecting convoys of the Second Australian Imperial Force in the Indian Ocean. He would see service with them again during the Battle of Crete, finally being reunited with his future subjects from across the Commonwealth in Tokyo Bay at the signing of the Japanese surrender. We have heard much today about Prince Philip's wartime service, which is a remarkable record on its own. It is a record made even more incredible given his young age. He was a first lieutenant at just 21, making him one of the youngest in the Royal Navy, which rightly stirred suggestions that he could have become the head of the service in time.

That service was cut short in 1952 by the death of his father-in-law, King George VI. He instead had to forge a new path, one where the most recent role model was his ancestor Prince Albert, who died 91 years earlier. This was the role of Prince Consort, husband to the monarch, juggling the complex dictations of manliness in the mid-twentieth century with the reality of being the support to a powerful woman. This was a balance he managed well throughout his 73 years of marriage to Her Majesty the Queen. He is the longest serving royal consort in history—the perfect partner to the longest reigning monarch in British history. In that time he spoke out for the environment, serving as the first president of the World Wildlife Fund. He worked to create a sense of self-worth and skills in young people by founding the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which has been taken by more than 775,000 young Australians, and he maintained a lifelong connection with the armed forces.

Despite his Herculean workload he was, of course, human, occasionally making a misstep, which is understandable, given the glaring spotlight that followed him for most of his life. His more than 20 visits to our nation saw him meet with people from all walks of life, including from my own electorate. Prince Philip's funeral beamed pictures that touched the hearts of people from all persuasions, whether monarchist or republican: a widow

seated alone, mourning the love of her life. On behalf of the people of the Cootamundra electorate I offer my condolences to the Royal Family and thank them for sharing their husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather with us for so many years. May we long remember his service throughout his remarkable life, and may he rest in peace.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:25):** I support the motion before the House and express my condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Royal Family and the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth nations on the passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was born Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark on 10 June 1921 in Corfu, Greece. Reared chiefly in Great Britain, Philip was educated at Gordonstoun School near Elgin, Moray, Scotland, and at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, Devon, England. From January 1940 to the end of World War II he served with the Royal Navy in combat in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. From July 1939 he began corresponding with the 13-year-old Princess Elizabeth, whom he had first met in 1934.

After World War II the King gave permission for Prince Philip to marry his daughter Elizabeth. The betrothal was announced when she turned 21. On 28 February 1947 Philip became a British subject, renouncing his right to the Greek and Danish thrones and taking his mother's surname, Mountbatten. On the eve of his wedding to Princess Elizabeth, he was designated a Royal Highness and was created a Knight of the Garter, Baron Greenwich, Earl of Merioneth and Duke of Edinburgh. The couple's first child, Charles Philip Arthur George, was born in 1948. He was joined by Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise, born 1950; Andrew Albert Christian Edward, born 1960; and Edward Anthony Richard Louis, born 1964. Philip continued active service with the Royal Navy, commanding the frigate HMS *Magpie* until Elizabeth's accession on 6 February 1952, from which time he shared her official and public life.

After Prince Philip's passing, numerous thoughtful and educative programs have been broadcast to inform us of the depths of the character, passion and life of Prince Philip. I took some time to watch a lot of those programs and to consider the pivotal point in his life, when King George VI passed. At that time he was a successful naval officer, who in 1942 became first lieutenant of HMS *Wallace* at the age of 21 years. He was one of the youngest first lieutenants in the Royal Navy. His intellect, passion and leadership were fully expressed through his navy role. As a successful officer, at a time of being a successful professional man, he stepped away from his career to become royal consort to his wife when she became the Queen of England.

The loss of his beloved navy career, on top of other losses in his life, including being exiled from his country of birth when he was 18 months old and experiencing abandonment as a child and a very disruptive, tragic and lonely childhood, speaks of the significance of the character and quality of Prince Philip. He not only navigated a very challenging childhood and gave up his passion in the navy; he also went on to become the longest serving royal consort. This was at a time when women were generally seen to be a wife and mother and men the leader of the family, head of the home, and the one going out to earn the income. He was an example of the exact reverse. I take this moment to consider what it was in this gentleman, Prince Philip, who not only took on those challenges but embraced this change in his life. He set up the causes of environmentalism and conservation as his own and established an award program. Not only did he become an outstanding royal consort; in his own right he changed the direction of so many important issues in our world.

In 1957 the Queen conferred on him the dignity of Prince of the United Kingdom and in 1960 his surname was legally combined with the name of her family to create Mountbatten-Windsor as a surname for lesser branches of the Royal Family. He served as president of the World Wildlife Fund from 1981 to 1996, and his international award program has allowed more than six million young adults to engage in community service, leadership development and physical fitness activities. In 2011, to mark his ninetieth birthday, Queen Elizabeth conferred on him the title and office of Lord High Admiral, the titular head of the Royal Navy. In May 2017 it was announced that Philip, who was one of the busiest royals, with more than 22,000 solo appearances over the years, would in August stop carrying out public engagements. His last solo event took place on 2 August 2017.

Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth were married for just over 73 years. It was a marriage of unwavering loyalty and an outstanding example to the people of the United Kingdom and the rest of the world. His legacy of service and advocacy for environmental causes will continue well after his passing. He balanced the roles of consort, husband, father, grandfather, leader and influencer in a way that sets an outstanding example for us. His humour, quick wit and loathing for political correctness kept it real for the people who had the honour and privilege to meet him in his amazing solo appearances.

On behalf of the people of New South Wales and the community of Mulgoa, I extend my deepest condolences to the Royal Family and to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I trust that the outpouring of love and support from the furthest corners of the world they are now witnessing will bring comfort and peace to their hearts as they now navigate a different world with the loss of their husband, father and grandfather. May he rest in peace.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (16:31):** It is one of those occasions for parliaments across the Commonwealth to reflect on the history, sacrifice and service making up this great institution, with the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. We as parliamentarians look on His Royal Highness as the consort to our sovereign and to an institution that has given Western democracies a thousand years of stable service. It is also important for us to pause and acknowledge and reflect on the fact that he was, like most of us, a parent. He was a husband, a father, a grandfather and a great-grandfather. He was all of those.

For me he was also a bit of a hero, not just because he was the consort to the greatest monarch the world has ever seen but because he was a veteran of World War II who served in the Royal Navy, who took up arms in the face of adversity against what I consider to be the vilest regime the world has ever seen. Of course, he could quite easily have used his rank as a member of a European Royal Family to avoid active military service. In fact, he probably could have avoided any military service by virtue of his rank. But he did not. He saw the evils in fascism. He accepted his obligations, noblesse oblige, and took up arms against the Third Reich and the Axis powers and saw active service. That act made him a hero of the Western world, in my mind.

Prince Philip has been criticised by critics of the Westminster system for various comments and actions he made over the course of his life. That is what makes up the charm of the story of His Royal Highness. Given his military service, I do not think anybody could say that he was anything but courageous. I think everybody in the world could say that he had nothing but loyalty to the Commonwealth, as exemplified by his patronage of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which my wife, Nicole, and my sons have completed. The patronage of that award has now fallen to his son Prince Edward. Prince Philip was also the patron of the English-Speaking Union. In that vein he worked very hard to ensure that the English-speaking nations of the world not only reinforced and encouraged Westminster traditions but also encouraged those nations to continue loyalty to the rule of law and to the eternal fight for freedom.

My wife and I met Prince Philip once at a garden party in Sydney. The Prince was visiting Australia with the Queen and I was visiting as a returned peacekeeper. When Philip saw my decorations—those that peacekeepers are offered in his wife's name—he identified with ease the Australian Service Medal. When one considers how many garden parties and military establishments Prince Philip has visited, it was quite impressive that he knew what the Australian Service Medal looked like. We had a brief discussion about peacekeeping operations in the Pacific Rim and he remarked on the instability of some of our neighbouring islands. At the end of the conversation I had the impression that Prince Philip had a genuine interest in the Australian Defence Force.

Yes, Prince Philip was politically incorrect. That was one of the things that I admired about him. But he was also a great believer in constitutional monarchy. As I mentioned before, Philip was an advocate for the rule of law. In the life of Prince Philip, we should reflect most on the fact that he genuinely believed—as was personified through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award—that we had an obligation to leave our children a better world than the one we inherited. I think that he did that not only for his family but also right around the Commonwealth. One of the faults of history is the fact that Prince Philip was born a prince of Greece and Denmark and not of the United Kingdom. He was born on 10 June 1921 at his family's villa, Mon Repos, on the island of Corfu. My birthday is 11 June, so when I was a child my family would acknowledge the fact that his birthday was the day before mine and we would celebrate both very important days in the calendar.

As we have heard from previous members, Prince Philip married Princess Elizabeth on 20 November 1947 at Westminster Abbey. The couple had known each other for many years, including during the early war years when Prince Philip was preparing to be deployed with the Royal Navy. In 2009 Philip became Britain's longest serving consort, which is no mean feat indeed. During the 1999 Australian republic referendum, Prince Philip kept uncharacteristically quiet. Later it was reported that not only was he surprised when the republicans failed but also that he made comments about the importance of constitutional monarchy. We cannot talk about Prince Philip without acknowledging his military service in the Second World War on board HMS *Ramillies*, HMS *Valiant* and HMS *Wallace*.

Prince Philip was on active service in Tokyo Bay when the Japanese surrendered, a day that is now remembered as Victory over Japan Day. On board HMS *Whelp* as first lieutenant, he was part of the crew that helped to recover prisoners of war. If the trauma of the high-tempo operations on the high seas during the Second World War was not difficult enough, recovering fellow countrymen who had been prisoners of war would certainly have tested the will and character of any individual. Prince Philip was one of the last surviving people to have served in the Second World War at Cape Matapan, where he was mentioned in dispatches for bravery. That is not an insignificant accolade in military circles. During the invasion of Sicily, Prince Philip saved his ship through quick thinking. He developed an ethic of service during that conflict, which he applied throughout the unprecedented changes of the postwar era, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Another fact that is often overlooked—although those who have recently binged *The Crown* would know—is that Prince Philip was also a qualified pilot, much like his grandson Prince William. Prince Philip flew 5,986 hours in 59 types of aircraft. I do not think I could work out how to drive 59 types of car. The fact that the man could fly 59 different variations of aircraft is quite remarkable. Prince Philip made more than 20 visits to Australia, which is more than any other royal. His first visit came as a naval officer during World War II and his most notable visit came in 1956 when he opened the Melbourne Olympic Games. His impact on Australians has been profound, not least on the more than 775,000 young Australians who have participated in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award since it began here in 1959. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is now so successful that it is offered across more than 130 countries.

Prince Philip's service began with the Royal Navy and included his service in the Second World War. He will probably be the last active serviceman to be a monarch or consort. He was also patron to more than 50 organisations, including Surf Life Saving Australia, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Australian Conservation Foundation, which the environment Minister is chuffed about. Up until his death, Prince Philip had a strong connection with the Australian Defence Force. In August 2017 Prince Philip retired from public life, and I vividly remember that I was in Parliament on the day that it was announced. I do not think anyone would begrudge a 96-year-old man retiring, particularly not after completing 22,119 royal engagements across the Commonwealth. It is a time of sadness and mourning not only for our monarch but also for the Royal Family. However, as members of the Commonwealth of Nations, which has seen the service he has offered, it is important for the Parliament to say vale to a great leader and to note that the world has changed with his passing.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:43):** I extend my deepest sympathy and offer my condolence to Her Majesty the Queen and all members of the Royal Family on the passing of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at Windsor Castle on 9 April this year. The relationship between Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth and His Royal Highness Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark, as they were known at the time, began as friendship, grew into affection and finally became everlasting love. It was one of the greatest and longest partnerships in history. Her Majesty and Prince Philip are the longest married couple in the history of the British Royal Family, having been married for 73 years.

Prince Philip's contribution not only to the Commonwealth but also to the entire world is well documented. His achievements are many and varied. His most notable achievements include his service during World War II in the Royal Navy, his tireless charity work and patronage, his distinguished polo career, the co-founding and inaugural presidency of the World Wildlife Fund and the establishment of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for which he will always be remembered. The Duke of Edinburgh program will be a lasting legacy and inspiration of Prince Philip and one with probably the furthest reach at a grassroots level for young people to learn skills and be empowered to reach their full potential. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has often been credited by high achievers in many fields for their inspiration and drive to achieve great things. It was a privilege to be in New South Wales Parliament in 2019 when His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, was in this building to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia.

Prince Philip's cheeky sense of humour and straightforward demeanour were well known and unique. The Queen and Prince Philip were often seen over the years sharing a laugh together. Perhaps one of his most famous remarks, about being the world's most experienced plaque unveiler, is one that members in this place may aspire to. Whether you are a republican, a monarchist or neither, it is undeniable that throughout the decades Prince Philip has been a stalwart for service to Queen, country and the Commonwealth. Prince Philip leaves behind a great legacy that is unlikely to be matched. Her Majesty best summed that up:

He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know.

I believe that Prince Philip probably thought of his greatest achievement as his love, support, strength, guidance and dedication to Her Majesty and their family. From a generation and class of arranged marriages, theirs was one of genuine love and respect and a true partnership. Her Majesty is, in my opinion—which I know I share with many people—the greatest monarch in history. Today we pass on our condolences to Her Majesty and their family in acknowledging the life of the greatest royal consort in history. On behalf of the Camden electorate, I pass on my condolences to Her Majesty and all the members of the Royal Family. May the Duke of Edinburgh rest in peace.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:47):** I offer my condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and members of the Royal Family upon the sad death of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. There has been bipartisan acknowledgement of Prince Philip's contribution to public life. Even the Australian Republican Movement gave its condolences to the Royal Family upon his passing. One does not need to love the Royal Family to appreciate the extraordinary contribution to public life by the late prince. Born in 1921, Prince Philip almost

reached 100 years of age, most of which was spent in public service. In 1939, at the age of 18, he joined the Royal Navy. During World War II he served with distinction in the British Mediterranean and Pacific fleets.

It should never be forgotten by today's citizens of Australia that the battles fought by the American, British, Dutch and Australian navies were critical to prevent Japan from achieving its stated intention to invade Australia. In turn, they made a great contribution to the freedoms that we enjoy today. It was during his service in the Pacific that Prince Philip first visited Australia. It is said that he came to like the relaxed manner of the people in this country, particularly with respect to the Royal Family. After the war Prince Philip became engaged to then Princess Elizabeth and in 1947 they married. The popular Netflix series *The Crown* gave many people an idea of the love story and early married life that they enjoyed.

Prince Philip has been the longest Crown consort in English history, but he was much more than that. Upon the Queen's ascension to the throne, Prince Philip left active military service to give his time fully to his public duties. Prince Philip was patron, president or member of more than a staggering 780 organisations. His love of sport included polo, which he retired from to develop the event of carriage driving. In our country he is best known as the chairman and founder of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a self-improvement program for young people aged 14 to 24.

In September 2019 I was fortunate to represent the responsible Minister at a Duke of Edinburgh's Award dinner at Parliament House to celebrate 60 years of the award in Australia. My wife and I met and had dinner with Prince Edward, who is now the head of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award recognises young adults for completing a series of self-improvement exercises. It is an incredible organisation and its basic statistics say a lot: Over 25,000 young people start the Duke of Edinburgh's Award each year; over 11,500 young people in Australia finish the award each year; and over 44,000 participate in the award annually. They are assisted by over 60,000 adult volunteer leaders and activity assessors, who support the annual award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is inclusive, with over 4,000 disadvantaged youth participating in the award each year. It generates an incredible amount of volunteer hours, with over 275,000 in Australia each year.

Since its inception in 1959 over 775,000 Australian youths have participated in the award. I know that is the case because many of the schools in the Ku-ring-gai electorate have participated in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program over its many years. The magnitude of Prince Philip's contributions to public life outside of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award should never be forgotten. Between 1952 and 2 August 2017, when he retired from public duties, Prince Philip completed over 22,000 solo public engagements and made over 5,493 speeches. Regrettably, he died only two months before his 100th birthday. Prince Philip has been one of the great public figures in the world in the past 100 years, as many speakers today have already acknowledged.

The death of Prince Philip has caused us to reflect on the positive role played by the Royal Family and their representatives in Australia under our current constitutional arrangement, which is within the constitutional monarchy system of government. Constitutional monarchies are objectively the best system of government in the world. Freedom House is an international, independent, non-government agency that monitors and ranks countries for their adherence to the United Nations covenants on political rights and civil liberties. According to Freedom House, Australia is in the top 10 free countries in the world. In fact, seven out of 10 of the top free countries are constitutional monarchies. That is a massive over-representation because only 25 per cent of countries that are members of the United Nations are constitutional monarchies.

In fact, three of the top 10 free countries in the world—Australia, Canada and New Zealand—have Queen Elizabeth as their monarch, and Prince Philip made a considerable contribution to their nations. Prominent republics like the United States, France, Italy, Russia and China do not even come close to making the top 10 free countries in the world, according to the Freedom House rankings. Indeed, many republics, like the Republic of China and the Republic of Russia, are effectively single-party states. So there is much to admire about a system of government involving constitutional monarchy. Prince Philip made an outstanding contribution to the world and to the freedom of the world, including to our nation, and we all offer our great condolences to Queen Elizabeth and the Royal Family. Vale, Prince Philip.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:55):** It is an honour and privilege today to pay tribute to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip. The Duke of Edinburgh spent more than seven decades at the side of Her Majesty the Queen, providing his steadfast and most loyal support. The Duke was referred to regularly as Her Majesty's "strength and stay" for his strong commitment to family as a devoted husband and consort, father and grandfather. Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh have visited this special place, our Parliament, on many occasions, opening special sessions of the Parliament in 1954 and 1992. Australia and the State of New South Wales had a special place in the heart of the Duke of Edinburgh. It is a testament to a lifetime of service that throughout the world people have marked the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh with personal and local memories.

The Duke of Edinburgh accompanied Her Majesty on many trips to Australia, which included 16 tours of New South Wales, including to Wollongong in 1954. People from the Shoalhaven were disappointed that the royal visit in 1954 did not travel further south than Wollongong. Reports at the time say that hundreds of people gathered at locations near Dunmore House in Shellharbour and at the aerodrome at Albion Park, hoping to see the Queen and the Duke, despite multiple officials dismissing rumours of a secret visit. Just two years later the Duke of Edinburgh returned to Australia to open the 1956 Olympics and visited HMAS *Albatross* near Nowra, in my electorate. The Duke was given a tour of the station, standing in a modified Land Rover. He then watched mechanics servicing aircrafts, and inspected the new canteen, the recruits' quarters and hangars. Officials at HMAS *Albatross* presented the Duke with a brass ornament, the design of which included a boomerang and an albatross.

The Duke of Edinburgh gave his tireless support to many causes here in New South Wales but most notably, as the member for Ku-ring-gai pointed out, to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As Minister for youth and young people, I am absolutely in awe of the young people who participate in the incredible tasks. These awards have truly changed the lives of almost 800,000 young people in Australia and many millions around the world. Several generations of leaders in this country are able to credit participation in the awards as playing a significant role in shaping and influencing their leadership style and their lives. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award serves as an enduring legacy of a man who embodied service. His distinguished service as member of the Royal Navy will be widely known to many members in this place. In 1939, during the Second World War, the Duke of Edinburgh served alongside Australian forces while on board HMS *Ramillies*, escorting the first contingents of Allied expeditionary forces from Australia to Egypt. Later in the war, he was even present in Tokyo Bay in 1945 on board HMS *Whelp* for the Japanese surrender on 2 September.

It will come as no surprise to anyone in this place that I greatly admired his sense of humour and occasional gaffes. His humour and no-nonsense approach endeared him to Australians far and wide. He did not take himself too seriously, which would reassure and comfort the people he met—who might have been nervous about being in his presence—even at the most formal of occasions. While it is with great sadness that we mark this occasion, we celebrate a life well lived. We do not forget a man who made a huge contribution to the lives of so many in his own right. We do not forget a man who put duty and service before self. He was an incredible individual—somebody who inspired many. On behalf of my community, I express our deepest condolences to Her Majesty and the Royal Family. May he rest in peace.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Announcements*

### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reference**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council regarding a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I set down consideration of the Legislative Council's message as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:00):** I move:

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

- (1) Permit the consideration, following the conclusion of the public interest debate, of the message from the Legislative Council proposing a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and of the following resolution:

That:

- (1) The Legislative Assembly disagrees with the Legislative Council proposal for a reference to the Independent Commission Against Corruption as set out in its message dated 5 May 2021.
  - (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution.
- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits:
  - (a) mover – 10 minutes;
  - (b) two Opposition members – 10 minutes each;
  - (c) one Government member – 10 minutes;

- (d) one crossbench member in favour of the motion – 10 minutes;
  - (e) one crossbench member against the motion – 10 minutes; and
  - (f) mover in reply – three minutes.
- (3) Provide for the resumption of any interrupted item of business at the conclusion of the debate.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Public Interest Debate*

**ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:02):** On behalf of Ms Yasmin Catley: I move:

That this House does not support any further privatisation of government assets or services.

I move this motion to support the Premier and the message that she took to the electorate at the 2019 election—a message in part upon which she was elected and entrusted to continue to be the leader of this State. The problem is that when a leader of a party goes to an election with such a significant commitment to the community and convinces the community that her words are worthy, that leader has a responsibility to come back to this place and ensure her words mean something. But we are finding that the Premier's words are worth nothing, and that is not only disappointing to the people of New South Wales and to this Chamber, but also a disappointing legacy of this Premier as history writes her record.

I quote the words that the Premier took to the election. When asked whether she was going to have more sell-offs, the Premier said, "No, no, no." When asked whether there were going to be any more privatisations, she said, "No, no, no." And when asked whether there was any chance of further asset recycling and privatisation, she said if she was going to sell more public assets "We would tell you". Does anybody in this Chamber recall the Premier going to the 2019 election and saying to the community, "Going forward, we are planning on selling off a whole bunch of additional stuff. We might sell the other part of Ausgrid and Endeavour Energy. We might sell a whole bunch of our public land. We might privatise a whole bunch of our assets"? Did anybody in the Chamber hear the Premier say that? Madam Deputy Speaker, I know you cannot answer the question, but I ask rhetorically: Did you happen to hear her say that? I know the answer to that is "no", because she did not. She said the complete opposite of that.

This is the same Premier who, when the Port of Newcastle was privatised, said emphatically, clearly and in the media that there was no restriction on shipping container terminals through the Port of Newcastle under the deal she had signed. Well, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has completely unpicked that and proven that statement to be a complete fabrication, dishonest in the extreme and contrary to the contract that she herself had signed. When they sold off the Land Titles Office, the Premier said publicly and widely that the employees would be offered a four-year protection to their employment. It was a disgraceful decision that is going to rob the NSW Treasury books of more than \$100 million every year, and she said they had a four-year guarantee. Guess what? Twelve months after that sale, 30 per cent of that workforce was gone.

What about the Ausgrid privatisation where, again, multi-year protections were put into place for workers? Putting aside the fact that the privatisation of that asset costs the State close to \$2 billion every single year, what about the workers? Well, within 12 months 1,000 workers had been dismissed from that entity. They had stripped out the profits and sacked the workforce and reliability was in decline. That was the privatisation of the electricity network across the Hunter. I personally know dozens and dozens of Ausgrid workers who no longer have a job. Hundreds of people in the Hunter lost their jobs—permanent, full-time jobs, not just short-term construction jobs on a stadium or a tunnel—and the State lost the income. Sure, there is going to be something built with the money—which, from the time it is built, is going to cost money to maintain, not drive a profit back to the State.

The people of New South Wales have had an absolute gutful of these privatisations. They are sick of them. It is not just the Labor Opposition that knows that; Government members know the very same thing. That is why they went to an election promising and committing to no more privatisations, because they know their communities have had a gutful. They have come back into this place and they are going to allow this process to go forward because their Treasurer knows no other trick. He is a one-trick pony. Pig Iron Perrottet only knows how to sell, sell, sell. He does not know any other way. Anyone in this Chamber who thinks that guy is managing the books in a decent way needs to understand that when the Liberal Party came to Government the borrowings of this State were \$11 billion and now, over the forward projections, they are going to be in excess of \$70 billion.

That is a 700 per cent blowout happening at the same time as the Government is privatising and selling off the assets that make profit for this State and saying to our public sector workers that they are going to have a pay cut, in real terms. Government members have sold it all. They have racked up the debt. They have put the squeeze on wages. Hundreds of full-time employees of those agencies are out of work now. That is the Government's

legacy and that is why the Premier went to the election saying, "No more. We have done enough. If I was going to do more, I would tell you." What a lie! What a big, fat, dirty, political lie. Government members took it to the election. Every single one of them is guilty by association with that lie.

Every single one of them went into their communities with the Premier as their billboard pin-up. They all took that same lie to their communities, and now they are going to sit there meekly and quietly and watch it happen. The Premier cannot be trusted. Her words cannot be trusted. Her election commitments cannot be trusted. Even her language and answers in ICAC cannot be trusted. Her relationships cannot be trusted. She cannot be trusted with a single thing that she says. She is going to privatise more of the State's assets despite the public promise and commitment she made to the people of New South Wales. It is a disgrace and this House must put an end to the privatisation.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:09):** There was a bit of Hollywood at play in the House from the member for Cessnock. It appears he is dabbling in confected outrage this afternoon. Those on the other side of the Chamber have very short memories because when they were last in government they pushed through the gentrader deal that even saw Labor Party members on the board resign due to the action of the Labor Party in the privatisation of those gentraders. It was such a hotly contested and appalling action, in the dying days of the Labor Government, that failed Premier Kristina Keneally prorogued Parliament to avoid scrutiny over the deal. Opposition members can lament that the Government is privatising assets but, in fact, they have done it. Why do they not bring some honesty to this debate and admit the areas and features of our community that the Labor Government privatised? Labor members set the wheels in motion.

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

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** In a fiscally constrained environment, asset recycling enables the Government to invest in service-enabling infrastructure while minimising government debt. The Government has a vision not only to invest in the future of our State—the much-needed infrastructure and services—but to do so without burdening future generations with debt. Unfortunately it seems that the Labor playbook has never been updated, because the only way it wants to deliver infrastructure and services is by burdening generations with the weight of debt. That is not what the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government wants to do.

The New South Wales Government has committed to a record infrastructure pipeline of \$107 billion to ensure the delivery of projects across the State, including vital infrastructure in health, education and transport, to benefit the people of New South Wales. The Government's track record and ability to deliver groundbreaking and much-needed infrastructure in health and education is the stuff that the Labor Party could only dream about. When it was in government for 16 years, it failed and failed and failed to deliver in those critical areas of essential public service delivery.

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

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** It was up to the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to turn the page in the storybook of the New South Wales community and begin a different chapter of delivering much-needed infrastructure. The \$107 billion infrastructure pipeline is estimated to deliver 145,000 jobs each year and will boost consumer confidence to place New South Wales in a strong position to respond to the economic challenges created by COVID-19. Just some examples of what the Government is funding include \$10.4 billion for the Sydney Metro West; \$9.2 billion for Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport; \$2.2 billion for the Sydney Gateway project; \$10.7 billion in health infrastructure, including hospital redevelopment, which is more than three times that of Labor in its last term of office; and \$7.7 billion in education and skills infrastructure, including new and upgraded schools, which my community in Mulgoa has certainly benefited from.

However, all of that has only been enabled by the Government's strong financial management, of which asset recycling forms a key part. The Government has been able to build big only because it had the vision and the courage to undertake its asset recycling program. The prior round of its highly successful asset recycling program enabled fast-tracking of critical infrastructure projects, including bringing forward project start dates, accelerating project time frames and funding projects that were previously unfunded. Since 2011 asset recycling has unlocked over \$60 billion in funding, which has allowed for the accelerated delivery of critical infrastructure projects. As at October 2020 the Government, through Restart NSW, has recycled \$25.1 billion of old assets into new assets.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** That component of the transaction seems to have fallen from the rhetoric that the Labor Party likes to promulgate in this place.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I will come back to it if I have the right of reply.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, you do.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** The New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government is committed to delivering the infrastructure, the services and the quality of life that the people of New South Wales deserve and will get only under a Liberal-Nationals Government.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:15):** The privatisation agenda of this Government is well and truly out of control and out of step with the expectations of this community. The Government flogged the Port of Newcastle for \$1.75 billion and shackled it with a cap on containers, which we cannot get out of—

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

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** Ninety-eight years of being shackled. Let me tell members about the disastrous privatisation of our Newcastle bus service: schoolchildren left standing by the side of the road; teenagers leaving home at the crack of dawn to get to school on time; bus stops closed; blowouts in journey times. The list goes on and on. Elderly people are left isolated and abandoned. The Government sold off the buses and sold off the electricity network. And does the reliability get any better? No, it gets worse. The Government sold off the Northern Beaches Hospital—

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

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** The committee recommended that the Government never privatise a hospital again.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Newcastle will direct his comments through the chair.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** These are just some of the items in the list of dodgy deals undertaken by this dodgy Government as it carries on its dodgy privatisation blitz. Remember the sale of Vales Point Power Station in November 2015 for \$1 million? It was later revalued at \$750 million. Great deal, guys! It does not really work, yet they keep doing it again and again. The Premier cannot help herself. She went to the last election saying, "Will we do any more sell-offs? No, no, no. No more sell-offs." She said, "Nup, nup, nup". She said, "If we were going to sell more public assets, we would tell you." Was she being truthful at the election? No. She knew exactly what she was doing though. She knew exactly what she wanted to sell off in the next term of Parliament.

This Premier is a fraud but the real fraud is the one perpetuated against the people of the State. They went to the election with a promise from the New South Wales Premier that privatisation would stop. They took her at her word that privatisation would stop. They took her at her word that she would not sell off more of their assets. These were solemn commitments given in the lead-up to the last election and taken at face value by the electorate, who gave the Premier the benefit of the doubt. She is dishonest and tricky. So it is no surprise that smack bang between two elections she is using the cover of COVID to open the door for more privatisation. We know, and the Premier knows, that people hate privatisation. She knows that people want to keep public assets in public hands and working for the public good. She also knows that if she were honest with the people and told them what she really stands for and who she really represents that they would run a mile from her and the Liberal Party.

The Premier knows that the people of New South Wales see through her lies, so she has kept very quiet for two whole years. But in the meantime she has been sizing up the State for the massive sell-off that is about to commence. Nothing will be safe. She will not stop with the remainder of the electricity network being sold. She will not stop with the final piece of the puzzle in the toll road monopoly, with Transurban owning every road in town. She will not stop there. She will keep selling off TAFE. Scone TAFE was sold last month and Bega TAFE will be next. Then she will sell Katoomba and Newcastle will come after that. This is not scaremongering. These TAFEs have been whittled away in preparation for them being sold. The Government has degraded the courses on offer, reduced the number of classes and discouraged people from attending in person. And now it will sell off the campus because, it says, there are not enough students. But that is not all. Crown land and public land will be gifted to property developers to build new private housing because this Government hates social housing and the vulnerable people who need it. Buses and trains will be flogged off, services cut, jobs slashed and safety compromised—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** —all so a private company can turn public services into private profits. Newcastle has seen firsthand what happens when public transport is privatised: It was a disaster. Now they are going to sell off trains and buses throughout Sydney and western Sydney. There is not a single parcel of land, public asset or essential infrastructure that this Government does not want to have a very good look at and sell. This Government made a promise. The Premier made a promise. They said, "No more privatisation". They lied.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Cootamundra will be heard in silence.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:20):** I stand here today as the very proud member for Cootamundra, a seat of small communities, where this Government's strong fiscal management has been about growth, prosperity, jobs and opportunities for the people of rural New South Wales. It must be remembered—and I do not think my people will ever forget—that we had a Labor government for 16 years. The towns and communities of my electorate went without for years and years. Throughout that time, everything was broken and busted. Schools were closed, maternity units were closed, and sporting facilities were struggling to provide for their players.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms STEPH COOKE:** My communities know this. The member for Cessnock talks about legacy. The legacy that they left us was an enormous backlog in infrastructure. We could not see how we were ever going to get on top of it. Since we have been in government, our strong fiscal management has allowed us to address these extremely large infrastructure backlogs—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Newcastle has had his turn.

**Ms STEPH COOKE:** —and the broken and busted infrastructure and facilities. I am so proud of our Regional Growth Fund, with \$1.7 billion already invested and over 2,000 projects right across New South Wales, setting our communities up for generations to come. This is exactly what was needed and at the right time for our communities. I can speak personally from the perspective of the Cootamundra electorate, which has received \$35 million through the Stronger Country Communities Fund already and over 180 projects—each and every one of them worthy. It is about setting those communities up for generations to come. We want our kids in the bush to be able to have the same access to opportunities as others across New South Wales, whether they live in a metropolitan area or Newcastle or Wollongong. That is what we want for our kids. That is not what it was like before we came into government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms STEPH COOKE:** Over the last decade our Government has been investing in improving our schools and our hospitals. Funding of \$70 million has been announced for the Cowra Hospital—not before time. We have new police stations and our schools and sporting facilities are being upgraded, certainly across my electorate and right across regional New South Wales.

**Ms Kate Washington:** That is not true.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens is on another call to order. I think that makes three.

**Ms STEPH COOKE:** The Regional Growth Fund, which has seen so much investment in our communities, is setting us up for the future. It is not just about leaving the legacy infrastructure; it is also about the jobs and the opportunities that it creates along the way. Our tradies have never been in higher demand. It is absolutely fantastic. We are seeing people moving from the city to the bush. Every single week I speak to people who are moving into our communities and who are making a valuable contribution because they can see—and at last we can see—that the bush has a future. Our kids will be able to grow up in a great environment, have a great education and be provided with all the opportunities and will be able to stay and live in the area and raise their own families.

Our people will be able to retire and not have to leave our small communities. This is what it is all about from our perspective. It is very disappointing to hear the member for Cessnock in particular, who has seen firsthand some of this investment through the special activation precincts in places like Parkes and Wagga. This is all about attracting more investment and generating jobs and economic prosperity for generations to come. I am proud of our economic achievements in government and the continued investment in regional New South Wales, which I and—more than that—my communities know are setting them up for the long term.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:25):** On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the public interest motion that this House does not support any further privatisation of government assets. I acknowledge the Labor Opposition for bringing this important public debate to the Chamber. As we have heard listed, we could be focused on so many things in the context of this debate. But given that the New South Wales housing strategy was released today, with the headline initiative announcing that it will make it easier for property developers to use a database to search public assets and land, and pitch to the Government how they would like to bid to allow them to privatise that, that probably tops the charts at the moment in a privatisation agenda.

I make it clear to the New South Wales housing Minister: We do not solve the housing crisis by creating a database to allow property developers to buy public land and redevelop public housing into for-profit, private housing that the people in the State cannot afford to live in. That is not a housing strategy. The Minister in her

comments today—and the associated commentary around it—was suggesting that this is exactly what we need: to go out to the private sector and private developers to get their ideas on how to deal with the housing crisis in this State. If we are talking about the idea of privatisation and outsourcing, this would suggest that she is in effect outsourcing and privatising her own responsibilities as the Minister, which is to come up with the ideas and the strategy to deliver on how we solve the housing crisis in the State.

Imagine for a second how one would feel if one was living in public housing in Redfern, Waterloo, Surry Hills, Mangerton, Bellambi, up north, down south, in the west, or in the upper Hunter, and one saw the State Government put one's home—the place where one lives—on a database for property developers to potentially bid for, buy and redevelop. One would still be living in that place and in that community. This is the strategy we are seeing out of a privatisation-obsessed Liberal-Nationals Government. I think the other crucial point to make around this is that there is a reason why we are seeing this, because the Government is refusing to recognise the need to invest public money in public infrastructure or to deliver the social and affordable housing that our community needs. If we are going to see this new database appear it is crucial that we get a commitment out of the Minister and the Government that this database is only being done to enable redevelopment plans around public land and housing that will see a re-delivery of 100 per cent public and social housing on that land.

Sadly, I do not think that is going to happen because its Communities Plus model is built on starting with 100 per cent public housing, somehow fudging and spinning it a bit, ending up with 70 per cent private housing and 30 per cent public housing, and claiming that it has increased the amount of social housing in the community. I still cannot work out how that works, but that is its current policy to deliver on, apparently, more social housing in our community. Meanwhile, the ABC today reported that services on the South Coast are bracing for an increase in homelessness as winter approaches. The housing crisis is not just a theoretical problem there. It affects people's lives in the most fundamental way. The ABC today reported:

Wollongong Emergency Housing has admitted it is struggling to keep up with the increase in demand for their services. CEO Mandy Booker said she fears their efforts won't be enough in the upcoming cold season.

Last week I met with Mandy Booker and saw the phenomenal work that her team does in supporting people with their housing applications and temporary accommodation, providing emergency onsite accommodation, and all too often seeing that their only option is to provide people with a swag or a tent. That is not the solution and would demonstrate the failures of this Government to deliver. In addition we see the mayor of Shoalhaven, Amanda Findley, today urgently calling for an intervention by the Government for more affordable housing. Mayor Findley has been a compassionate, calm and competent leader, supporting the Shoalhaven community through catastrophic fires and floods. Now she is facing a housing crisis and she is calling on the Government to act. Whether it be the privatisation of public housing or public land, Communities Plus or the privatisation of TAFE, electricity or our local inner west bus services, this Liberal-Nationals Government only knows how to do one thing and that is to put the profits of private big business and dodgy property developers above the needs of the community.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:30):** Let us just reveal the hypocrisy of this Labor Party. Their leader, Jodi McKay, has a long history of supporting privatisation of electricity assets. In 2007-08 at the height of the debate around privatisation of the State's electricity assets, Jodi was full-throated in her endorsement of privatisation plans. A March 2008 report in the *Newcastle Herald* noted:

Ms McKay said yesterday she remained supportive of privatisation as it was in the interest of those in her electorate.

She even stuck to her endorsement of privatisation in the face of being threatened with disendorsement in 2008. The *Newcastle Herald* reported:

A resolute Ms McKay stuck to her guns yesterday, saying she supported the privatisation because she believed it was the right thing to do. "It is a good plan and the state needs it," she said.

She voted in favour of privatisation in the State Parliamentary Labor Party caucus on multiple occasions as well as voting for the plan at the May 2008 State Australian Labor Party [ALP] conference.

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Jodi said in regard to electricity privatisation, "I believe in the plan and will be supporting the Premier." In May 2008 she went even further with her criticism, with the *Newcastle Herald* reporting that Jodi continued to support the privatisation proposal even after it was rejected seven to one by the ALP State conference. The *Herald* reported Jodi saying opponents to privatisation were "fighting a battle of the past". When Jodi was made a Minister in September 2008 she went even further, saying that she had not lost any sleep over the decision to back power privatisation. The *Newcastle Herald* reported:

After months of strong criticism over her decision to back electricity privatisation, a decision that many believe gave her the cabinet spot, McKay reflected on that question and her answer.

"What I've found is you have to keep asking yourself, 'Is this the decision that will keep me awake at night?', and I haven't had that. I can honestly say I haven't been in that position.

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** The *Herald* reported her saying:

"The one thing you have to do is have your integrity as your compass." McKay said she remained a strong supporter of electricity privatisation.

"I'm not backing away from it," she said.

Jodi's views on privatisation are not just a political convenience. Again, the *Newcastle Herald* reported:

Her support for the Government's power restructure was "because of the beliefs that I have", and was not related to any factional alliance, she said.

"I have to do what I think is best, and I'm pretty comfortable with my decision."

When targeted by unions, McKay's response was to stand up to them and say that she was not backing down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** The *Newcastle Herald* said:

Ms McKay said she was not intimidated by the union's vow to target her and would sleep well at night. "The decision I made was a difficult decision but that's what this job is about, making decisions. Sometimes they're unpopular but they are the right decisions," she said.

It was not just the energy networks that Ms McKay supported privatising. She also supported the privatisation of Cessnock and Parklea prisons. The *Newcastle Herald* reported, "Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay said she supported privatising the jails". When member of the bench Judge Nicholson criticised the lack of funding and resources for rehabilitation in country jails and noted that it would be worse if private industry takes over, Ms McKay dismissed his concerns about privatisation, saying:

The Department of Corrective Services offers a suite of rehabilitation programs and I reject any suggestion they are inadequate ... Programs at Cessnock will not be cut. They will be maintained.

Jodi supported the privatisation of three aged-care facilities in the Hunter as the Minister for the Hunter. She said:

On a personal note, my father is cared for in the facility at Gloucester. ... I am supportive of the facilities being operated by non-government organisations ...

In brief, Jodi supported privatising anything that was not nailed down, both as a member of Parliament and as a Minister, because of the beliefs that she held. Her latter-day conversion to fight against privatisation has come only because she believes there might be a vote in it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland has the call. She will be heard in silence.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:35):** It is interesting to look around the Chamber today and see how many Nationals actually turned up to argue against privatisation—doughnuts. One member opposite is actually supporting it, The Nationals Whip. I feel sorry for her because she drew the short straw today and has had to come in and back the Government. We know that before the last election the Liberals and The Nationals came in and the Premier herself made a promise that there would be no more privatisations. She looked the electorate in the face and she said, "No more." Within 12 short months she had broken that promise and last year the Treasurer admitted he does not just have plans to continue the sell-offs; he has a list. The Government has already flogged off \$82 billion in government assets, costing thousands of jobs in our communities.

At the same time, with all the magical fiscal genius that the Treasurer purports to have, his infrastructure projects have blown out by \$22 billion. This is a government that robs the public to pay the corporates. A major example of this has been electricity. We know that with the privatisation of poles and wires the electricity prices went up, up, up. That is what this Government said would not happen. I have a constant stream of people coming to my electorate officers to tell me that they are very concerned about paying their electricity bills—those families, single people and small businesses are struggling to ever pay them. We have had 5,000-odd jobs slashed at Ausgrid after the Government sold off half of that provider in 2015. Today in question time the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer refused to say how many more jobs would be lost under the new privatisations. The Treasurer could not even say "Murrurundi" because he just does not care about the upper Hunter. That has been very clear all week.

We know that the reliability of the network has gone down under this Government. We have fewer workers going out in storms to restore power to properties. In rural areas that are not connected to town water—and I lived through this myself—that can mean days of not being able to have fresh water in your house to even flush your

toilets or have a shower. During the 2007 *Pasha Bulker* storms there were 100 linesmen employed by Ausgrid in the Hunter. In the 2015 April super storms, after eight years under this Government, the number had been halved to 50. When we fast-forward to 2020, we had just 17 to deal with those storms.

The people of Upper Hunter are so lucky right now. They are going to the polls soon and they have the chance to do what they have been trying to do for a long time, which is to tell the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to stop selling off our assets. There is a laundry list, a mega shopping list, of things that this Government has privatised: the Sydney Desalination Plant, Port Botany, Port Kembla, Eraring Power Station, Mount Piper Power Station, Wallerawang Power Station, Port of Newcastle, Green State Power, Bayswater, Liddell, Colongra Power Station, M7 rental payments, Vales Point—what a bargain that was, worth \$750 million later on—TransGrid, Construction Services Group, NSW Public Works, Pillar Superannuation, the land titles registry of Land and Property Information, Endeavour Energy, WestConnex and Scone TAFE.

There are so many assets, and that is just assets. Privatised services include palliative care, mental health services, disability services—how many disability services workers in the public sector were sacked under this Government?—cleaning services in hospitals, warehousing of medical supplies and bus services in the Hunter, as the member for Newcastle said. We have aged care. I went to Kimbarra in Gloucester the other day and it is an absolute disgrace, with accommodation for 20 people sitting there absolutely empty because this Government has sold off that aged-care service. What is next on the table? The Minister for Water, Property and Housing has come into the Chamber with her registry today. Exactly as the member for Newtown said, we will now have a list that will tell you what is up next. It might be your house. What a disgrace!

How many homeless people are coming in? The Minister had the gall to talk about housing affordability in terms of buying first homes. There are people in my electorate who cannot buy a bloody tent to live in. They cannot afford a second-hand bomb to live in. It is a disgrace. Muswellbrook TAFE and all of those other things are on the list. When I was elected in 2015 we fought the privatisation of my hospital and we won. That is why the community of Upper Hunter needs Jeff Drayton, because the member for Upper Hunter needs to be a strong advocate. That is what we need.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that it is a member of her own party who is waiting for silence to reply to the debate.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:41):** In reply: I acknowledge the contributions made by the member for Newcastle, the member for Maitland and the member for Newtown. I thank the unfortunate members representing the electorates of Mulgoa, Cootamundra and Goulburn, who were sent into the Chamber tonight by their cult and told to rattle out the lines that they do not fundamentally believe in. It is worth noting—and I know the member for Maitland commented on it—the almost complete absence of the National Party. That tells you plenty. It is as simple as this: The fish rots from the head down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind Opposition members that their member does not require their assistance. He will be heard in silence.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** When the leader of the show is willing to say anything, do anything, keep secrets, tell lies, not be honest, pork-barrel and shred documents, is it any wonder that we end up with people like the disgraced member for Wagga Wagga or the disgraced member for Upper Hunter? Is it any wonder we have a by-election on our hands right now? Premier Berejiklian gave solemn commitments in the lead-up to the last general election. Taking them at face value, the community believed her. They looked at her predecessors, Baird and O'Farrell. One was corrupt; one was a failure. Berejiklian appeared to be a little bit different, so people trusted her. But in fact she is guilty of being not just another politician but the worst kind of politician, the kind that gives the rest of us a bad name by telling lies. She is dishonest; she is tricky. She turns a blind eye to corruption and runs a protection racket for crooks in this place the likes of which has not been seen since Robert Askin.

It is no surprise that smack bang between two elections, under the cover of COVID, she is saying that we have to do more on privatisation. She knows that people hate privatisation and I explained that earlier. She knows that people want public assets kept in public hands. She knows that those profits are absolutely essential to the budget bottom line. She knows that once that money is gone it will not be coming back. She knows that the assets that she is building with that money are not profit-making assets; they are cost assets. They are assets that hit our recurrent budget bottom line. She has taken us from being property owners to being property renters.

Who across the Chamber is looking to sell their house so they can rent a house? Those opposite know that is not what you do. You build towards rent. The Premier knows that the people have fallen for her lie and that is why she is doing it. The fish rots from the head down. The disgrace in this Government, the corruption, the number of appearances at ICAC and the by-elections that we are having—headlined by the member for Upper Hunter

right now—are a consequence of that fish rotting from the head down. Privatisation has to stop; so do Berejiklian lies.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....40  
Noes .....46  
Majority.....6

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

Hornery, S

Smith, N

**Motion negatived.**

#### Motions

### INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

#### Reference

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:54):** I move:

That:

- (1) The Legislative Assembly disagrees with the Legislative Council proposal for a reference to the Independent Commission Against Corruption as set out in its message dated 5 May 2021.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution.

You can tell that it is Wednesday of a sitting week because here we are again debating what is a very cheap political stunt. That is all it is. What we are about to hear from those opposite is some serious diatribe, some verbal diarrhoea—a conjured-up, manufactured, shadowy, weird, bizarre concept that seeks to refer the Premier to ICAC. This is Trump-level madness. But perhaps more sinister in this motion—the real damage that it does—is how it chips away at the public's faith in our law enforcement agencies and the good work that agencies like ICAC do. Those opposite run out of things to talk about. They run out of policy ideas to debate on the floor of the House. They say, "We have run out of things to do so let's just cook up another referral to ICAC."

Imagine the things that they could be talking about: a world-class response to the pandemic, a powerhouse economy on the up, great unemployment figures. Take your pick; there is a lot to talk about. But the Opposition seems to operate in this very strange parallel universe. If you were to go out and speak to the citizens, as this Government does a terrific job of doing, you would understand that no-one in their right mind would support this motion. But what we hear from those opposite is some serious weirdness that simply does not make sense and is cooked up in a parallel universe.

Nonetheless, here we are with the New South Wales Labor Party wasting our time in this place by referring the Premier to ICAC. This time it is a referral for supporting the arts and culture in the Riverina. That is it. That is basically the crux of this referral to ICAC. So let us just work with that. In considering this referral, I want to help those opposite, so here are some facts. Do Opposition members understand the concept of facts? They are indisputable; they are real things that happen. So here is fact number one: The funding for the Riverina Conservatorium of Music went through all appropriate processes, including through the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet, before it was announced during the Wagga Wagga by-election.

There is a pretty critical point there. Not only did it go through the appropriate processes, but it was announced in one of the most public settings that one could imagine—a by-election. I think that is an important factor for those opposite to consider. Fact number two is that in the case of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music it was the support that this Government delivered that secured the continued existence of the institution itself. Where is the logic in this motion? We are working towards a referral to ICAC for something that has done nothing but help the Wagga Wagga Conservatorium to continue its operation. Why does the Opposition hate the arts and music? I do not understand.

Here is the third fact: The conservatorium sought government support because it was being forced out of its existing leased site at Charles Sturt University. So there are three indisputable facts that I hope those opposite will take into account when they begin on their diatribe and their mission in making sense of this ridiculous motion. What is really at stake here? Let us have a look. The conservatorium supports a broad range of students, including school-age students across the entire Riverina. It assists in their musical literacy and hopefully in the future it will create some amazing musicians from the region and nearby. I do not think the Opposition has thought this through. I really do not. Did those opposite speak to the conservatorium? Did they speak to any locals? Did they seek their views?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** We're not referring them to ICAC, James.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** That does not make sense because you are trying to say that the support of this wonderful conservatorium was not something that was supported by the conservatorium itself, and that the funding it got from the New South Wales Government was not supported by the locals. So let me help you with that. Here is what the locals had to say. Conservatorium chair Andrew Wallace said late last year:

It's going to be an absolute game changer for the city. It's wonderful for Wagga, this facility, and it will be all ours for many, many, many years to come.

The director himself says:

It will provide world-class cultural infrastructure for the whole community and will be the premiere performance venue for classical music across all of regional New South Wales. It will attract visiting musicians nationally and internationally, and will also provide this cultural sector employment and significant economic stimulation for the city and region.

That is what they had to say about it. Let's kick on, even though this motion does not make sense. The Government committed to stage two of this project in 2018 and this is a Government that keeps its promises. It keeps its commitments to the citizens of New South Wales and, indeed, this is one that we are proud to commit to and deliver. We make no excuses for supporting arts in the region, and supporting local cultural and educational facilities. What the Opposition dislikes about this project is that it provides a great facility for the promotion of

music and arts in wonderful Wagga Wagga. The arts community in Wagga Wagga has been unanimous in its support for this project. The conservatorium chair has said it would be a game changer. The director has said it would be world class. It will be a piece of cultural infrastructure for the whole community. The only victims here are the conservatorium and the good people of Wagga Wagga. It is terribly sad that this motion has been brought to the House.

So let us call it what it is: It is a stunt. It is a desperate, time-wasting, utterly stupid political stunt. The entire process of referrals and the accusations of conflicts of interest pre-empt the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Where I started this motion is a reflection of those opposite: tired, sluggish, unimaginative and almost borderline obsessed with the good work of the Premier of New South Wales. This motion is so far off the mark—as I said, if you were to talk to Joe Citizen anywhere in New South Wales and say, "Look, this is what they propose," they would say, "You are absolutely bonkers. The Premier is doing an absolutely magnificent job. Let's talk about the things that matter." Let's talk about COVID recovery—the economic powerhouse that is New South Wales coming out of the challenges this pandemic has presented. Members opposite should respect the integrity of our legal system. They should support the arts and they should recognise this tired old tactic of referring the Premier to ICAC is boring and that the motion should be opposed.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:02):** Another day, another conversation to do with ICAC. This is a fairly familiar pattern with the Government, and when you have had a litany of scandals, then, yes, we may be back every Wednesday for the next few months. We may very well be back. It is a long and growing list. It started in the first term of this Government and it continues. I apologise to the member for Manly for this disruption, but his side of politics is giving us no shortage of fodder. I will say the same thing tonight as the Leader of the Opposition said last time we sought to refer the Premier to ICAC: "If the Premier has nothing to hide then she should support this referral." We wish we did not have to do this again, but time after time the Government forces us into this position. This time it relates to the \$30 million refurbishment—I will get back to that figure in a minute—of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music. It is another matter the Premier would not talk about at budget estimates. I have a conservatorium of music in my electorate, as some of you have. There are a fair few around regional New South Wales. I have one: the Wollongong Conservatorium, or the "Con" as it is known in my neck of the woods. I can guarantee that it would never even have dreamed of receiving a grant to the tune of \$30 million. It is an incredible amount. As far back as 2019, the former member for Wagga Wagga said, and this is important:

The organisation is now ready to expand.

...

The Riverina conservatorium concept is to develop a new centre for the Riverina Conservatorium of Music, together with a multi-purpose arts centre.

...

I am an enthusiastic supporter of this concept and wish the Riverina Conservatorium of Music well with its funding applications. I will do all I can to support this wonderful initiative.

That is fine. What we know is he was not a passenger. He was the main advocate for this project. That is very important. We also know the Premier was the main source of funding. In February 2017 Daryl Maguire took the Premier to the conservatorium to show her the site and lobby for funding. She had been the Premier for two weeks, and she made her way down to Wagga Wagga. Within a year, it was on. In February 2018 he announced:

The conservatorium of music will receive funding to the value of \$10 million from the State Government to move into and refurbish this building in Wagga Wagga ... and also in the near future receive further funding to build a world-class performance venue.

In February 2018, a full six months before the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC] approved stage two, how did he know that he had the green light? I do not know. I am not sure whether other members would know. We all lobby hard. I am not sure I could say to my conservatorium, and I have written many times to my conservatorium on a range of issues, "You've got a green light on funding", before there has been any discussion by the ERC. That is unusual, I will say that. How could he be sure that the second stage of funding was on its way? Why did the conservatorium that he was lobbying for get more funding than all the other conservatoria in New South Wales put together?

I know the member for Wagga Wagga will no doubt say that this conservatorium is a strong one. I know what it is like to have a good conservatorium in your local community. They make a real difference. They help to educate the next generation of musicians. They provide opportunities for people to engage in music in a formal and informal way. We understand that. I, having one in my own electorate, support that. But this is more funding than all of the other conservatoria in New South Wales, including my own, put together, received. That is a substantial amount of money.

Back in February at the grants inquiry, my colleague in the other place the Hon. John Graham asked Chris Hanger from the Department of Regional NSW who approved the funding. Mr Hanger replied, "The Premier

made that commitment." Mr Graham double-checked, "So the Premier approved stage two?" "Yes." We also have a letter signed by the Treasurer, which says, "The Premier and I approve this funding." The department says the Premier approved it—reasonable. The Treasurer says the Premier approved it—reasonable. But the Premier says, "I didn't." We all know—a lot of us have kids—you cannot do that. That is a common trick of my 11-year-old: to say one thing, forget what he said and then do another. That is a common mistake. But here we have the Treasurer of the State, the department head and secretary saying something completely different from the Premier. That is slightly unusual in anyone's books.

There are critical questions about this project that need answering, and the Parliament, this place, has exhausted its avenues to answer them. The Premier has refused to appear before the grants inquiry, which we tried to get her to, and she was unable to answer basic questions at the other formal hearing, the budget estimates. The Premier says she cannot remember when she first became aware of this project or who raised it with her. The Premier cannot remember Daryl Maguire taking her on a tour of the conservatorium two weeks after she became Premier. The Premier cannot even remember whether Daryl Maguire spoke to her about it. This is a \$30 million project; it is not an upgrade to a school canteen. The Premier cannot say whether she signed the approval letter. But she expects us to believe that everything was above board. We know she was at the centre of this process. She was lobbied for funding and she approved the funding.

Members on both sides of this House know that I do not give a damn about a person's partner in life. That is completely their business. It is the same in this case with the Premier. But on this occasion it relates to a member of her Government and to a funding issue. All she needed to do was to declare it or to simply say that someone else should look at it. Labor is saying that there are serious questions to be answered. We know that and we believe a referral is important to get to the bottom of this matter.

I would hope that no-one on any side is interested in people's personal relationships. I do not give a damn about it. I am on the record many times as saying that the quicker that behaviour gets out of this place the better for everybody—certainly the better for our spouses, partners, boyfriends, girlfriends, whatever it is. The problem here is that the Premier was the approver of a significant amount of money—an amount of money that was greatly increased and greatly more significant than funding received by any other conservatorium across the State. You have to declare an interest when you are controlling that level of expenditure. This is not a small amount of expenditure; it is a significant amount of expenditure. These are legitimate questions. These are legitimate issues around the administration of public funds. We say that this matter needs to be looked at.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:11):** I stand here perplexed as I speak to this motion, responding to another upper House referral to ICAC. A proposed referral by both Houses of Parliament should be an act that is above politics, a solemn and sincere act, consistent with the oath all parliamentarians have made. A referral by both Houses of Parliament is not supposed to be a political stunt, rather something that has bipartisan support. But this is now the third time in the past six sitting weeks when such a referral has been proposed by the upper House. So I question whether this is the new normal and whether the Opposition will continue to stoop to the low depths of cheap political stunts such as these with the hope of getting some attention for the Opposition in the news cycle.

This is a time that should be focused on the many citizens of this State who have been forced out of their homes due to the devastating floods. It should be a time to reflect on the sacrifices our emergency service workers and volunteers make, trying to keep communities safe. Instead, the timing of this is nothing but repugnant. It is the product of the hubris of the Opposition. It smacks of desperate politics from a desperate Opposition leader trying to find the public relevance she greatly lacks. This time it is a referral criticising the Government for supporting the arts and culture in the Riverina. The funding for the Riverina Conservatorium of Music went through all the appropriate processes before it was announced during the Wagga Wagga by-election in 2018.

In the case of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music, the Government's financial support allowed the continued existence of this institution. The conservatorium sought the Government's support because it was being forced out of its existing leased site at Charles Sturt University. This conservatorium supports a broad range of students, including school-aged students, across the entire Riverina. It will assist in their musical literacy and, hopefully, in the future, incubate some of the next best musicians to come from the region who are the equivalent of anybody anywhere. The Government made a commitment to stage two of the project at the Wagga Wagga by-election in 2018. The Government makes no excuses for supporting arts in the regions. It makes no excuses for supporting important local cultural and educational facilities. The Opposition's dislike for the project has nothing to do with integrity; it opposes a great facility for the promotion of musical arts in Wagga Wagga. The arts community in Wagga Wagga has been unanimous in its support for the project. As the good member for Manly mentioned, conservatorium chair Dr Andrew Wallace said that it would be a game changer for the city. Director Hamish Tait—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira was heard in silence.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** —said that it would be "world-class infrastructure for the whole community". I cannot begin to explain the importance of such projects to regional areas. They enhance arts and culture in communities. We have a conservatorium in Goulburn. Why should the good citizens of Wagga Wagga miss out? Conservatoriums provide incalculable benefits to the quality of life, mental health and wellbeing of the people who live in our regions. They are especially important given the hardship that has been faced by many people during years of drought. What does Labor have against projects such as these? Does Country Labor stand for the regions or is that just a sham? How can so-called Country Labor members like the Hon. Mick Veitch not support significant investment in cultural facilities in the regions such as the Young community library or the Wagga Wagga conservatorium?

**The SPEAKER:** That is enough from the member for Auburn.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Will the member for Cessnock support that government funding? Does he care about proper cultural facilities in regional areas? Are people who live in the regions second-class citizens? I believe they are entitled to have government investment in facilities, including in cultural institutions—

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** —so that they are of a standard similar to that found in our cities. The Premier's referral to ICAC by the upper House is an attack on funding for the regions. We know what Country Labor and the so-called Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party really stand for. They do not stand for top-class facilities in the regions, like the Coalition does. They do not stand for anything except for cheap political stunts. Again, that is the politics of the desperate Leader of the Opposition. She has thrown as much mud as she can and she is seeing what will stick. That is what she stands for. Another week, another referral. I say to members opposite that this approach does not serve them well. The good people of the regions see right through those political games. They want facilities that are equal to those in the cities.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:17):** I begin my contribution to debate on the motion by noting that the two Government contributions covered everything but the issue. They spoke about funding for the conservatorium, as though that was the matter in question today. They have not uttered a word to defend the substance of what is at hand today, which is the conduct of the corrupt Premier. That conduct has been tested at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. A report is pending and a number of facts have been tried and tested. Really, the matter hinges on a single word—intimate. Under all of the codes of conduct, member requirements and ICAC law, an intimate relationship must be declared. The Premier tied herself up in knots to avoid that single word.

The corruption, which was connected right throughout the process, stemmed from that one issue of an undeclared relationship with a colleague. The relationship was just a relationship; we can park that to one side. But the declaration is at the heart of the issue that is being dealt with today. For any one of us in this Chamber who has a significant interest like that, we have not only a moral and ethical responsibility but also a written responsibility under ICAC law to remove ourselves from those decision-making processes. Most normal people do that. I know dozens of volunteers in my community who coach the local basketball, netball or soccer team and who have a son or daughter on that team. When decisions are made about who will be on the starting line-up, who will play a certain position or who will receive the best-and-fairest award at the end of the season, those volunteers often know in their heart and soul that they must seek some external support for that decision-making process because they do not want to be seen to be offering favouritism when there is an obvious link—not a hidden link but an obvious link—to a young athlete, such as the same surname. Normal people do that.

We all have those kinds of volunteers in our communities. Individually, we have all probably been in a situation where we have needed to question our position in a decision-making process. Knowing the good members of Parliament that we all are, I would suggest that 99.9 per cent of us have stepped back and said, "I have a conflict of interest. I need to either declare it so that everyone in the room knows or I need to step back from the decision-making process with the knowledge that I have a conflict of interest." The word "intimate" is incredibly important because it is laced throughout our laws and our codes of conduct. Before making my contribution today, I consulted the third edition of the *Macquarie Dictionary*, Australia's national dictionary, which I assume reflects us as a people. Some of the definitions of "intimate" include:

... associated in close personal relations ... characterised by or involving personally close or familiar association ... private; closely personal ...

I suggest that all of those definitions should require the decision-makers of the day to declare their conflicts or step out while decisions are being made. That is what the entire issue is about. We will not be whitewashed by nonsense about whether or not conservatoriums of music should be funded in regional areas—of course they should. But one has to ask a question when an issue that had been ignored for so long suddenly became not just part funded or stage one funded with \$10 million but funded entirely with \$30 million and approved by the same

person with whom the local member was in a relationship. That relationship had not been declared, that intimacy had not been acknowledged, and the conduct of the person in the decision-making position was that she did not step back from that process. In fact, she did quite the opposite. The secrecy was maintained.

Her direct involvement in the decision-making is now a matter of public record in *Hansard* and in the transcript of budget estimates. The time line is irrefutable. It is on the public record that the member for Wagga Wagga, who is now disgraced and gone from here—unfortunately it took longer than it should have—made a stage one announcement, indicating that he had the full support of the Government for the stage two announcement, that further money would be coming, six months before it went to the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC]. None of that can be disputed because it is all fact; it is on record. Members have come into the Chamber to defend that type of conduct, the direct personal involvement of a decision-maker in this place. And it was not just a regular decision-maker but one who sits on the ERC. It was not just a normal, common ERC representative—it is quite a small room—but the ultimate person in that room, the Premier of New South Wales.

That is what is at hand today. Any defence that is lobbied in this place during this debate about whether or not regional communities deserve conservatoriums is a furphy. In essence, it seems to me that the members speaking on behalf of the Government do not want to associate themselves with the person who this motion is about. The transition is already in place. We have seen the Treasurer in the media three or four times a week speaking about new ideas, spending money, coaching the local football team and doing all that sort of stuff. The transition is in place and Government members know it. The Premier knows it and the Treasurer knows it. I understand why members do not want to come in here and make a defence for that person. They want to defend the funding for the conservatorium—sure. But that is not the substance of the issue we are dealing with today.

The Premier of this State has said in this House, "If you know something, refer it." Guess what? Members on that side of the House know. Members on this side of the House know. We collectively have the chance to refer it but Government members will vote against referral. Let me outline what that means about Government members. They know something and will not tell; they will not refer it. They know something but will not do what their leader said—refer it. That is what we are dealing with today. The New South Wales upper House has decided to support referral because that is the House in which the Government does not control the numbers and so is not accountable to the elected officials. In this House the Government controls the numbers. We are asking members to be accountable, but they are saying no. They know something and they are not referring it. That is the disgrace of the vote that is about to be cast. That is the shame of their conduct. Government members are better than that, but although they know in their hearts what they should do and what their Premier should have done they cannot do it. We do not support the motion.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:27):** The Riverina Conservatorium of Music is an important issue for the Wagga Wagga community and the region. It is one of 17 regional conservatoriums partnering with the New South Wales Government to provide music education programs to public schools and to the wider rural and regional communities in the State. Core funding for the conservatorium is provided by the Government through the Department of Education. The Riverina conservatorium is a large, successful, community-owned, not-for-profit company, which serves students across the Riverina. It is the responsibility of a community-run, skill-based board. It is a popular and well-respected educational facility in my region. It does not receive funding for major capital works. The conservatorium and its success is the result of the blood, sweat and tears of its staff and the support of the local community.

The conservatorium has for some time been facing a serious issue regarding where it operates from. It is currently located on the former south campus of Charles Sturt University [CSU]. The need to find a new location has been a longstanding issue that has bedevilled the community. The need to find new accommodation arises from the loss and redevelopment of its current facilities on the CSU campus because it has been sold to a private group. For years the conservatorium has been seeking a solution to where it will operate from. It has an excellent facility, but that is about to go. It is a large conservatorium servicing a large region but it has limited access to the capital funds required to provide accommodation. With that in mind, the board developed a proposal for the Government for the redevelopment of a surplus government site located in Simmons Street, Wagga Wagga. As I understand it, the proposal involved an extensive document that outlined the proposal, together with a high-level analysis and a range of background material.

As we have heard in this debate, the project has two stages. Stage one involves the refurbishment of a government building in Simmons Street, which is no longer required and is surplus to government needs. The refurbishment for that is to replace where the conservatorium currently operates from. It is an ideal use of that government building because it is surplus to requirements. It is an ideal use of facilities for the community that is centrally located. It is the correct size and a smart capital solution to this pressing problem. The conservatorium identified the site and put the proposal to the Government. Funding for stage one has been approved in the budget allocation. I understand that the tendering process is currently underway. That is \$10 million of funding to provide

a like-for-like facility to that which is currently available and is critical to the continued function of this key institution in our region. In fact, it is just as well that this matter has come about as it has because accommodation has become quite urgent.

The conservatorium has only a short time to move from the current facility because building work has commenced on the site where it currently operates from. It is literally being hemmed in by construction work and temporary fences. The process is underway and, from my interactions with government departments and the board, the development and tendering processes have been very strict. A high-level business case was prepared for stage two and presented to the Government. It provided details of a proposal and a vision. It was to include development of a performance space for education adjacent to the building in Simmons Street. The proposal required a ballpark figure of \$20 million of funding, and that was put to the Government. I understand that the Government agreed that the funds would be held in reserve but that the proposal would be subject to a business case being prepared and approved. I understand that that business case is currently underway and being done by an independent company that is reporting directly to the Government. The success of any funding for stage two depends on the justification of the business case.

So they are the two stages to the project. The first stage is the provision of accommodation which is urgently required for what is a major education asset in our community. The second stage is a business case for a performance area, which will be a significant enhancement to the region. This development is subject to the business case and it must be approved. The business case has not yet been approved. In summary, the relocation and the future of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music is an issue that is important to my community. It is one that I have made representations about since being elected. Prior to that, it was one that I was concerned about as a member of the community. The board and the management of the conservatorium have been at pains to make sure that all the correct processes have been followed. I have spoken several times with the chair of the board and he is very particular about the processes and steps involved and has been very concerned to make sure that all is correct.

From my dealings with the machinery of government, it is my view that it has been at pains to make sure that all the correct steps have been followed in this process. The development is important for our community, which has worked hard and carefully to make sure it meets the required standards of probity. It is therefore unfortunate that the tireless efforts of the board, the community and the staff have been besmirched and undermined by the political discussion on this issue. Finally, I note that the last update from the ICAC website is that Operation Keppel is ongoing. I understand that ICAC has not identified the Premier as a person of interest at this stage and that it is yet to publish its final report. In summary, we have a process where the development of much-needed accommodation has been through the scrutiny of government and it is providing a like-for-like solution for the Riverina Conservatorium of Music. The conservatorium is an outstanding facility in our region that urgently needs that new accommodation. It is a sensible use of a current government building. A \$10 million price tag to refurbish the building is a very sensible solution to the needs of the conservatorium. The stage two proposal, which would be a game changer for our region, will be subject to an independent business case that has to meet the requirements of government. I put these facts on the record because I believe there is a concern that the efforts of the community and the good work they have done as well as the steps that they have been taken and the value of the proposition have been undermined. I will not support the referral to ICAC in this instance.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:35):** I oppose this motion moved by the Government, which is once again operating a protection racket for its Cabinet. There is no doubt that ICAC must investigate the New South Wales Premier over how and why she approved \$20 million of taxpayer's money for the Riverina Regional Conservatorium of Music in Wagga Wagga. She did this without disclosing she was in a relationship with the former member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire. We live in a State where an Indigenous child was once jailed for stealing hamburger buns. To say we should not investigate the New South Wales Premier over a dubious \$20 million investment is insulting. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that \$20 million for a conservatorium in her boyfriend's electorate amounted to more funding than that provided for all other regional conservatoria combined. This does not pass the pub test.

The Premier claims she did not approve the funding. But written confirmation of funding for the project was sent out on her letterhead. The Liberals and The Nationals are happy to claim credit for every bit of taxpayer money they spend; you only have to listen to them. They put their letterhead and even their party logo on all sorts of funding announcements, but suddenly Gladys knows nothing about this funding that went out on her letterhead. We cannot let this blatant disrespect for taxpayers' money continue. In New South Wales politics an honour system seems to persist despite decades of dishonourable conduct. So much dodgy conduct is being hidden away from public view. My first shock occurred just after I was elected when I had to fill in the MP's pecuniary interest register. As a farmer, I own water in the Murrumbidgee. I use the water to grow crops, which I still do. But there was nowhere on my pecuniary interest form to list my water ownership. I was flabbergasted.

Over the past decade water has been perhaps the most lucrative investment in Australia, and that impacts on the Murray electorate. Ruthless traders have made millions of dollars while farmers have gone broke during a drought. The ICAC investigated National Party water corruption and insider trading. When I asked the Premier why in nine years her Government had done nothing to change the law to make MPs declare their water, she told me that we could trust politicians to declare their water interests proactively. Trust them? Wow! When it comes to conflict of interest, the Premier has been anything but proactive. During the ICAC hearings last year the Premier told the corruption watchdog four times that she did not know what Leeton agribusiness United World Enterprises [UWE] was. But a tapped phone call revealed that she had talked about UWE with Daryl Maguire back in 2017. UWE paid for Mr Maguire to fly to China to look for investors for its business. Why was a member of Parliament doing this for a private, foreign-owned business? Leeton is not in Daryl's electorate. It is in mine. Gladys knew that, but she did nothing to stop it.

A New South Wales Government Minister is required to report all suspected corrupt conduct. In the past three years Gladys did not report Daryl's UWE dealings. Back in 2014 Daryl told Gladys he made \$5,000 from a property deal. "Congrats!!! Great news!! Woo hoo", was Gladys' response. Why the hell is a State MP pocketing money from a property deal in my electorate? That should have been her reaction, but it was not. In six years she never reported it. That is completely unacceptable behaviour from the Premier. This is the same Premier who refused to let pregnant women in New South Wales, in the Murray electorate, cross the border for treatment in Victorian hospitals. She refused to let people in country areas travel a few kilometres to say farewell to dying relatives. Why? Because she is a stickler for the rules and the truth. She enforced the border closure with an iron fist, no matter how many families suffered. But when it comes to rules for herself and her party colleagues, she is far more flexible. This should not go on any longer. The ICAC must be allowed to do its job and investigate the Premier.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:40):** In reply: The seriousness of this referral is evident in the quality of the responses by those opposite. I said to look for three things: conspiracies, politics and diatribe.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Diarrhoea.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Verbal diarrhoea. It is not a reflection on those opposite personally. I respect them a great deal. I just do not respect their arguments one iota. The member for Keira provided no compelling reason. He took us on a typical tired journey, blurring accusations with reheated sound bites. The member for Cessnock—as if on cue to prove my opening remarks—commenced the hyperbole and the bluster. After saying that we should focus on the substance of the matter, he then absolutely failed to do so. The absurdity of this referral was reinforced by the member for Cessnock contradicting his colleague when he zeroed in on personal relationships. There was really nothing of note after that point, although after two minutes he did tick off the third element, which was politics that attempted to emotionally blackmail all of us on this side.

Point four, and perhaps this all could have been settled early on in the piece, is that the most illuminating contribution this evening was from the member for Wagga Wagga, and I thank him. He spoke of the success of the conservatorium and of the blood, sweat and tears of the volunteers of the community group and the chair who runs that organisation. He spoke of extensive documentation and of the work that had gone into stages one and two. He said that stage one was an ideal project for the community: it was a smart solution and a smart use of capital. I note there are very strict processes around stage one. Then he got onto stage two and spoke about the high-level business case that had been prepared. He said the conservatorium was an important issue to his community. I believe that goes to the heart of this matter in that the Opposition is seeking to tear down an investment that is important to a community, roping in conspiracies, politics and diatribe in doing so. The member for Wagga Wagga went on to say that this project had been besmirched and undermined by politics, and I could not agree with him more. There were no compelling arguments whatsoever from those opposite.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** What about me?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I acknowledge that interjection. I have written in my notes "See earlier remarks". This is like the boy who cried wolf: the third referral in three sitting weeks. This is borderline McCarthyism and it is ridiculous. The motion should be agreed to.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....	46
Noes .....	39
Majority.....	7

## AYES

Anderson, K	Greenwich, A	Provest, G
Ayres, S	Griffin, J	Roberts, A
Barilaro, J	Gulaptis, C	Saunders, D
Berejiklian, G	Hancock, S	Sidgreaves, P
Bromhead, S	Hazzard, B	Singh, G
Clancy, J	Henskens, A	Speakman, M
Conolly, K	Kean, M	Stokes, R
Constance, A	Lee, G	Taylor, M
Cooke, S (teller)	Lindsay, W	Toole, P
Coure, M	Marshall, A	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	McGirr, J	Upton, G
Davies, T	Pavey, M	Ward, G
Dominello, V	Petinos, E	Williams, L
Elliott, D	Piper, G	Williams, R
Evans, L	Preston, R	Wilson, F
Gibbons, M		

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Smith, N

Hornery, S

**Motion agreed to.***Private Members' Statements***MAJOR JOHN DAVIS****Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (18:54):**

I am pleased to inform the House and the people of New South Wales that on 21 April I had the honour of presenting retired Major John Davis, a 103-year-old veteran, with the Australian Defence Medal in recognition of his service to this nation during World War II. John Davis enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in November 1941. His leadership potential was immediately recognised upon his enlistment and he was selected to undergo officer training. After completing his training, the newly commissioned Lieutenant Davis was posted to New Guinea in August 1942 to serve as a platoon commander—a position in which he served until he was discharged on 12 December 1945. Major Davis would in fact later return to New Guinea as an ex-patriot, working there from 1951 to 1953. John continued to serve in what is now known as the Australian Army Reserves until 1973, retiring with the rank of major.

When the Australian Defence Medal was introduced in 2006 to recognise all current and former Australian defence force personnel, Major Davis was accidentally omitted and never received his medal. I was humbled to be able to rectify that situation just in time for him to wear it on Anzac Day. It is unfortunate that many of the estimated one million eligible veterans still do not have their medals, with many of them still unaware that they are eligible in the first place. I congratulate also Mike Lee, the welfare officer for the Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch, Sarah Ireland, Major Davis' neighbour, and Major Davis' three carers, all of whom were instrumental in organising

the presentation of the medal. Following the medal presentation I had the opportunity to discuss the variety of issues facing veterans in New South Wales with Mike and many other veterans who attended the presentation. It was a poignant time for such a discussion in the days leading up to Anzac Day. We spoke about the need to focus more on recognising the hardship of those service men and women who have returned home, veterans who are bearing both physical and mental scars from their experiences during service, and the challenges that face them whilst trying to transition back into civilian life.

Like so many of his fellow veterans, Major Davis has never sought recognition, charity or applause for the sacrifices that he has made in service to our nation. Major Davis was bewildered at the apparent fuss made over the medal and why he was even receiving it in the first place, saying that his carer, Diane, was a much more deserving recipient. This attitude, the shunning of deserved recognition, epitomises the mentality held by so many of our veterans. With nearly 6,000 homeless veterans in Australia and the leading cause of death for veterans being suicide, we must work harder to provide the appropriate support to these brave men and women because many veterans, just like Major Davis, will continue to shun the benefits and help to which they are entitled. Major Davis, on behalf of a grateful nation and State, I salute you and thank you for your selfless sacrifice in the service of our nation.

### PORT STEPHENS HOUSING CRISIS

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:55):** In my electorate of Port Stephens a housing crisis is unfolding. As the local member of Parliament I feel it is important to put on the public record again that I hold grave concerns for many of my constituents who cannot find somewhere to live. I raise this issue in the Chamber this evening in the hope that the Government will start listening, that it will hear the concerns of my constituents, understand the impossible circumstances many families have found themselves in and help those caught in this unfolding crisis. This is not a new problem but it is a rapidly deteriorating problem. Its impact is escalating day by day. It is not a market failure that is causing it, it is a government failure because for the past 10 years social and affordable housing has not been a priority for the Government.

Under this Government, there has been next to zero investment in public housing. That is a fact. The Liberals and Nationals have been very quick to sell off public housing right across the State but very slow to build any additional public housing, and in Port Stephens we have received nothing. Year after year our social housing waiting lists continue to grow. Families languish on the waiting list, unable to afford the basic necessities to live in the meantime. Families become homeless. They live in their cars and in tents and they couch surf. This is an issue that the Labor Opposition has raised over and over again. Community organisations and charities have raised it over and over again—St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Mission Australia, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Homelessness NSW, Anglicare, the Community Housing Industry Association NSW, the Mercy Foundation, Hume Housing, Shelter NSW, BaptistCare and Compass Housing Services. That is not a complete list—just a few of the organisations that have been raising the issue of the lack of social housing for years with the Government. They have been begging the Government for social housing and it has not been listening.

Some have suggested the Government's apathy might have something to do with the fact that public housing affects only poor people. If that is true, that would be an indictment on the Government, the Premier, her Ministers and all Government members. What we see now is that indifference has created a community-wide housing crisis. It is not just low-income families suffering, it is double-income households that cannot secure a place to live. *NBN News* recently aired a story on a local family. They owned a home in Medowie until illness meant that they had to sell, so they rented in Raymond Terrace until they were given notice by the owner. They applied for 60-plus properties but have not been able to secure anywhere to live. They are now living in a tent with their four children. Both parents work full time. They have a perfect rental history. They always paid their rent on time. Right now this family has nowhere to live. To their credit, somehow the parents are holding down their jobs and the kids are going to school, despite the desperate situation they now find themselves in.

The *Newcastle Herald* recently wrote about another family in Raymond Terrace with three children. Once again, they have a perfect rental history but they cannot secure a rental. After more than 100 applications, they cannot find a house. In two weeks' time this family will also be homeless. My local housing providers are in despair. One provider told me their phones have been ringing off the hook all year. Homelessness services are breaking, doing all they can with inadequate resources and not enough homes to help the almost threefold increase in clients. Right now every level of housing is inadequate and unavailable to many—from emergency housing to social housing, interim housing to affordable housing. People renting are being forced out because owners are selling whilst the market is hot. Trying to secure another affordable rental is impossible.

The Government needs to step up. If it is not the Government's responsibility, whose responsibility is it? Of course, this issue is complex. Of course, it cannot be fixed overnight. Of course, COVID-19 has had an impact. But ignoring the problem will not fix it, and a decade of ignoring it has caused a significant problem. After 10 years in office and 10 years of failing to invest in social housing and strengthen a much-needed safety net, we have a

crisis on our hands under this Government. Double-income, full-time working families in my electorate cannot find a rental property. Families on income support are being left to fend for themselves, living in tents or in their cars. This is not a sign of a healthy community. If Labor were in government, I would be spending every waking hour wondering how I could fix it, how I could help these families, but the Government continues to ignore that there is a problem. As the member for Port Stephens elected to represent my community in this place I say to the Government: These families need your help and they need it now.

### COFFS COAST SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:01):** I am extremely proud of the Coffs Coast community, whose citizens shine brightly each day in every field of endeavour. They are the leading lights who are passionate about their pursuits and they are paving the way for others. Three seniors helping the Coffs Coast thrive were given special recognition during a visit to my electorate by seniors Minister, Dr Geoff Lee. We presented each of them with a NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award to mark this year's NSW Seniors Festival. In their own unique way, Ken Pay from Coffs Harbour, Lorraine Penn from Boambee East and Bob Piper from Arararra have had remarkable impacts on the communities they serve and love. Ken, Lorraine and Bob showcase the qualities of seniors who make the Coffs Coast the best address in New South Wales. I congratulate them and thank them for their generous contributions, remarkable skills and extensive knowledge, which continues to be of enormous benefit to our region.

These local award winners highlight the diverse ways seniors support their families and society. Ken Pay is Coffs Harbour Creative Arts Group vice-president and life member. He is considered the backbone of the organisation, always ready to investigate new ideas with the group's best interests at heart. His devotion provides a social outlet for the members, who are mostly seniors. Lorraine Penn is Enterprise & Training Company Limited deputy chair and Mid North Coast Writers' Centre deputy president and has established an Older Women's Network, Coffs Harbour branch. She actively works to minimise homelessness in Coffs Harbour and improve the health and wellbeing of older women. Bob Piper is an outstanding community leader whose extensive contributions over many years have improved the lives of locals. These include local government, RFS, SES, Corindi Beach Reserve, Regional Landcare, Upper Corindi Forest 2 Coast, Australians in Retirement, Red Cross, Red Rock Bowling & Recreation Club, Red Rock-Corindi Surf Live Saving and Corindi Beach Progress Association. This trio is a credit to the Coffs Coast. The best thing is that there are many more seniors just like them who are changing local lives for the better.

In fact, improved wellbeing is also the winner on sporting fields the length and breadth of my electorate. The Coffs Harbour and District Baseball Association is a classic example of how sport brings people together. The association made me extremely welcome when I attended a game day at Stadium Drive to mark the start of the 2021 competition. I was even fortunate enough to throw the honorary first pitch for A-grade. The other reason for my visit was to celebrate a \$17,000 State Government grant, bringing enormous benefits for years to come for the baseball association. The Community Building Partnership funds have been allocated to build new facilities for scorers on diamonds 1 and 2. This grassroots project is part of the association's blueprint to further upgrade and develop facilities for its 200-plus players and four clubs: Woolgoolga Bluesox, Coffs Harbour AllStars, Sawtell Dodgers and Bellingen Brewers. The teams, players and officials were extremely disappointed to have no season last year due to COVID, while a recent run of wet weather had made competition impossible. It is fantastic to see our baseball players back in action. I congratulate their hardworking leadership crew comprising president Ben McCall, vice-president Sam Langler, Treasurer Michele Naidu and secretary Carleen Bake-Smith.

There has been plenty of court-side action too. I was delighted to open the sports pages of the Coffs Coast *News of the Area* to read that Damian Phillips produced a stellar performance at the Australian Tennis Championships in Melbourne for players with intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, autism and those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Damian, who trains at Englands Park Tennis Club at Coffs Harbour Jetty with coach Tony Polack, won the men's doubles with partner, Archie Graham. He finished third in the men's singles and third in the mixed doubles with partner, Kelly Wren. Damian's mother, Leanne Phillips, told *News of the Area* that she was thrilled the tournament went ahead, as the event may have been cancelled due to COVID.

Leanne said, "Damian trains every day, either with his coach, Tony Polack, or down the gym or agility work on the court. He normally competes in overseas tournaments but that stopped last year because of COVID, and he plays in the Australian team. He's currently ranked number eight in the world and number three in Australia." According to coach Polack, Damian's work ethic is inspiring juniors at Englands Park Tennis Club, "Every time Damo walks onto the court for a lesson he gives 100 per cent. I wish every junior I coached had his determination to improve. His intensity level is always high." Every person I have mentioned can rightly claim to be an ambassador for the Coffs Coast community and the whole community is rightly very proud of them.

### LUGARNO PHARMACIST ADVICE PHARMACY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:05):** I acknowledge an outstanding local business that has been a pillar of our community for the past 50 years. The Lugarno Pharmacist Advice Pharmacy features some of the best medical professionals found anywhere across New South Wales. Its impeccable service is held in the highest regard by all in our community. Lugarno Pharmacy offers several specialised services to customers, including blood pressure and blood glucose level monitoring, as well as cholesterol checks. This is what makes its service so unique and its advice so precise. The team is always gathering as much information as possible, with world-class equipment.

The pharmacy's service during the recent COVID-19 pandemic is particularly impressive because it played such an important role in supporting our local community. Its home delivery service, Webster-pak service and home medication reviews allow elderly and vulnerable individuals to access medical care without leaving home. Given the difficulty of the past 12 months, I strongly believe these efforts have been so important in ensuring that these vulnerable individuals in our community could stay at home and prevent the risk of community transmission. The pharmacy also provides medication and disease counselling as well as educational advice on medication consumption. These are just more ways to ensure that the team is providing the best possible health advice and person-centred care for each and every client.

I make special mention of Warren Del-Grande, who is the owner and leading pharmacist, whose passion for health and wellbeing is second to none. He is a devoted individual and a community-minded person, who is always there for others and always up for a challenge. The pharmacy supports a number of local community groups including the Lugarno Football Club, the Lions Club of Lugarno and St George Touch Association. It also regularly sponsors organisations including Cancer Council and Jeans for Genes Day. This commitment shows dedication to the community in ensuring that no individual, regardless of their circumstances, is left behind.

It is for these reasons that the Lugarno Pharmacist Advice Pharmacy was honoured with the Professional Services Champion Award as part of the 2020 Pharmacist Advice Awards. This is such an outstanding achievement and it is a thoroughly deserved award. This award was given for the pharmacy's ability to adapt and incorporate new technology, its commitment to clients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and its educational services. Only one of these awards was received throughout Australia and I am so proud that it rests in the hands of none other than one of our best and brightest local businesses.

You might be wondering what makes them a "Pharmacist Advice Pharmacy" and the answer is, really, everything that it does. Its consultancy style expresses that the pharmacy works with the needs of individual clients to provide the best possible outcomes. It also focuses on providing a detailed understanding of a client's health and wellbeing so that it can provide an accurate means of treatment. The Lugarno Pharmacy is more than just a medical service; it is an integral part of our local community and has been there for multiple generations of local residents. The entire community of Lugarno and the broader St George region is thankful for everything that Warren and the team do not only to keep us safe but to ensure that we are always at our best.

I have no doubt that the Lugarno Pharmacist Advice Pharmacy will go on to provide many more years of service to the local area. Given the team that it has and the motivation they share, I know that we will hear many more success stories in the future. Well done to Warren and the entire team at the Lugarno Pharmacist Advice Pharmacy for everything that they have achieved over the past 50 years. I wish them all the best and I hope that they continue to share their passion for health and wellbeing in our community.

### LUNAR PARK GHOST TRAIN FIRE

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (19:09):** I urge the New South Wales Government to construct an independent, special commission of inquiry into the tragedy of the 1979 Luna Park Ghost Train fire. At a bare minimum, a second inquest must be conducted. On 9 June 1979 a fire ripped through the Ghost Train at Luna Park taking the lives of innocents, including four young boys who were students at Waverley College: Jonathan Billings, Richard Carroll, Michael Johnson and Seamus Rahilly. The fire also tragically took the lives of John Godson and his two children, Damien and Craig. Naturally, it was the death of the four Waverley College boys that attracted the most attention in the east.

The memorial to these boys within the chapel at Waverley College has provided a continuing reminder of the loss for generations to follow. I share my deepest condolences with all the families that have been impacted by this tragic event. Many members of our community were directly affected by the Luna Park fire including, most obviously, the parents, siblings and relatives of those who were killed and also their friends, teachers and the very many who, for different reasons, felt a connection with this tragic event.

The aftermath of the tragedy well and truly lives on in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. Even before the recent revelations that most likely a criminal intentional fire resulted in the death of several innocents and the

destruction of a Sydney icon, the Luna Park fire had cast a long, dark shadow. Since 1979 Luna Park has not been perceived as a fun place to visit by many people in the east, especially those who witnessed the fire. While most in our immediate community accepted the tragic story at face value that a fire had simply occurred, it is now evident that the Luna Park fire was most certainly the result of a deliberate, calculated and criminal act.

We must acknowledge and thank the amazing ABC staff who revealed the truth of this story, including Caro Meldrum-Hanna, Patrick Begley and Jaya Balendra. Led by an ABC report and supported by major metropolitan mastheads, a new light has been shone on these events and a deep public cynicism now exists surrounding the way in which the investigation was run the first time, including the suggestion that evidence may have been ignored by investigators. The excellent ABC exposure has shone a new and informed light on the Luna Park fire and has raised important questions and concerns regarding the role of criminals in the fire and the role of police and possibly politicians and other influential people in its cover-up.

It has been suggested that large-scale corruption was present throughout the investigation and also that much evidence, including further witness accounts, were not included in the original investigation. As members would also know, the New South Wales Coroner has recently requested that the NSW Police Force review its evidence surrounding the fire. The truth is important, and it is the very least that we can offer to the families and friends of the seven people who visited a fun park and did not get to go home. For those reasons, I call on the Government to construct a new, independent special commission of inquiry into both the events of Luna Park in 1979 and the subsequent investigation by the NSW Police Force. In the absence of a special commission of inquiry, a second inquest must be conducted.

### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:14):** Schools in my local area are reaping the benefits of the Berejiklian Government's investment in public education infrastructure. The Government has committed more than \$7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools across our State, which is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. Locally we recently hit a milestone for the major upgrade to Mosman High School when an early contract was awarded. The new designs were co-created by the school community and the wider Mosman community. They have been lodged for planning assessment and have been open for public exhibition for the past month. We have worked closely with the school community and Mosman to ensure that we get the design right. The school sits in the very heart of Mosman village, right across the road from the main shops, and the history and heritage of our community is paramount.

I thank principal Susan Wyatt, current P&C president Richard Fechner and past P&C presidents Evan Predavec and Gerhard Beukes, who are incredibly committed and have worked tirelessly to get the project to this stage. I know they are very excited about seeing it come to fruition. We are re-envisaging Mosman High as a modern place of learning for generations to come. The constrained site will be transformed to create modular, multi-use components to enhance the creative and academic capacity of our students. While the transformation is unfolding, the exterior design of the school is complementary to the built environment and village aesthetic of Mosman. The upgrade includes 16 new classrooms, new administration and staff facilities, a new library, a multipurpose gym and hall, outdoor and rooftop space and new canteen facilities. The new theatre is incredibly exciting, particularly for Mosman High and its creativity. It is a once-in-a-generation project and I am excited to see building commence.

Work is also underway for North Sydney Demonstration School upgrades and planning for Neutral Bay Public School. At North Sydney Dem, we will soon finalise a contractor to get shovels in the ground. Like Mosman High, it is a significant upgrade for the school to continue offering excellent teaching and learning facilities to the many new families moving into North Sydney and surrounds. It is an investment in both current and future Dem students. The upgrade will see the replacement of old demountable classrooms with 16 new and refurbished classrooms, the addition of a new school hall, an upgrade to administration facilities and improved outdoor learning spaces. The community has played an important part in helping to shape the design so far. My thanks go to principal Fiona Davies; past principal Myra Wearne, who led a lot of this; former P&C presidents Laurens Liberton and David Bond; and current P&C president Luke McElnea for their dedication in getting this project off the ground.

We are also working with Neutral Bay Public School to complete the planning for that project and I am eager to see funding in this year's budget to progress it. Neutral Bay Public School relies quite heavily on the work of its P&C president, Liz Henry, and on acting principal Victor Tam. I thank them for their work. While the Berejiklian Government is delivering on its commitment to complete significant school upgrades in my local area, it has also responded to the challenges presented to our education system by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the Government's economic response to the pandemic, it is rolling out a school COVID stimulus program. The \$120 million Metro Renewal Program is providing government co-contributions of between 50 and 80 per cent

for school infrastructure programs in high priority schools in Sydney. A number of my local schools have received funding.

Mosman Public School received funding to upgrade its learning spaces in the first round of the program. Seven schools in my local area will benefit from the second round of funding. Mosman High School will upgrade its science labs, on top of the upcoming major upgrade to other parts of the school. North Sydney Demonstration School will upgrade the staff room and staff toilets before it kicks off its major upgrade. Beauty Point Public School will install a hard-surface covered outdoor learning area. Cammeraygal High School's junior campus will improve shade in the playground area. Middle Harbour Public School will upgrade its toilets. North Sydney Girls High School will upgrade its science labs and North Sydney Boys High School will upgrade its kitchen, prep room and storeroom for food technology classes. Those projects will improve our local schools' capacity to deliver quality education and learning experiences for our kids.

The focus of the program is to ensure that students can thrive in their learning environment, no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be. That means access to quality school facilities. The projects will be undertaken in the next 18 months and will deliver not only enhanced school infrastructure but also a boost for the local economy by supporting jobs. My own experience has taught me that education can transform lives and disrupt cycles of poverty and disadvantage. That is why I strongly support access to quality public education for all children across our State. We need to give our kids the best start in life, and that is made possible by the Government's investment in new and upgraded schools and facilities. I thank the Berejiklian Government and the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, for their continued investment in our schools and for delivering on the Government's commitment to offer the highest quality education to our kids.

#### **SERVICE NSW**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (19:19):** I acknowledge and thank the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Customer Service and Minister for Digital, for his recent and very successful visit to my local area. I was joined by the Minister on 8 April at the Ed.Square complex in Edmondson Park to announce that the lease has been signed for the establishment of a brand-new Service NSW centre. The new centre will open in the second half of the year, once that part of the new building has been completed and the fit-out can take place. It was a very exciting announcement, as my election promise to deliver another local Service NSW centre to the community has now taken a leap forward. Residents of our local area will soon have a digital-first centre, with the location now locked in right in the heart of the community, directly opposite the train station, making it nice and easy for people to access. It will also make it much easier for locals to obtain so many New South Wales government transactions in a convenient location. What a difference that will make to our community.

The new centre will enable residents to register their vehicles, apply for a driver licence or a seniors card, or apply for a birth, death or marriage certificate. The Service NSW centre in Edmondson Park is the fourth of 10 new centres being built in the fastest growing parts of Sydney and it will be the 111th centre across the State. Our other centre in Liverpool is one of the busiest in the State, so we know this new centre will make a huge difference. It will feature modern facilities with additional staff available to help our local customers with self-serve touchscreens or to complete a transaction over the counter. The centre will also serve as a gateway for up to 70 government savings and incentives that can ease the cost of living. Having better access to all of the great discounts and support available to the community much closer to home will make a real difference.

The Minister and I also had the opportunity to visit Casula Mall to speak to local small business owners about the Dine & Discover program and how it is benefiting them and their customers. We spoke to Linda, owner of the Sahara Cafe & Grill—and she wants me to emphasise that it is the one outside Casula Mall, near the car park. We discussed the success of the New South Wales Government's program. She told the Minister and me that it is "by far the smartest and best move to support small business". Hearing that kind of feedback is incredible and goes to show how positive the program is. The purpose of the Dine & Discover program is to encourage the community to get out and about and support local dining, arts and tourism businesses.

For participating businesses, it is a great initiative that will definitely help get them back on track and on their feet after such a challenging year. The program is working wonders and is helping to bring people out by giving them the opportunity to try new foods and menus. We have seen that residents are starting to choose places they may not have been to before or that they are trying sides or desserts that they may not have tried before—I know they are going to become firm favourites. The vouchers are coming in very handy and are also making sure that we keep people employed during these difficult times. The process is very simple. We watched people use their vouchers while we were there that day. Linda said, "It is one of the best ideas introduced since COVID." It made us very happy to hear that.

The Minister has live data to show him the areas in the State where the vouchers are being used and to make sure the program is getting the best bang for the buck. I encourage all residents of New South Wales to

download their vouchers now because support of small business counts and it makes such a huge difference to everybody. Once again I thank the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Customer Service and Minister for Digital, for coming to the Holsworthy electorate and making such a great announcement, and for showing us how Dine & Discover vouchers can make a real difference on the ground. It was so good to get out in the community again with the Minister for such a fantastic announcement and to meet with locals who are benefiting from the New South Wales Government's Dine & Discover program.

### ILLAWARRA HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:23):** It is with disappointment that I must once again draw the attention of the House to the disturbingly inadequate funding for health and hospital services in the Illawarra. The region's premier teaching hospital, Wollongong Hospital, is under more pressure than ever before. They are not COVID-related pressures. They are daily pressures faced by everyone, from the cleaner to the clinician, the paramedics to the food service providers and the security guards to the nursing staff. Over recent weeks I have been speaking with a number of them and they are all screaming out for the same thing: more resources.

In the June budget the Government has an opportunity to take three immediate steps to start repairing Illawarra's ailing health and hospital system. This is not a silver bullet but a small step in the right direction. First, the Government should commit to addressing emergency department and elective surgery waiting times; second, commit and fund a new health facility in Warrawong to replace the Port Kembla Hospital which is now, according to most, well beyond repair; and, third, fulfil the Government's 2015 election commitment to provide cardiothoracic services in Wollongong.

It is time that the Government conceded that health and hospital services in Wollongong need help. They are virtually on life support. Our services rank as the worst in the State on many measures. At more than four hours, we have the longest emergency department median waiting times in the State, and surgery waiting lists are not much better. The independent Bureau of Health Information recorded in March this year that some Wollongong Hospital patients are waiting up to 17 months for surgery. Senior director Hilary Rowell told the *Illawarra Mercury* on 17 March 2021, while acknowledging that the suspension of non-urgent surgery for COVID impacted on all hospitals, that at Wollongong the typical patient waited more than 14 months for non-urgent surgery in the last quarter, which was longer than any other hospital of a similar size in New South Wales. This is simply not acceptable.

Behind every single waiting time statistic there is a person in great pain or serious discomfort just waiting and waiting and waiting for their turn for treatment. When I receive complaints about waiting times, those making complaints do not criticise the health professionals at Wollongong Hospital; in fact they immediately declare that the staff are run off their feet. This needs to be acknowledged up-front because the dedicated, highly professional staff in all parts of the hospital are being let down by inadequate funding again and again and again. In answer to a question on notice recently, the health Minister would not even say how many nurses would come to Wollongong under the Government's signature election campaign commitment. Perhaps the number was so small, he was just too embarrassed to reveal it.

This tired 10-year-old Government is failing to provide the basics for our hospitals, staff and patients. I urge the Government to pump more funding into attacking the growing surgery lists and emergency department waiting times in the budget. It is also time for the Government to announce the site of the new Shellharbour hospital because that is an important cog in the health network and, after all, more than six years have passed since it was announced. My Labor colleagues and I put aside political point-scoring, rolled up our sleeves and co-operated with our Liberal colleagues and the Minister on delivering a new hospital. However, our patience is reaching its limit. It is time to announce the new site and get construction underway.

This brings me to the sorry state of Port Kembla Hospital. The once state-of-the-art facility, now more than 50 years old, is riddled with concrete cancer and its window frames are ajar and skewed—so much so that during rain events I receive messages about leaking windows. During a recent heavy downfall there was a shortage of towels and bedlinen, not because there were many patients but because they were being used to mop up leaks. Port Kembla services 8,000 patients a year and delivers sensitive services, including rehabilitation and palliative care. I have always made it clear that there are only two options for that hospital: Improve it or replace it. It is now well past improvement. Not even the most generous real estate agent would describe it as a renovator's dream. It is time for a new facility located in Warrawong to serve the communities of Warrawong, Berkeley, Lake Heights, Port Kembla and Cringila.

Finally, I remind the House of an undelivered 2015 Liberals and Nationals election promise. Wollongong Hospital was promised cardiothoracic services by the former Minister so that patients did not need to travel to Sydney for specialist treatment. I want to see patients from Wollongong requiring cardiothoracic treatment being treated in Wollongong. I pay tribute to Fay Campbell, OAM, for her dedication to this community campaign. Fay

remains a steadfast, fierce and effective advocate for better health treatment and care and for disability services in the Illawarra and South Coast. I also pay tribute to Dr Phil Clingan, a force of nature who is also responsible for never giving up on the healthcare cause in the Illawarra region. I encourage the Government to listen to voices like Fay's and Phil's, to the staff at Wollongong Hospital and other hospitals in the health services, and to the staff at Bulli Hospital, which has gone days and days without having a doctor available, and to fulfil its promises, get its money into health services in Wollongong and make sure that cardiothoracic services are available in Wollongong too.

### TAXI LICENCE HOLDERS

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:28):** I speak on behalf of many of my constituents who are long-time taxi licence holders and who have seen their life savings, based on a scheme operated by the New South Wales Government, evaporate and for which they have received no fair compensation. Since the New South Wales Coalition Government refused to properly regulate the ridesharing industry in New South Wales, taxi licences have plummeted in value. Local residents in the Auburn electorate and those across New South Wales who invested in taxi licences for as much as \$400,000, putting their trust in a government-run scheme, have now seen their investment drop to virtually nothing. Many of those who held these investments are in their fifties, sixties and seventies. They have worked hard, essentially as small self-owned businesses—which this Government pretends to champion—only to have their hard work disappear in the stroke of a government pen.

Taxi licence prices have collapsed to around \$60,000 and the market has disappeared. It is amazing that a government run by a Liberal Premier shows such disregard for those who own and run small businesses. We have seen it with retail shops along the route of the Eastern Suburbs light rail and in Parramatta where there is a string of shop closures along the light rail route. We have just been told by Liberal members on the other side of this Chamber that small businesses count. Apparently some small businesses count more than others. But the Government's disregard of shop owners is second only to its treatment of taxi licence holders.

I have one local constituent who received no compensation because he had \$70,000 in the bank. He did not have a mortgage on his house, so apparently he had no hardship—except that he was 70 years old and his taxi licence was his entire superannuation. He is now working well past his retirement age, still driving that very same taxi long after he thought he would be able to retire. His life will be forever worse for the lack of empathy this Government exhibits. It would surprise most people in New South Wales to discover that of the \$142 million meant to be allocated to taxi licence holders in compensation by the New South Wales Government, only \$42 million has reached the pocket of those taxi licence holders. There is still \$100 million sitting in the New South Wales Government coffers.

Another taxi licence holder in my electorate had been a driver for 25 years. In 2014 he bought a licence for \$370,000 and, with other costs including vehicle and legal fees, ended up with a \$430,000 mortgage on his home. He did so to ensure his financial security. Two years later the New South Wales Government threw his investment down the drain. He now has a \$430,000 house loan to pay off at the age of 63 with no available taxi licence asset, which was to have been his superannuation, to retire the debt. He will have to continue to work into his seventies in the hope of avoiding losing his house.

Another local resident, who is 60 years old and held a taxi licence which he added to a \$432,000 mortgage on his house, bringing his entire mortgage to \$800,000, applied for compensation and was informed two days before Christmas that his application, which he had filled in with the assistance of a State government-funded support person, was incorrect and that he had two days to fix it. With an impossible deadline and no access to the person who had assisted him, he was not even considered for compensation. This cannot go on.

Recently the Government released the Baker-Finch independent review of the point to point transport industry—a review that the New South Wales Government sat on for eight months before releasing to the public. The review considered the case for further assistance in line with the Government's supposed commitment to further compensation. On 24 February Minister Constance stated that the New South Wales Government is now considering the recommendations in the report. However, there has been no further statement. For people in the community who have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars and are now carrying huge debts into their old age, thanks to this Government, it is cold comfort.

The thousands of families across this State who have invested in taxi licences are once again waiting for some action from the New South Wales Government. Many taxi licence holders have come to this country, worked hard, educated their children and put so much back. I urge the Minister for Transport and the Premier to take heed of the plight of these hardworking community members who put their faith in the Government and to consider a genuine compensation scheme.

## REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICES

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (19:33):** Improving and developing youth services in our regional communities have been a continuing and fundamental focus of mine in the Oxley electorate. Drugs, suicide, mental health and unemployment are issues young people continue to face in our regional centres. Before the last election I announced with Deputy Premier John Barilaro that the former Kempsey Ambulance Station would be revamped into a community centre—a hub providing youth support and a range of associated services. I thank the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Minister Brad Hazzard, for enabling the transfer of that property to our Land and Housing Corporation offices.

Our proposal aims to transform the site on Belgrave Street—the old ambulance station in the centre of town next to parks and sporting facilities—into a vibrant community hub that will help protect and support at-risk youth. Quite frankly, there are too many at-risk youth in my communities. It will also expand the level of community support and business services. The hub will provide safe and secure temporary accommodation, with a 24/7 onsite caretaker who will coordinate services and supports for individuals to help them retain their self-worth and transition to independence. This non-stop service will address a gap in the Kempsey community. Currently all the support facilities operate only between nine and five, which is actually not when kids need help. I highlight the work of incredible volunteers in my community who deliver food and make sure our kids are looked after. They do so on a volunteer basis because the support services close at five.

Young people in our community need help. We know youth unemployment in Kempsey in particular is significantly higher than the national average and that each night in Kempsey there are unmet beds for young people and those facing homelessness. A lot of couch surfing is going on, even among mums and little babies, girls as young as 13 years of age with babies, and fleeing domestic violence victims and an increasing number of women aged in their 60s forced to sleep rough or get support from their other family and friends with nowhere else to go. Many in our community need somewhere safe. This initiative starts to fill that gap, as well as other initiatives that we are working through with my agency which I will be able to reveal to the community in the near future. This vital community project funded by the Australian and New South Wales governments provides more than just crisis accommodation; it will offer services from the old Kempsey ambulance station site to help young people realise their potential.

I highlight the fabulous working relationship I have with the Federal member Pat Conaghan. The benefit to our regional communities of having both State and Federal governments in alignment supporting regional communities cannot be overstated. This new home will link young people to additional services such as headspace, which will require them to be in the building where there will be food and comfort and safe accommodation manned 24/7. The vision for this contemporary, three-storey building will incorporate a cafe, office space and a mix of one-bedroom and studio units. Twenty-four rooms are proposed for crisis accommodation, as well as a common area for youth activities. The development will create 31 jobs during construction, including jobs for local tradies, subcontractors and apprentices, with money to also flow through to our local businesses that service the construction industry.

Regional communities like Kempsey deserve greater opportunity to grow and reach their potential, which is why our Government and the Federal Government are investing in this service. I particularly thank the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, and Pat Conaghan, the Federal member for Cowper, for lobbying at a Federal level. The lion's share of this investment—\$6.5 million—is coming from the Commonwealth. I also acknowledge the communities Minister, Gareth Ward, and his support of half a million dollars of funding from the Kempsey Place Plan to ensure that this project has wings. I look forward to our local communities reaping the benefit of 118 new social housing dwellings throughout the region which we are working to deliver across the North Coast. By 2023 it is projected we will deliver a total of 309 extra dwellings. We are in a challenging situation. With the positivity around living in regional New South Wales, we need more opportunities. I am happy to partner up with local members, councils and community groups to ensure that we take every opportunity that we can to put more housing and services for those who most need it in our regional communities.

## LEVEL CROSSINGS SAFETY

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:38):** I speak about a courageous young woman, Madeline Bott, and the very serious issue of level crossing safety. In February this year Ethan Hunter and Mark Fenton were involved in a tragic accident at a level crossing near Bribbaree in my electorate. Carting gypsum in a B-double truck, both men, who called the Weddin shire home, were killed instantly when their vehicle was struck by a train as they crossed the line. Mark was only 50 years old; Ethan just 27. Ethan was Maddie Bott's fiancé. Instead of planning their life together, 26-year-old Maddie found herself instead planning his funeral. No young person should ever find themselves in that situation. I acknowledge the deep pain felt by Mark and Ethan's families, friends and work colleagues and the small community of Grenfell. The loss of two much-loved people in their prime hurts entire towns and the anguish reverberates across the region. I also pay tribute to the first responders

attending the accident, most of whom I have come to know well over the past 3½ years. I thank them for all that they do.

Maddie constantly gives back to her communities. She is a registered nurse at Orange hospital and a clinical nurse educator at the Mercy Care Centre Young. She has been a part of emergency and trauma teams and knows what it is like to sit with families as their lives are falling apart. Maddie has bravely turned this personal tragedy into action. As she put it to me, she is prepared to spend the rest of her life fighting to ensure no-one else has to experience her pain. Maddie is calling for more to be done to improve safety at level crossings, a position I wholeheartedly support. The spot where Mark and Ethan lost their lives is known as a "passive crossing". These are crossings with marked stop signs but no barriers or flashing lights. Eighty per cent of all level crossings across Australia are passive crossings. There are 1,360 level crossings on public roads in New South Wales. Some 431 of these have active traffic controls; 156 have flashing lights and bells; 273 have flashing lights, bells and boom gates; and two are manually operated. The remaining and overwhelming majority of crossings are passively controlled by give-way or stop signs. Further, more than 2,400 crossings are on private roads and properties.

The New South Wales Government is investing \$7.3 million each financial year to upgrade crossings. Twenty-nine level crossings across the State have been identified for upgrades between 2020 and 2023. Whilst this is commendable, it is simply not enough. It should not take a tragedy to make a change. We have the opportunity to do everything in our power to prevent further loss of life and the terrible impact that these accidents have on families, friends and communities. Maddie wants to see lights on all level crossings in New South Wales. Thousands of people who have signed her petition to Parliament feel the same. Why shouldn't it be our aim to do everything we can to ensure road users are aware of oncoming trains and the dangers they face? Rail traffic is only going to increase.

There has been a massive investment from this Government in our own rail network, which has totalled over \$100 million in improvements and upgrades in my electorate alone. Our Federal colleagues are moving ahead with the Inland Rail project. This is a boost for our regional communities, primary producers and the markets that take their goods but it will also bring increased risk to motorists across our railways. I am calling for local, State and Federal governments, agencies, departments, rail network operators, farmers, landowners, freight operators, rail companies and the community to do what they can to invest in the safety of our communities. Let us take a lesson from Maddie Bott and turn anguish into action. Let the loss of these two men become a catalyst for change for our communities. Maddie's petition is still open on the New South Wales Parliament website to be signed by New South Wales residents. So today I urge everyone to put their name to this petition and be part of this cause. I thank Maddie for her selfless advocacy on this issue.

### MASCOT TOWERS

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:43):** With a heavy heart I provide an update to the House on the very dire situation that owners of units in Mascot Towers are currently facing. It has been nearly two years since residents were ordered to evacuate on the evening of 14 June 2019 after building engineers discovered a crack in the transfer slab of the building. Since that time, residents have been unable to return to their homes. That looks unlikely to change. It is the sort of traumatic event that one struggles to comprehend: In an instant residents' life savings, home and future were snatched away from them, and not due to any fault or failing of their own. The home is the most valuable and most prized of possessions. It is difficult enough to lose that, but of course Mascot Towers owners also had to cope with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic soon after they were evacuated. Many have taken up temporary accommodation or rental assistance, provided by the State Government at my request. I am very grateful to the New South Wales Government for supporting the residents in this way, which I acknowledge was extraordinary.

While residents have been hopeful of being able to repair the building and return to their homes, the estimated cost of repairs has blown out from an early estimate of \$1 million to \$64 million once the interest costs of the commercial loan are considered—about \$500,000 per lot in the building. The financial viability of such a restoration appears unlikely. Unbelievably, Sydney Water was levying water usage charges on residents from 1 July onwards, after the temporary waiver I requested from the Minister expired on 30 June last year. Fortunately that insult was dealt with and residents will now have the waiver extended indefinitely. Consideration amongst the owners has now turned to a collective sale to a developer who will demolish the building and start again. Such a sale would allow residents to recoup a small portion of the value of their homes. For many owners, although not all, bankruptcy appears to be the most viable option to escape this nightmare. There are of course more than just financial costs. The emotional strain on residents has been enormous, with many reporting relationship breakdowns, loss of employment and even contemplation of suicide. It is a human tragedy.

Since the preliminary advice given to me by the State's engineers on the evening of the evacuation, I have always maintained that the fault that caused Mascot Towers' transfer slab to crack arose from the neighbouring Aland development Peak Towers at 27 Church Avenue rather than any construction or certification defect in the

original construction of Mascot Towers. That was the view of the independent investigation team, which found that soil and water leaking from the Peak Towers site was causing the support underneath Mascot Towers to subside and was undermining the structural supports of the building. It is that view that is currently being tested in the suit brought by Mascot Towers owners against Aland and its builders. If liability is established, I hope the owners of Mascot Towers recover as much compensation as possible from some of those parties so that they can get their lives back on track.

It is a sobering reminder to this place of the very real human cost of the legislative decisions that we make and the immense impact that planning decisions can have on the lives of New South Wales residents. It is not just the building, construction and property development industries that have failed the owners of Mascot Towers but the planning system too—a system that was designed by this place and whose legitimacy flows from this place. It is the planning system that allowed the consent to be granted by the Land and Environment Court for Peak Towers—contrary to the council's recommendations and determinations—and the failure to properly enforce the conditions of consent that would have prevented the undermining of Mascot Towers. If failures of this nature are not rectified, there may be more owners in the future who find themselves in the same awful predicament as the owners of Mascot Towers.

### PROBLEM GAMBLING

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:48):** I speak about a serious health problem, an addiction affecting members of our community and my electorate. It robs people and families of their lives. One of my constituents began his addiction at age 15 and it lasted more than 30 years. It led him to commit crimes and it devastated his family and personal relationships. I am not talking of drugs or alcohol; I am talking of the addiction to gambling. My constituent Stephen Menadue believes he has beaten his addiction. It is now almost 10 years since he was able to overcome his addiction, but not before it stole 30 years of his life and not without much support and help.

According to Lifeline, the average amount lost each year by a problem gambler is \$21,000. Australia has about 0.3 per cent of the world's population but 2.5 per cent of its gaming machines, and we now have an increasing issue with online gambling and sports betting. Beyond Blue argues that problem gambling can be thought of as a behavioural addiction, sharing some features of other addictions such as alcohol and drug dependency. In a 2013 position paper called *The Health Effects of Problem Gambling*, the Australian Medical Association [AMA] said:

Problem gamblers experience high levels of comorbid mental health disorders and substance abuse, and they or their families may experience stress-related physical and psychological ill health as a consequence of their gambling activities. Other adverse effects include family breakdown, domestic violence, criminal activity, disruption to or loss of employment, and social isolation. Additionally, problem gambling may compromise the capacity to afford adequate nutrition and necessities such as heating, shelter, transport, medicines and health services.

The problems of gambling are worst among the most vulnerable. According to the Alliance for Gambling Reform there is a common but erroneous claim that most of those who gamble do not experience harm. A 2016 study by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation found that gambling harm is experienced by broad sections of the community and the largest aggregate source of harm was in fact found to be experienced by low- and moderate-risk gamblers. It is a misconception that the experience of harm is limited to chronic gamblers. We know the majority of harm can be attributed to gamblers at the lower end of the gambling spectrum. So what are we to do? I believe that we should be treating problem gambling as the illness it is. The AMA paper states:

A public health approach to gambling takes into consideration the health, social and economic dimensions of gambling. ... a comprehensive approach is required that includes prevention, harm minimisation, and treatment. In addition to supporting medical interventions and treatment, preventative measures are required that address structural factors, with investment in 'upstream' public health strategies that contain the economic, political and social drivers that intensify gambling consumption. This includes regulating and restricting the availability and distribution of gambling products ... and reducing governments' reliance on gambling revenue. In addition to preventative and upstream measures, interventions that minimise the harm associated with gambling activities are required.

Because of the multiple problems faced by problem gamblers, a public health approach will bring together the services that are needed to help them. Gambling should be managed as a public health issue in the same way that smoking and road tolls are managed, where the systemic dangers are recognised and the industry is held to account. A public health approach will make sure we take this affliction seriously, that we make people aware of the real damage it causes, that we get help to those who need it and that we take the steps needed to prevent it. It will also mean that we stop the conflict of interest the Government has now as it treats problem gambling as something to be regulated while continuing to take the money it provides.

Stephen Menadue believes there is still much shame and stigma around problem gambling, which means people are hesitant about seeking help. He also believes that making it a public health issue could help make treatment services more available and easier to access. Let us not forget that it is not just gamblers but also their

families and friends who are affected. In fact, we are all diminished when members of our community suffer in this way. It is time that we stepped up to the challenge and treated the affliction of problem gambling as the disease it is.

### MIRANDA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:53):** I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations held in our local community on 25 April 2021. On 25 April 1915 the world changed as the first soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the shores of Gallipoli, unaware of the shocking loss that would follow. Tragically, more than 8,000 Australian soldiers died in the campaign. However, it was through this devastation that our Australian identity grew stronger and in many respects it has since guided the character of our nation as we respond to challenges.

The Anzac legacy is one of mateship, resilience, courage and sacrifice. Given the profound impact that Gallipoli had on Australians at home, 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who fought and died for our nation. This year I was pleased to attend Club on East's dawn service, held at Peace Park in Sutherland. Whilst I was disappointed to see that Miranda RSL Sub-Branch could not deliver an Anzac Day dawn service this year, it allowed me the opportunity to attend the Sutherland service. Organised by the wonderful Judy Ward, the Club on East service was a beautiful demonstration of the determination and ingenuity we share as a community.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Club on East dawn service ran seamlessly, thanks to the exceptional ticketing system that allowed more than 2,500 attendees to come together at dawn in remembrance. They included people from a number of outstanding community groups, such as Sutherland North Public School, Jannali East Public School, Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, 2nd Sutherland Armco Scout Group, 3rd Caringbah Guides, 1st Oyster Bay Scouts, Sutherland Shire Ranger Guides, Legacy Laurel, the National Servicemen Association, St Johns Ambulance, Southern Brass Band, the NSW Police Force local command and the Australian Army 4th and 3rd Battalions. I specifically thank the individuals who helped to facilitate the dawn service, including Pastor Rod Harding, who ran the outstanding service; Councillor Michael Forshaw; flag bearers Dr Peter Critchley, Chris Lance and Greg McIntyre; piper David Humphries; singer Natalie Claire; and CEO of Club on East, Scott Lindsay, alongside President Harry Morgan and Deputy President Brian Hannah. I also acknowledge the efforts of John Meekings, Alyssa Ward and Harry Ward. I commend Club on East for holding an outstanding and thoughtful Anzac Day dawn service.

I later attended Sylvania Bowling Club, which delivered a beautiful Anzac Day service. Organised by Tony Robins and facilitated by the Salvation Army, the service was held at the club's war memorial. The wreath laying was the highlight of the service as the club invited all of the children in attendance to lay a wreath together on behalf of the "Children of the Shire". I note that the luncheon address and toast to the Anzacs was beautifully delivered by Captain Ben Hurst of the Royal Australian Navy, along with Blake Jones, who played the bugle for the Last Post and Reveille. I acknowledge the exceptional team who contributed to the service, including President Ray George and Ladies President Kay Makin; Sutherland shire councillor Tom Croucher; service leader Mark Soper from the Salvation Army; along with the two flag bearers, flag officer Lieutenant Sam Hobby of the Royal Australian Navy and Isabella Dooley. Finally, I thank Sylvania Bowling Club members Keith Howell, Andrew Jones, Clint Wilkins, Sharon Rochester, Robyn Mackenzie and Audrey Giezekamp for their hard work, which was appreciated by all those who attended the service.

I also visited Woollooware Shores, which held two outstanding Anzac Day services to accommodate the village residents in a COVID-safe manner. Led by Reverend Garry Dawes, the service was thoughtfully put together and included a montage of wartime photos contributed by village residents of their loved ones. This tribute to those who served was not only touching but also helped to humanise the stories told to younger generations by allowing them to visualise the sacrifice given for our nation. I commend those involved in the organisation of these beautiful services, including village manager Colin Smith, president of the Resident Committee Geoff Breen and chair of the Chapel Committee Fya Willson, who each laid wreaths in remembrance. I also thank Ian McLeod, who led the Anzac dedication, Ron Hack, who led the prayers, Brian Loomes, who led the Ode, organist Adrian Jackson, bugler Jonathan Normand and flag bearers David Clayton and Geoff Kneeshaw. It is important to remember the Anzac legacy not just on 25 April but every day. Lest we forget.

### HOMELESSNESS

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:57):** We are currently in a crisis when it comes to housing security, homelessness and the dire shortage of social housing properties in our State. The New South Wales Government urgently needs to prioritise this social crisis by making sure that agencies, including health, housing, the Department of Education and the Department of Communities and Justice, all have the goal of preventing homelessness when working with groups and individuals. The global pandemic has emphasised the important

need for safe and secure housing for the health and wellbeing of individuals and the broader community. These unprecedented times have highlighted the lack of available social housing for the most vulnerable members of our community. I am sure members in this place understand the challenges our constituents face when they try to access public housing or social housing. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a strong economy and job security in maintaining affordable accommodation. But that is not possible for everybody in our community.

The New South Wales waitlist continues to be a substantial indicator of the lack of social housing. Close to 52,000 applicants are waiting on the NSW Housing Register. We know some of these people will need to wait 10 years for a property. In Glebe they will wait five years for a studio and more than 10 years for a multiple-bedroom home. In Wollongong, in my part of the world, the average time a family will wait for a three-bedroom home is 10 years. I know from the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Campbelltown, who have raised this with me, that in Campbelltown a family needing a four-bedroom home will need to wait 10 years for social housing.

Our specialised homelessness services are stretched and are unable to keep up with increasing demand. Sadly, they are assisting more people and more families who have been pushed out of rental accommodation and are unable to afford housing. Data released from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that in 2019-20 over 73,000 clients were supported by homelessness services in New South Wales. The sector continues to support 26 per cent more clients than it is funded to do. That is a quarter more of its work than it has funding for. I am frequently contacted by people who simply cannot afford a rental property and are facing impending homelessness. These are families who have never experienced housing insecurity before. This is not just apparent in my community but is apparent, I think, in many electorates across New South Wales.

The Government released its much anticipated *Housing 2041*, its 20-year vision for better housing. What the strategy lacks is real targets that actually address the current 50,000 people on the housing waiting list. How does the strategy deal with homelessness? We need more than words in this strategy. We expect that the Government will increase the support for those who need it most, as is stated on page 26 of the strategy. But we also need to understand how it is going to do this. It can say it will increase support but the people of New South Wales deserve the detail. How is it going to do this? The prevention of and the solution to homelessness rests in housing. We know this from around the world. Investment in public housing is also a fantastic economic driver because it adds economic activity and supports jobs across every single community, unlike mega projects that concentrate the labour market in a particular area. Public housing, social housing and affordable housing ensure that economic activity and job opportunities are spread across New South Wales.

The prevention of and the solution to homelessness therefore rests in the provision of housing. Domestic and global evidence confirms that there is no substitute for access to housing. Shelter is a well-recognised human right. We know that social housing can lift people out of poverty, where they can begin rebuilding their lives and contributing to their community and their family. If this Government's commitment to address homelessness is indeed genuine, then it must also create genuine opportunities to create more social and affordable housing, particularly as we begin to feel the effects of the global pandemic in an economic sense. We simply do not have enough to address the growing need and the current demand and our most vulnerable cannot afford to continue to stay on a growing waiting list.

## SEXUAL CONSENT

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:02):** One problem with prosecuting sexual offences is that the prosecution has to prove that the complainant did not consent to the sexual conduct. In many cases the defendant admits to sexual behaviour but maintains that sex was consensual. The questions become: Was she consenting? Did he know that she was not consenting? This situation is made much more difficult when the sexual assault is alleged to have happened between partners. The subjectivity of the opposing views makes a positive determination for the complainant difficult in court.

In determining if sex is reasonably available or if it is not, it is not unreasonable to assume that a man should know if a woman is consenting or not to sex, regardless of his original view. In determining consent or not, physical evidence may not be present. There may be no sign of physical violence on the victim and the victim may not have fought back, but this is not a reason to think that the sex was consensual. It may well go to the shock and fear suffered by the victim during the attack.

Typically the perpetrator of rape is known to the victim. This can add to the confusion of the victim and can lead to the victim taking on feelings of guilt and not reporting it immediately or ever. Submission is not consent, although some take it as such. There always needs to be an unequivocal yes from the other person. Consent must be given voluntarily in making that decision. A person should be in a position to make a free, cognitive and unimpaired decision in relation to sex. In the context of any decision made in a sexual assault case, that should be a prime consideration.

The use of force, threats to themselves or another person, conduct that would reasonably be captured under the term "coercive controlling behaviour" as well as frightening them, hurting them physically, unlawfully detaining them or using fraud or deceit are all anathemas to the making of a free choice. While any of these actions are present before sex, consent was not freely given. Consent must be given voluntarily before the beginning of a sexual encounter. Consent must be present prior to sex and, where necessary, during the sex act. A person's body autonomy should be respected. We need to start from a position of the body being unavailable until it is made available to the other person.

A place for Australia to start looking for examples of comprehensive laws to protect women is the Istanbul Convention. It is the first legally binding instrument that creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women and is focused on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims and prosecuting accused offenders. The preamble evokes the European Convention on Human Rights, European Social Charter and Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings as well as international human rights treaties by United Nations and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In Article 2, the convention indicates that the provisions shall apply in times of peace and also in situations of armed conflicts. Article 3 defines key terms. Violence against women is defined as:

Violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Domestic violence means:

All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

Gender is defined as "the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men". Gender-based violence means "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately". Article 4 prohibits several types of discrimination:

The implementation of the provisions of the convention by the parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any grounds.

Currently over 30 European countries have signed, ratified and brought into force the Istanbul Convention. I request that the Government look at it when considering coercive control in the bill that we will be bringing. I thank the brave women from the Illawarra who have advised me on this matter.

#### VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:07):** I speak on the work undertaken by Vishva Hindu Parishad [VHP] Australia. In the recent Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans budget estimates hearing, Vishva Hindu Parishad Australia was accused by Mr David Shoebridge of being a far-right Hindu extremist organisation. Further, Mr Shoebridge stated that VHP is a designated militant extremist religious organisation in the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] World Fact Book.

I have met with Subramanian Ramamoorthi, president of VHP Australia and a constituent of mine in the electorate of Prospect. He and his organisation are distressed by the disgraceful accusations and incredibly misleading statements from Mr Shoebridge. The VHP was listed as a religious militant organisation in the CIA World Fact Book for less than one month in June 2018, before it was removed from the political pressure groups list. I would have thought that a member of The Greens in the Legislative Council, who I believe is meant to be a solicitor or a barrister, would apply more scepticism to claims made by the CIA, especially given that the claims have since been removed, and apologise. It is clear that any adverse claims made against the VHP are incorrect.

I give the following facts. Mr Ramamoorthi and VHP Australia have the confidence of the Department of Defence, which has appointed him to the Religious Advisory Committee to the Australian Defence Force [ADF]. He is currently serving as the representative of VHP. During his time on the advisory committee, the number of Hindu members of the Australia Defence Force has increased by some 50 per cent, a fact that he is proud of as an Australian citizen. Further, Mr Ramamoorthi has received confirmation from the NSW Police Force Terrorism Investigation Squad that Vishva Hindu Parishad is not a proscribed terrorist organisation in Australia.

The harm that such allegations can cause to our community is immeasurable. The allegations are an attack on not just VHP Australia but all multicultural community organisations. Several organisations representing people of various faiths and cultures have reached out to Mr Ramamoorthi to offer their support and express concern that they could be singled out in the future. Following the comments made in budget estimates, All Faiths SRE (NSW), which represents special religious education providers from many faith groups, came to the defence of VHP. Its letter to the deputy secretary of Learning Improvement at the Department of Education stated in part

that "the allegations implied under parliament privilege by The Greens senator's questions are baseless and unfounded." The secretary of the NSW Department of Education has also stated that no concerns have been raised by the NSW Police Force regarding VHP Australia, stating:

They are not known as an organisation of concern in New South Wales. Where New South Wales Police are aware of any concerns regarding a group or organisation known to be in our schools, they advise us immediately.

Members of Parliament should think carefully before throwing untested allegations against community groups in our State. Sydney is a multicultural city. There is no room for this accusatory and divisive behaviour by any member. If members of either Chamber of the Parliament wish to make the extraordinary claim that a community group is a far-right extremist organisation or that it is a militant extremist organisation, they must be willing to provide some evidence. It is unfathomable to me that such allegations were raised without so much as first speaking to the organisation and undertaking basic research. Unless substantive evidence can be produced that credibly accuses VHP Australia of wrongdoing, it is owed an unreserved public apology by Mr Shoebridge. I stand in support of our diverse western Sydney multicultural community, where people of all faiths and cultures have come together for the betterment of Australia. I thank the House.

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:12):** Tonight I once again draw the attention of Parliament to Labor's NSW Jobs First Bill 2021. It was introduced by deputy leader Yasmin Catley, who is a passionate advocate of manufacturing in New South Wales and the importance of manufacturing to regional economies. The bill has been read for a second time in the House, on the back of massive cost blowouts and failures in overseas manufacturing that the Berejiklian Government has invested in at huge cost to taxpayers, future generations of manufacturers and skills development in New South Wales. Trains that do not fit the tracks, massive cost blowouts in light rail manufactured in Spain, Hong Kong-made metro blowouts, ferries that do not fit under the bridges—the list goes on.

The light rail has cost the taxpayers of New South Wales more than the original estimated cost. That is a \$1.7 billion blowout. The Minister travelled on it this morning—still very empty as it is slower than the bus and possibly slower than an electric bicycle. We now have new ferries in New South Wales, manufactured to include asbestos and that decapitate passengers under local bridges, made in Indonesia and China. We have metro trains made in Hong Kong, blowing out to more than \$7 billion over budget. The majority of our new buses are coming from China. And yet in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia, under Labor governments—which have not cascaded down the economic scale, like the New South Wales Liberals, but have cascaded up—we have sound domestic train manufacturing.

I thank McConaghy Boats for choosing to locate its very highly skilled manufacturing hub to the Central Coast. The ending of the lease in Sydney and the number of talented, highly skilled boat builders who call the beautiful Central Coast home have led to the opening of a huge facility in Gosford which directly and indirectly employs over 100 skilled locals and regularly makes the effort to support local suppliers. I am proud to call the coast home, a region born on the waterways and of the waterways. It is a region that has forever fuelled generations of talented and innovative men and women who build marine craft. They keep people connected to our beautiful waterways, recognising what they provide for humanity while highlighting the importance of keeping our oceans clean as they pass on their knowledge from generation to generation.

We are extremely lucky to have on the coast a strong network of shipwrights and naval architects who have grown up in the industry in the Hunter, on Cockatoo Island and at many and varied boatyards across coastal New South Wales. The huge shed front on the Gosford industrial estate does not tell the story of the evolution in forefront technology, innovation and logistics that is going on behind doors. Many at McConaghy Boats have spent time working overseas and racing high-performance yachts. They are proud coasties who are delivering work of an international standard in our community. The hub covers approximately 20 per cent of McConaghy's international work. It is important that we hold onto this component and continue to support the boatbuilding industry in New South Wales.

On this one site we see generational shipwrights, naval architects and other marine experts who are passing on their knowledge to younger generations. We see work-from-home technical design components, carbon fibre and fibreglass curves across the workshop combined with more than 200 years of experience, pride in workmanship and a transfer of knowledge. That is combined with the capacity to innovate, create, switch around, design and deliver to the military, health and solar industries and many other sectors in our society, including the Chinese train manufacturing industry. The work is backed by an intellectual capacity that is generously demonstrated and shared and provides a massive increase to the value of our community that can never be understated.

I will talk tonight about Kearin, a young graduate from Brisbane Water Secondary College who is finishing his boatbuilding training at TAFE. What are the next steps in the Government's investment in the boatbuilding industry so that this young man can secure a future in New South Wales? In mentioning the incredible talent, innovation and excellence in delivery, I also commend the great work of coastie-born Borg Manufacturing, which continues to innovate, train and deliver excellent standards in manufacturing across New South Wales. I thank them for their great work. The importance of government investment in high-quality training as well as the many facets of manufacturing is vital for the future of our community, our State and our nation.

### WATER SAFETY

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:17):** Tonight I speak about how this Government is once again putting our most valuable natural resource—water—at grave risk. In the north of my electorate, in the centre of our State, stretch great brown plains that are the stuff of legend. This is classic Australia, the sunburnt country. Aboriginal people flourished out there for tens of thousands of years. Later, settlers established the vast stations on which our modern nation was built—on the sheep's back. Agriculture remains the backbone of the region, although more and more tourists are coming out to discover the wild beauty of the Yathong Nature Reserve or the spectacular landscapes and deep Indigenous history of the Willandra Lakes.

That region is one of the driest parts of the State. Water is our most precious resource—more precious than gold. Some irrigation occurs down by the Lachlan but to the north, humans and animals alike are utterly dependent on water from the earth. Without water, there is no life. Yet the Government is willing to gamble that water away so a few fat cats can make a short-term profit. They claim that gas deposits are beneath that precious water. Without too much fanfare, government planners have been taking steps to extract it.

Planning teams have been to the region on a rushed consultation. Given the vast distances that the locals need to travel, we would have thought there would have been more notice and publicity about such an important issue. But—surprise, surprise—there was not. Perhaps that is because they knew what the reaction would be. Despite keeping the consultation on the down-low, word got around. The communities of Yathong, Ivanhoe and Neckarboo got together, and when the chief planner came to visit, he got a rude shock. Yathong-Ivanhoe Neckarboo Aquifer Alliance, or YINAA, told the Government it was not going to be railroaded again.

All around the State we have seen that people do not want gas wells; it is not worth the risk. If that gas gets into the groundwater during the exploration stage, it is game over. As one farmer told me, without water we are finished. Agriculture, communities and a long, sustainable chapter of Australian history is finished, and for what? Gas is not going to help our Central West flourish. Like parasites, a few companies will truck in, suck out the wealth and leave the land unusable. It is not just the risk of contamination. If this gas drilling goes ahead, it will put pressure on resources that are already thinly spread. That is not to mention the disruption to our farming life, caused by fleets of trucks and machinery playing havoc with stock and fencing.

But the people of the area are not standing for it. They are standing up for their region, organising an alliance of local farmers, graziers and others who love the land. They have pushed back against the planners, although it is not finished yet. That is why I am standing here today, asking this House to hear the voices of the constituents. They are saying, "Don't prioritise short-term profits over long-term sustainability. Don't risk our fragile water resources on a pipe dream." To the self-proclaimed party of agriculture on the benches over there, I say, "Now is your chance to put your money where your mouth is." Whose side are they on? Are they going to stand with generations of farmers or will they risk our most precious resource so their mates can make a few bucks?

### MEMBER FOR MULGOA

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:21):** My private member's statement is about my 10-year anniversary of being elected to this place, which happened in March this year. Ten years ago I was elected to the Parliament of New South Wales, representing the electorate of Mulgoa, with a swing of 23 per cent. With a large number of other new MPs, I was eager to get working and start fighting for our communities to see investment return to our communities and grassroots organisations, which do so much for our residents. I will spend a few minutes highlighting a number of achievements I have been able to deliver, together with the focus of the community and the help of the wider Liberal-Nationals Government.

One of my campaigns when I was first running for election was fighting to have the St Marys Methadone Clinic relocated from Queen Street, St Marys, and placed in a proper designated hospital location. This was achieved in the first term of government, despite the previous Labor member holding the electorate for 16 years and refusing to do anything about that very important matter. Another important aim was to achieve funding of \$1 billion to support the rebuilding of the Nepean Hospital, in addition to supporting the purchase of additional humidicribs for the neonatal intensive care unit in the current hospital.

Infrastructure development includes expanding roads and building new roads such as stage one of the Werrington Arterial Road, Erskine Park Link Road, Wallgrove Road and Mini Link Road, the upgrade of Horsley Drive and the M4 smart motorway. The upgrade of Mulgoa Road is underway, as is stage one of the planning to upgrade Mamre Road and Roper Road's westbound on ramp to the M4. Many more road upgrades have benefited my community as well as new and upgraded schools, including the new Fernhill School in Glenmore Park, Cecil Hills Public School and Kurrambee School. I also fought hard to secure additional funding on top of the insurance payout when St Clair High School suffered a catastrophic fire about six years ago. Now we see a magnificent innovation centre on the St Clair site.

At the last election I proudly announced that, if elected, the Liberal-Nationals would fight to secure funding and deliver the Glenmore Park High School's Performing Arts and Learning Centre, which is now in the detailed planning stages. That construction will start very soon. Being able to purchase Fernhill Estate to get it back into public hands for the benefit of residents of western Sydney as well as broader New South Wales and beyond, and securing funding to upgrade amenity blocks at Mulgoa Rise, Ched Towns Reserve and Mark Leece Fields in St Clair are also wonderful achievements.

A couple of years ago I was honoured to be appointed Minister for Mental Health, Women and Aging under the Berejiklian Government. One of the achievements that I am proud to highlight is the delivery of the Baby Bundle, which I undertook to ensure that every new mum and dad was provided with information about postnatal depression in a non-threatening way. I was also proud to deliver \$700 million worth of investment into mental health services across New South Wales. I will highlight some of the organisations that have received funding through various means and with the assistance of my advocacy. They include various community and council early childhood centres and preschools across the electorate as well as schools in the suburbs of Blackwell, Bringelly, St Clair, Mulgoa, Surveyors Creek, Cecil Hills, Regentville, Horsley Park, Erskine Park, Glenmore Park and Wallacia. Other schools that have also received funding include Clairgate Public School, James Erskine Public School, Banks Public School, Mamre Anglican School, Marion Catholic Primary School, Nepean Christian School, Thomas Hassall Anglican College, St Narsai Assyrian Christian College, Irfan College and Al-Faisal College.

I have also helped to raise funding for sporting groups. Clubs that have received funding in my electorate include: the St Clair and Emmaus netball clubs; the Kemps Creek, South Creek and Glenmore Park football clubs; the St Clair Comets and the Glenmore Park Brumbies; the Mulgoa Valley, Glenmore Park and St Clair cricket clubs; the St Clair Crows AFL club; the Penrith City Softball Association; the Glenmore Heritage Valley Golf Club; the Sydney International Equestrian Centre Arena; and the Penrith Golf and Recreation Club. I have also advocated on behalf of many charities to help them to raise funding.

They include: CatholicCare social services at Mamre, Angels of Mercy, Wesley Community Services, Sunnyfield, Nepean Food Services, the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, the Riding for the Disabled Association and Anowah Community Living. I will outline the community groups that I have been able to help to raise funds. They include: the St Clair and District Men's Shed; the Assyrian Australian Association; the Luddenham and Wallacia progress associations; the Luddenham Show Society; the Erskine Park, Regentville, Wallacia and Mulgoa Rural Fire Services; the St Marys RSL sub-Branch; Mulgoa Valley Landcare; the Cumberland Land Conservancy; Glenmore Park Anglican Church; and ImagineNations Church.

More broadly, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has turned our State around. It is the leading State in financial management, business confidence and investment, both locally and internationally, and the unemployment rate has now returned below 5 per cent. The future is full of hope. We must always look ahead while we deliver services and improvements to our communities in the present. I am focused on fighting for a better standard of living, on providing more jobs and careers for western Sydney in western Sydney to avoid the burden of commuting, and on delivering the best health and education infrastructure and information services for everyone.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:26):** I acknowledge the private member's statement given by the member for Mulgoa. I note her 10 years of service to this place and also to the people of Mulgoa. I have had the pleasure of working with the member since my election in 2015, at a time when she was Minister responsible for mental health. She provided support to my community through funding for our Men's Shed and for the Save Our Kids program. Five minutes was not near long enough for the member for Mulgoa to outline all of the successes that she has had as a strong advocate for her community. Every single sporting club has received funding through support from the member for Mulgoa. In addition, her fierce advocacy in this place stopped an incinerator from being built in her electorate. The list of her achievements goes on and on. The member for Mulgoa has been an incredibly strong voice for her electorate. Recently I received her newsletter and I found it hard to believe that she has been able to achieve so much in 10 years. I know that she represents her community strongly and fiercely, and she will continue to do so. I congratulate her on her 10-year anniversary as the member for Mulgoa.

### FALL OF SAIGON ANNIVERSARY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:27):** On Friday 30 April 2021 the New South Wales chapter of the Vietnamese Community in Australia [VCA] held a candlelight ceremony to commemorate the forty-sixth anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, also known as National Resentment Day. The solemn event was held to acknowledge the adversity, struggle and sacrifice of millions of South Vietnamese men, women and children against the oppressive communist regime of the north during the Vietnam War and to remember the eventual fall of Saigon. The Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg was the venue for the commemorative event. Attendees included members of the VCA, former South Vietnamese defence force personnel, local councillors, parliamentary colleagues, NSW Labor leader Jodi McKay, and Wendy Lindsay, who represented the Premier.

On 30 April 1975 the South Vietnamese bastion, Saigon, which is now known as Ho Chi Minh City, fell to the People's Army of Vietnam and the Vietcong. The South Vietnamese fought long and hard in that bitter battle to defend both their territory and their democracy. Unfortunately they were overtaken by the rapid advancement of the Vietcong forces. That day was significant. To the world it meant the end of the Vietnam War; however, for the South Vietnamese it meant that their country was now one nation under communist rule. Some 7.5 million people died in that conflict and many more were displaced. Disheartened by the prospect of communist oppression, many South Vietnamese took to the seas and fled Vietnam in the hope of finding a better life in another country. There is no doubt that although the atrocities occurred many decades ago, the pain, wounds and psychological scars still remain.

Video footage from the fall of Saigon period was played at the commemoration, and community members told personal stories of their treatment under the brutal communist forces. Those personal stories remain powerful to this day. Vietnamese refugees recounted being stranded on leaking boats, floating aimlessly in the ocean without food or water for weeks on end. Sadly, many merchant ships neglected their maritime duty to assist the stranded vessels and sailed past them. Thousands of lives perished at sea. Many never made it to dry land. Either their vessels sank or they were taken captive and treated barbarically by pirates. The more fortunate refugees landed ashore in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia and other parts of South-East Asia, and thus began their search for freedom through refugee camps.

Thousands were resettled in developed countries like the United States of America, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom and others were resettled throughout Europe. Under the leadership of President Paul Huy Nguyen and Vice President Kate Hoang, the Vietnamese Community in Australia continues to strive to keep the plight of the Vietnamese people in our hearts to this very day. Along with VCA committee members and support from the wider community, the organisation continues to fight to highlight the human rights violations that occurred then and that continue to occur now. Although that was a terrible time for the people of Vietnam, for many, that period began the journey to Australia and to freedom, albeit as refugees. Australians are lucky to have so many wonderful Vietnamese people living here today, who have been brought to us as a result of the conflict. The Vietnamese people in Australia have added to our fabric of life. We are grateful that they have shared their traditions and culture with us.

Although born out of a terrible time in Vietnamese history, the presence of the Vietnamese community in Australia has enhanced the Australian culture in a unique way. It has brought some extremely talented people. We are fortunate enough to share in happy experiences with our Vietnamese brothers and sisters through events such as the New Year's celebrations, the Tet Festival and the exquisite flavours of Vietnamese food. We join with Paul Nguyen, Kate Hoang and the Vietnamese community each year to pay our respects to those who perished in the Vietnam War and to honour the survivors of that terrible conflict. We commiserate with the Vietnamese community over their loss of loved ones, their loss of basic human rights and their loss of freedom. We will continue to remember and honour those who perished on that day and throughout the Vietnam War.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **VIC ALHADEFF**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:32):** Today I acknowledge the work of Mr Vic Alhadeff as he steps down as CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Mr Alhadeff has been a dedicated leader of the board for 16 years, building a legacy for the organisation that both the Jewish community and the broader community can enjoy. During his time as CEO, Vic served as chair of Multicultural NSW and as spokesperson for the Keep NSW Safe coalition. He successfully campaigned for legislative reform to outlaw racial and cultural violence. Prior to his position as CEO, Vic was an editor of the *Australian Jewish News* for 18 years. During that time he travelled to Berlin to cover the fall of the Berlin Wall and then on to Israel to report on the Gulf War. Over the years I have shared in Vic's commitment to drawing attention to social justice issues through the celebration of difference, and I call him my friend. Vic is known throughout this place for his tireless and energetic

championing of liberty, freedom and human rights. I thank Vic for his service to the community and I wish him all the best in his future endeavours, including as a consultant with the board.

#### **GREG AND ZELKA POTTER**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:33):** I commend the efforts of small business owners Greg and Zelka Potter on sustaining their family-owned business, Ambassador Coffee, through the COVID-19 pandemic. Zelka's father, Josip, established the business in 1980. As a migrant, he worked tirelessly to serve the community. Many local customers have purchased Ambassador Coffee beans for years. Greg gets up to roast coffee beans in his house at 6.00 a.m. six days a week. Zelka says that roasting in small batches means that the flavour is locked in. Through continuous experimentation, learning and education, Zelka and Greg continue to offer one-of-a-kind blends 41 years on in store and online. On my visit Zelka told me how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted their business on multiple fronts. Importation of beans is now more difficult, which means they are not coming in as quickly. The dispatch is unreliable and they need to plan far in advance. The business also operates a small cafe. During the COVID-19 lockdown period Greg and Zelka had to rely on takeaway and home deliveries to sustain their business, which they have done admirably. I commend Zelka and Greg for working hard to sustain and grow their business throughout the pandemic.

#### **ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:35):** At the end of last year I had the privilege of attending the graduation mass and presentation ceremony at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Oatley—where I used to go to school. It was an honour to visit the Our Lady of Fatima Peakhurst Catholic Church to present certificates to the inspiring young students who have now made their transition to high school. From speaking to students and their parents, I am pleased to see that these students have achieved outstanding results and that they are going on to bigger and better things. It was fantastic to see so many parents present at this very special occasion. I thank the principal, Kylie Brakel, religious education coordinator Annette Robertson and the entire team for putting this fantastic event together. To have over 100 guests and supporters present is simply incredible and showcases the friendly, supportive and community-based culture at St Joseph's in Oatley. I wish each and every student the very best for the future.

#### **ST PHILIP'S ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:35):** I congratulate St Philip's Anglican Church in Auburn on celebrating the centenary of its current church this year. The church was built in 1921 as a memorial to peace after the Great War, replacing an existing church that held services dating back to 1838. The St Philip's Anglican community has grown in recent years to include services in Newington, which is also in the electorate of Auburn, and embracing a wide multicultural community. They are one of our many local communities offering much-needed support and help to newly arrived residents and those in need. I was delighted to join parishioners for the Easter Sunday service last month, which included a sermon from the newly retired Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies. It was an opportunity to celebrate both Easter and the church's centenary. I congratulate Pastor Tim Cocks and the St Philip's church community on their centenary and thank them for the great work they do in Auburn.

#### **HELLO KOALAS TRAIL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:36):** On the last day of March I had the pleasure to witness the launch of the Hello Koalas trail as it came to the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan in Camden. The Hello Koalas trail is an award-winning public art project that encompasses culture, heritage and environmental themes. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her attendance. I commend the amazing work of the famous founder of the project, Margret Meagher from Port Macquarie. I also acknowledge the work of grounds keepers and people behind the scenes who made this all happen. It is a great way to forge bonds, create memories and celebrate the fundamentals of Australian history past and present. I am honoured to have such a remarkable project come to the Camden electorate.

#### **DUBBO CAN ASSIST OPEN GARDEN DAY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:37):** I had a fantastic Sunday morning with hundreds of other people investigating all the open gardens as part of Dubbo Can Assist Open Garden Day. Seven open gardens around the Grangewood area took part. It was good to meet all the owners who opened up their gardens for all of us to have a squiz at. I was pleased to meet them individually and chat about their gardens. Funnily enough, most of them had been quite nervous and stressed in the lead-up to the event. There was lots for them to organise to make sure their gardens were looking tip top. The good news is that by the end of it they were all particularly happy, if a bit tired. The organisers, Can Assist Dubbo, did a great job putting the whole thing together, including

a fantastic setting for the market stalls. It is one of the big fundraisers for the Can Assist team. Given the number of people in the streets, I am hoping that it has translated into a great boost of funds. Well done to all involved.

#### **ETTALONG-WOY WOY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:38):** I thank the Ettalong-Woy Woy Teachers Association for embracing the Gallop report, continuing to work to elevate the concerns of local teachers and highlighting the increased workload and stress in the education workspace over the past 10 years. It was great to meet with so many teachers who are positive about the future of their important profession. They are looking forward to the Berejiklian Government acting on the Gallop recommendations to save this important profession and drive it into a thriving future. Teachers are looking forward to the pay rise, the counsellor support, the increased preparation time, the improved steps in professional advancement, the changes to the Local Schools, Local Decisions model and the collaborative work on future curriculum changes. I thank all teachers in my electorate across the Central Coast and New South Wales for the incredible work they do every day to educate and support our kids and families. I encourage them to keep active and keep the pressure on to improve the future educational outcomes for our kids, our State and our nation.

#### **TAREN POINT TITANS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:39):** I acknowledge the Taren Point Titans Junior Rugby League Football Club, which celebrated its first crop of centurion players on 17 April 2021. Established in 2004, this wonderful club has thrived in the local sporting community, producing 26 players this year who have reached their 100th game milestone. Led by founding member and club president Brett Robinson, the Titans have continued to grow in size and were awarded Club of the Year by the Cronulla Junior League Association. I congratulate centurion players Harrison Brian, Jake Morris, Lachlan Brown, Declan Thornberry, Joshua Keith, Kane Morris, Jonathon Jones, Joshua Moran, George Spiropoulos, Adam Dailly, Carson Gabriel, Mitchell Gasiner, Zac Kennedy, Brody Osfield, Wade Osfield, Kalen Fay, Kacey Fay, Luke Ford, Caleb de la Vega, Darcy Flood, Harrison Ford, Jack Gardiner, Prashat Pilay, Constandinos Spiropoulos, Christos Margaritis and Christian Santani. I commend the Taren Point Titans on this outstanding achievement and wish them well for the future.

#### **WOODLANDS RESTORATION**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:40):** Part of the rich history of the Davidson electorate is the house where Ethel Turner wrote *Seven Little Australians* in 1894 when she was 24. The novel was penned at her family home, Inglewood, now known as Woodlands, in Lindfield. It is the only Australian novel to be continuously in print for over 100 years. Turner and her novel were memorialised in Davidson when Seven Little Australians Park was proclaimed in 1980, 22 years after Turner's death. In 2017 Albert and Eva Lim, recently arrived from Malaysia, purchased Woodlands, unaware of its history. Upon learning of Ethel Turner and her most famous work, the Lims restored parts of the house to reflect the period of Turner's life there, filling the rooms with period furniture and the bookshelf with Turner's novels. They now plan to open their house to the public, welcoming schoolchildren, literary groups and libraries to experience the life of one of Australia's most prolific writers. I commend the Lims on their enthusiasm and dedication in bringing Ethel Turner and her *Seven Little Australians* back to life for future generations.

#### **SAVE THE KILLALEA ALLIANCE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:41):** I acknowledge the Save the Killalea Alliance, which has done a fabulous job in ensuring that our community's voice is being heard in this Parliament, in council and at the Federal level. Last night I talked about this organisation in a private member's statement. My community is absolutely opposed to the development in Killalea State Park. In this place I speak for them and put their wishes forward. It has been said to me on numerous occasions that this Government does not understand the environmental and cultural impacts of this area. On behalf of my community, I again call on the Government to ensure that there is no development of Killalea State Park.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Like Labor's proposal, the 103 development hotel proposal?

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I note that the member for Kiama in 2011 said that the Liberal-Nationals Government was committed to not developing the Killalea State Park. Again, the member for Kiama says one thing in Kiama and another thing in Macquarie Street.

#### **THE BLIND CHEF CAFE AND DESSERT BAR**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (20:42):** Recently I had the pleasure of visiting one of Penrith's newest cafes, The Blind Chef Cafe and Dessert

Bar, and chatting to owner Craig Shannahan. His is a truly inspirational story. Craig had a dream to become a chef and own his own cafe. He is legally blind. He lost one eye when he was quite young and a tumour has severely impacted the vision in his second eye. The fact that he has been able to set up a new cafe in Penrith is a truly inspirational outcome and exercise. It is critically important to Craig that his cafe is designed to be an inclusive place for people with disability, people impacted by loss of vision and the elderly. He has his trusty guide dog, Rocko, by his side and an unbelievably strong group of supporters, including his family and lots of workers to make the cafe fantastic. What Craig has done is truly inspirational for the people of Penrith and across Sydney. People should go to this cafe because the food is excellent.

#### **CHARMHAVEN LIONS CLUB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:43):** I congratulate the Charmhaven Lions Club on celebrating its 37 years of service to the community. Dino Morlin, who is a charter member, still supports the community by supplying many hours laying concrete at Camp Breakaway, San Remo, and has also completed a concrete car park for Marine Rescue. The Lions club has dedicated over three decades of service and more than half a million dollars to the community on the Central Coast. The Lions club volunteers are contributing their time by organising Bunnings barbeques and raffles to raise funds for Wyong hospital to purchase equipment to be used by staff. Their ongoing support also provides care packages for the Central Coast women's refuge and We Care Connect. During the recent drought, which was followed by bushfires, several people lost their water tanks. Charmhaven Lions Club sent funds to the Taree Lions Club to buy and install three water tanks, each costing \$3,000. I thank the volunteers who have been involved with the Charmhaven Lions Club. Each member has impacted the community, making it a better place.

#### **WEST WYALONG HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:44):** I extend my congratulations to the 17 students from West Wyalong High School who recently completed their Construction General Induction (White Card) course. The White Card course provides students and citizens with the general knowledge and understanding of safety requirements for working on construction sites. The course includes hazard identification, equipment use and safe work practices. I am extremely pleased to see so many students within the Cootamundra electorate complete this course as it sets them up for apprenticeships and work in the trade of construction. West Wyalong High School is just one of many schools within my electorate that run the White Card course. I thank the school and the staff for offering this course to students, allowing them a stepping stone to a career in the construction industry. I congratulate all of those students and I wish them all the very best for their chosen career.

#### **ST GEORGE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:45):** From Riverwood to Rockdale and everywhere in between, the St George Football Association is an outstanding organisation that is continuing to grow our local football community. Earlier this year I had the honour of visiting Peakhurst Park alongside the chief executive officer of the St George Football Association, Craig Kiely, to launch the 2021 football season. I am pleased to announce that the organisation has more than 10,000 registered players—my son is one of them—for the 2021 season, which is an outstanding achievement for a community organisation. I am proud to be a joint patron of the St George Football Association—I understand the member for Kogarah and the member for Rockdale are also patrons—because I strongly believe that it does an incredible job in promoting inclusion and greater engagement within our local sporting community. The 2021 season launch put the supportive nature of the organisation on display and it has been great to see so many people eager and excited for the season ahead. I cannot wait to see plenty of exciting football being played at local fields across our region in the year ahead.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MALCOLM CLARK**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:46):** Tonight I pay tribute to Malcolm Clark, who passed away recently. Malcolm was a friend to many. He was funny, down to earth and willing to give anything a go—at least once! In short, he was a great bloke. Recently his friends the member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, the member for Keira, Ryan Park, Councillor Janice Kershaw and I joined Malcolm's family, workmates, friends from football, the surf club and a range of other organisations he had become involved with during his life to celebrate a life well lived. That afternoon Corrimal Surf Club was filled with stories, but the most special were told by his two sons, Cameron and Riley, who knew that they could always count on their dad to be in their corner or urging them to take on new challenges—quite vocally at times.

As well as the many other roles that Malcolm had in life, he was a long-term member of both the Corrimal and Bulli-Woonona-Helensburgh branches of the Labor Party. At branch meetings he was well known for greeting you with a massive smile and a handshake, which was quickly followed by, "Now, I want to talk to you about something." Often it would be more than one thing. He was always probing, always inquisitive, looking for

answers and more details around issues, but the one thing you could always be sure of was that you were never in any doubt where you stood with him.

#### **CRESTANI SCHOLARSHIPS TWILIGHT SOIREE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:48):** On Sunday 21 March Crestani Scholarships held its sixth annual Twilight Soiree at the Gosford Regional Gallery. Crestani Scholarships is a wonderful organisation founded by the 2019 Central Coast Citizen of the Year and former Terrigal Woman of the Year, Yvonne Crestani. The charity, which is managed by volunteers, aims to ensure better outcomes for cancer patients through funding further education for radiation therapists, medical physicists, nurses and allied health professionals to advance skills and techniques in cancer treatment. This event celebrated the commitment, dedication, compassion and courage of all essential healthcare workers during an especially difficult time. I acknowledge all the talented musicians who performed on the evening as well as town crier Stephen Clarke, OAM, and award-winning artist Peter McKnight. A big thankyou to Crestani Scholarships for putting on a fantastic event and to the extensive list of sponsors, including Central Coast Conservatorium of Music, who make the work done by the organisation possible.

#### **WOOLGOOLGA HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:49):** Like all schools in my electorate, Woolgoolga High School strives for excellence in education. Its motto is "Success Crowns Effort". I enjoyed visiting my former school to catch up with relieving principal Lu Nickell and school captains Kelsey Blackhall, Lucy Dunning, Phoenix Keating and Kai Nudd. Their leadership contributes to positive outcomes across their school community. Science was the topic for discussion on the day. The school will benefit from improved facilities with its \$595,000 science laboratory upgrade, part of the New South Wales Government's \$120 million Regional Renewal Program. It is a similar good news story at many Coffs Coast schools, which have \$4 million worth of projects included in this important program. I thank the staff, students and parents at every school in the Coffs Harbour electorate for what they are achieving every day.

#### **HANIEL DAVISON**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:49):** I offer my sincere congratulations and best wishes to Haniel Davison. Haniel is a year 11 student at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, and he will be representing the Fairfield electorate as the youth member for Fairfield in the upcoming Youth Parliament, which will be held on 21 July. Youth Parliament has a long history of championing the development of young minds and encouraging young people to think of themselves as having the potential to be catalysts for social change through mindful debate. This program is run by young people for young people and it is a great opportunity for Haniel to step into my shoes and represent the constituents of the Fairfield electorate through the parliamentary process. I wish Haniel all the very best in his endeavours in the Youth Parliament in 2021.

#### **AUSTRALIAN STREET ROD FEDERATION**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:50):** I update the House on my attendance on 2 May 2021 at the Australian Street Rod Federation [ASRF] information day at the Croatian Club in Schofields. I had met with Dave, Ian and Tony from ASRF last year when they were seeking my support for changes to the *Brake Assessment Manual*. Having grown up in a car enthusiast family, I had some understanding of the issues that Dave and his team had raised with me. The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the very capable the Hon. Paul Toole, was also understanding of the red tape and restrictions that car enthusiasts have had to deal with, and consequently the *Brake Assessment Manual* has been revised. There were some impressive vehicles on display at the meeting and I was able to award trophies to the top cars. The meeting drew supporters from across New South Wales and there was a big variety of vehicles, which included street rods, muscle cars and rat rods. The Australian Street Rod Federation is to be commended for its advocacy and for keeping motoring enthusiasts well informed. I congratulate David Clift, Ian Davis and Tony O'Donnell for their support and dedication to the industry.

#### **GOSFORD POLICE STATION ABORIGINAL FLAG RAISING**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:51):** It was a life-changing moment at Gosford Police Station as the new Aboriginal flag was raised for the first time ever. Our fabulous Aboriginal community celebrated not only the flag raising but also the incredibly talented local artists and their artworks, which will now hold pride of place in the foyer of the station. Congratulations and thankyou to Kylie Cassidy and Muzza Gulagong for their talent and generosity of culture. Their artworks are not only gorgeous; their story and symbolism are also very powerful and important. Many hugs were shared as we celebrated this important change in our community. Thanks also to Deputy Commissioner Worboys for this initiative across New South Wales. He is a legend human! Congratulations and thank you to Superintendent Brett Greentree and Acting Inspector Anthony Doherty, who

pushed through the barriers of protocol to do what is right in our community. Congratulations to all the members of our Aboriginal community who have been working behind the scenes to make this happen. The Central Coast is home to an amazingly strong Aboriginal community from far and wide who call this land home. Onwards, upwards, stronger together!

#### **COMO WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:52):** I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Como West Public School on their appointment. Como West Public School is a warm and dynamic community which prides itself on its inclusive and positive culture. Upholding its motto to do "Our Best Always", the wonderful school provides various extracurricular opportunities including creative and performing arts, sports, leadership enrichment, band, cultural and public speaking events and technological exploration, allowing students to explore their diverse abilities as they continue to grow. The 2021 leadership team is a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Como West Public School. I congratulate Prime Minister Elke Stark, Deputy Prime Minister Gideon Young and parliamentarians Liam Percey, Matisse Packer, Gabriela Muslu and Ethan Moy 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 GRACE AUBUSSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:53):** Dubbo lost one of its true business trailblazers recently when Grace Aubusson sadly died at the age of 83. Grace was the daughter of Scottish immigrants, and after growing up in the Riverina she moved to Dubbo in 1964 with her husband, Patrick. Together they had two children, Andrew and Yvette, and in 1974 they launched Aubusson Bearing Centre. When Pat died in 1988, Grace continued running the business and in 2006 she became the first female to be inducted into the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce's Jean Emile Serisier Honour Roll. Grace was also involved with the Inner Wheel club of Dubbo, the Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Uniting Church and the Western Plains Cultural Centre. She truly was a fantastic community person who I know will be missed by many. Vale, Grace Aubusson.

#### **KING HUNG FESTIVAL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:54):** On Sunday 18 April 2021 the Vietnamese Community in Australia – NSW Chapter hosted the annual King Hung commemoration at the Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre, Bonnyrigg. The King Hung festival is a traditional festival honouring the first king of Vietnam. Traditionally the Vietnamese community prepare offerings to express gratitude to their ancestors. At this particular event, Vietnamese senior citizens sang, played songs and re-enacted ancestral tea and food offering ceremonies. Representatives from the local Vietnamese language school contributed to the commemorative event through historical speeches and poetry recital. King Hung is known as the founder of the Viet civilisation and is believed to be an ancestor of the Vietnamese people. A man who shaped the nation, King Hung laid the foundations for the country as we recognise it today. The event is considered to be a national festival of Vietnam. Locally the Vietnamese people always commemorate the festival to show their appreciation and honour of the first king of Vietnam. I commend the Vietnamese Community in Australia – NSW Chapter on a successful event.

#### **EARLY CONNECTIONS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:55):** Many families in my electorate are receiving the support they need thanks to the important work of Early Connections – Coffs Coast. I was pleased to spend time with the leadership group to congratulate them on their \$27,500 State government grant. The NSW Community Building Partnership funding is helping them deliver their playground project. It focuses on the development of their outdoor areas, including the construction of natural learning environments for education and therapy for children and families with key workers, teachers and therapists. The Early Connections – Coffs Coast program aims to support families—including my own family in recent weeks—to become resilient, confident and capable participants in their community. I am extremely proud of the management and staff for what they are achieving. They are led by president Ian Braine, his sister and vice-president Vicki Braine, program manager Caryn Maher and business manager Stacey Bayliss.

#### **MICHELLE KIRKWOOD**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:56):** I acknowledge Michelle Kirkwood from Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club on the announcement of her retirement after eight seasons as Director of Lifesaving. Described as an amazing leader and mentor of the club, Michelle has served in a number of positions since joining the organisation in 2004. As the patrol captain and emergency call-out team member,

Michelle has coordinated rosters, overseen patrols and beach management and supported the training of inflatable boat driving skills for the club's 120 patrolling members.

During her time at the club, Michelle was presented with the prestigious Chalkie Bob Smith Club Person of the Year award and the Volunteer of the Year award for her extensive service and commitment to surf lifesaving. It has been an especially busy year for Michelle as the surf club assisted the evacuation teams during the recent floods, rescuing and supporting those directly impacted. Michelle will continue her role as patrol captain of Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club; however, she is looking forward to new blood with fresh ideas taking over the role of director. An irreplaceable member of the club, I congratulate Michelle on her outstanding service to our community.

#### **BROOKLYN RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:57):** I thank and sincerely congratulate the Brooklyn RSL Sub-Branch and community for its fabulous Anzac Day ceremony, especially in this poignant year when it has farewelled very generous contributors Ken Shadie, OAM, and Claude Davidson. I thank guest speaker Michael for his very important words, imploring our elected representatives at every level of government to go forward with mindful recognition of the impact of war on those who serve our nation. Australia has a strong history of stepping up and defending sovereignty and the right to freedom and our service personnel have always been valued for their professional and compassionate contribution.

In the New South Wales Parliament I acknowledge the impact on service personnel and their families and communities of the horrors of war and the now recognised post-traumatic stress disorder. I also acknowledge the responsibility that members have to support them in recognising more than just sacrifices they have made. Tonight I extend more than "lest we forget". It is also important that the Federal Government has established the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. May the Government contribute to what our service personnel need and deserve.

#### **ANDREW MONTAGUE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:58):** I congratulate Andrew Montague who, after almost five years serving the Central Coast, is leaving NSW Health and his position as chief executive of Central Coast Local Health District [CCLHD]. Under Andrew's highly capable leadership, both Gosford and Wyong hospitals have been redeveloped and the new clinical research institute building has been developed in partnership with the University of Newcastle. Further, I thank him for one of his greatest achievements, which is assisting with the opening of the Central Coast's first palliative inpatient unit. I extend my gratitude to Andrew for his efforts in utilising technology and taking pressure off hospitals as well as modernising local health services on the Central Coast. I thank all of the frontline healthcare workers in the CCLHD, who have been incredibly resilient after an extraordinarily difficult year and were ably led by Andrew. I look forward to working with Dr Tim Sinclair in the interim until a new chief executive is recruited. I wish Andrew the best of luck in his new position as the general manager of health and palliative care at HammondCare in Sydney, who are very lucky to have him come on board.

#### **DOUG WICKENS 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:59):** I congratulate local Oatley resident Doug Wickens for celebrating his 100th birthday on 30 April 2021. Doug is an inspiring man with a youthful heart who is full of humour, compassion and wisdom. Doug was born in Bankstown in 1921. He was a proud student of Belmore Technical College, which he left in 1935 to pursue his interests in woodwork and national service. In 1938 he joined the Royal Australian Navy and was stationed in the Atlantic and Indian oceans as well as in the convoys to Russia. In 1944 he returned home and a year later he married his wife, Betty Wickens, who has remained by his side for the past 75 years. A key to Doug's success and his long and healthy life is his beautiful family. His wife, Betty, children Colin and Rhonda, and four grandchildren have always kept him busy, but he has loved every minute of it. I again congratulate Doug Wickens on 100 years of outstanding service to his country, the community and his wonderful family.

#### **CLUB MARCONI CHESTNUT AND WINE FESTIVAL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (21:00):** I congratulate Club Marconi on hosting the annual 2021 Chestnut and Wine Festival in grand style. The festival was back, bigger and better than ever, after a two-year lay-off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With a new format and a move to the top car park, the festival was an outstanding success due to the massive number of patrons attending. I thank all the chestnut-roasting volunteers for their efforts on the pans and barrel roasters. Of course, no roasting would have been possible without the guidance of Il Capitano, Mr Luigi Volpato.

Mille grazie to the wonderful ladies auxiliary for cutting a whopping 1.3 tonnes of chestnuts prior to the roasting. Well done to Mrs Joan Pellegrino for organising the committee and volunteers throughout the day. This year's festival had all the usual Italian trimmings, including gingerbread, porchetta rolls, Italian sausage rolls, a tarantella dance-off and music from the one and only De Bellis Band. It was nice to see my dear friend from the Italian Parliament Senator Francesco Giacobbe, who is back home for a short while before jetting back to Italy. Viva Italia and viva Australia!

#### WEDDIN MOUNTAIN MUSTER

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:01):** I recognise the celebration of the Weddin Mountain Muster reaching 20 years in 2021. This much-loved event is being held between 19 and 24 September 2021. It is much more than just a ride; 120 horses and riders venture out of the showground gates at the beginning of the muster. The committee is made up of volunteers who put in a huge amount of work throughout the year every year to bring the event to fruition. The year 2021 has brought more excitement as this year's event was booked out in 48 hours. I acknowledge the committee for providing a safe and amazing event to riders near and far. I congratulate the Weddin Mountain Muster team on 20 years of service to the local community and on keeping history alive among the next generation.

#### DIANNE "AUNTY DI" O'BRIEN

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:02):** I pay my respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, on which this Parliament stands, and pay my respects to Aboriginal people past, present and emerging. I wish to acknowledge a phenomenal community leader and Aboriginal stalwart on the Central Coast, Dianne O'Brien, better known as Aunty Di. Aunty Di's remarkable life story has recently been told in the published book *Daughter of the River Country*, authored by Aunty Di and Sue Williams. The incredible story details the pain, hardship and hope Aunty Di experienced as a member of the Stolen Generation and the journey of becoming an Aboriginal leader. Aunty Di truly is a national treasure, having been named the 2017 NSW Grandparent of the Year and fulfilling the role of chairperson at MINGALETTA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Umina Beach. I congratulate Aunty Di on publishing her life story and on her positive life work contributing to the healing process in our Aboriginal communities around Australia. Aunty Di, you are an absolute legend and a role model to so many. We love you and thank you so much!

#### ROTARY CLUB OF DUBBO MACQUARIE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:04):** I recognise the work done by the Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie and all the volunteers who coordinated the recently held eleventh Michael Egan Memorial Book Fair. The book fair was created in honour of charter member Michael Egan, a renowned book lover, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 49. COVID put an end to plans for last year's event but this year there were more than 25,000 books available for sale, with the funds raised being split between the Royal Flying Doctor Service Dubbo Support Group and cancer research. It was phenomenal to see so many books for sale in one place; there were more hidden away. The committee behind the event deserves massive congratulations on the many hours of work that went into making it such a big success. Over the weekend there were plenty of people on the hunt for that special book. I know the rewards have made it all worthwhile. Well done to all involved.

#### UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE GLOBAL RANKING

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:04):** I commend the University of Newcastle on its performance in this year's Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. Times Higher Education is a worldwide university ranking body that assesses universities against 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The University of Newcastle was ranked twelfth in the world overall based on the goals, which promote ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The university took out the number one spot for Sustainable Development Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals, which is arguably the most competitive category as it is the only compulsory goal included in the overall ranking; and it ranked third worldwide for Affordable and Clean Energy, in recognition of Newcastle's energy research, energy use and policies and commitment to promoting energy efficiency in the wider community. This achievement cements the University of Newcastle's approach and commitment to equity and sustainability, with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals underpinning its Looking Ahead strategy. This is an incredible achievement. I am proud that many constituents of the Terrigal electorate have such close access to the university, which is a world leader in paving the way to the future.

*Community Recognition Notices***BASS HILL RSL AND CHESTER HILL-CARRAMAR RSL ANZAC CEREMONY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was honoured to attend the combined Bass Hill RSL Sub Branch and Chester Hill-Carramar RSL Sub Branch ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Chester Hill War Memorial on Sunday 25 April. ANZAC Day allows us to acknowledge and preserve the memories and stories of our soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice to enable our communities to live freely today. It is a time for the community to pay our respects to the brave soldiers who have fought for this nation. Bass Hill and Chester Hill-Carramar RSL sub branches also offer essential community support and services to our veterans throughout the year, which is worthy of commendation. I thank the members of the Bass Hill and Chester Hill-Carramar RSL Sub Branch Executives for their invitation: Presidents Ralph Hannaford and Michael Bowman, Vice Presidents Ian Muirhead, Ambrose Dinh, and Ivan Tilmouth, Secretaries Gary Roser and Lloyd Newman, Bass Hill Treasurer Ron Duckworth, and Bass Hill Welfare Officer Greg Brown. Thank you as well for the assistance provided on the day by Brendan Bates and the Chester Hill-Campsie RSL staff. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

**BANKSTOWN RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC SERVICE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—It was an honour to attend the ANZAC Commemorative Service organised by the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch at Bankstown RSL on Sunday, April 25th. ANZAC Day is an essential time for us to commemorate and remember the sacrifices made by our brave servicemen and women who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the freedoms that we have today. It was wonderful to see the community coming together to commemorate the lives lost and paying tribute to the everlasting legacy of the Anzacs and all of our veterans. I would like to thank the members of the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch Executive for their invitation: President Terry Corcoran, Hon Secretary John Woodley, Hon Treasurer Ian Morrison, Vice Presidents Hien Pham, Chien Nguyen, and Vice President/ Welfare Officer Jim Wrigley. I would also like to extend my greatest thanks to the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch for their hard work and for the many services they provide to support veterans in the community. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

**TANYA DANIEL**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Tanya Daniel who recently had her dancing photography recognised when she placed in the Top 10 of a worldwide photography competition "Portrait Masters" run by international photographer Sue Bryce. One of Tanya's photographs of dancer Madeline Aspinall scored her 86 in the Movement category which put it among the very best dance work in the Section. Congratulations Tanya and I wish you continued success with your career.

**GAIL ERSKINE, CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—Gail Erskine, a shire resident for more than 70 years, is the 2021 Cronulla Senior of the Year. Gail is passionate about giving children access to quality literature as well as opportunities to be inspired by authors and illustrators. To this end she has volunteered since 1990 with the Children's Book Council of Australia – NSW Branch, an organisation that aims to create and to keep alive uniquely Australian children's literature. In her various roles with the CBCA – NSW Branch (including 3 years as Vice-President and 5 years as President), Gail has helped to organise numerous events, allowing children to meet their favourite authors and illustrators; emerging authors to connect with and learn from published creators; and educators and authors to discuss and form strategies to expand engagement among young readers. Gail is a passionate lifelong educator, who fundamentally believes in the power of literature to enrich each child's life as well as Australian cultural life more broadly.

**SHIRLEY CHIRGWIN OAM AND REG CHIRGWIN OAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Reg Chirgwin, OAM and Shirley Chirgwin, OAM, who were both finalists in the 2021 Cronulla Local Senior of the Year Awards. Shirley Chirgwin has been volunteering at Sutherland Hospital's garden kiosk since 1965 and has spent most of the past 55 years as its treasurer. She has served as president for 16 years. Her husband, Reg, started volunteering at the kiosk around 40 years ago. He now handles much of the accounting and banking and was also one of the kiosk's first certified baristas. The kiosk, which is run by volunteers, raises funds to go towards the purchase of medical equipment for the hospital. Since its establishment in 1960, the kiosk has raised close to \$3.5 million. The Chirgwins—together with their three children and Shirley's parents—have been instrumental in that extraordinary success. Their dedication and generosity over a lifetime is inspiring.

### PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I acknowledge the work of Parramatta Female Factory Friends in protecting the Parramatta Female Factory and their campaign to have it inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Parramatta Female Factory is one of the most important heritage sites in Australia and should be preserved and maintained for future generations. It has played an extraordinary part in Australian history related to settlement. On 21 February I attended an event commemorating its Bicentenary. A quiet reflection, honouring the convict women took place at the 1818-2018 Commemorative Wall. A re-enactment walk from the site of the 'old' factory site (now Prince Alfred Square) down to the 'new' factory and barracks site (now in Cumberland Hospital) was especially poignant. The walk represented the 109 women and 71 children who were incarcerated there and reminded us of the need to do what we can protect and preserve these buildings. One in seven Australians are descendants from the women who were incarcerated there. There is no doubt that the site should be included in the UNESCO world heritage listing. I commend them for their commemoration of the bicentenary and their ongoing dedication to the preservation of the site.

### CHITHIRAI FESTIVAL

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I bring to the attention of the House the 9th Chithirai festival, it was held in my electorate, Granville, on 18 April 2021 and organised by the Tamil Arts and Culture Association Inc [TACA]. TACA is a charitable organisation registered in 2011, and has been servicing the Tamil community in Sydney and other states. I was delighted to attend their New Year celebration this year, and I take this opportunity to commend those amazing staff and volunteers by enriching and promoting the art and culture of the Tamil community within the Australian multicultural community. It is important the Parliament to acknowledge those who works tirelessly to support and strengthen our community. Hence, I would like to extend my best wishes for their bright years ahead and I hope to see this Association continue to grow and flourish within our community. My thanks go to President Anagan Babu for the invitation and to him and his team for staging such a successful event.

### CALLAGHAN DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Everyone should be able to participate in sport and physical activity in a welcoming and inclusive way – regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability, cultural background, ethnicity, location or life stage. The Callaghan District Netball Association and IMB Bank Community Foundation have partnered together to organise a free new inclusive netball program. They recently held the first of eight sessions targeted at disadvantaged youth. The sessions addressed inequality in sport, and physical and mental health among local youth. Some kids struggle to find a safe place to socialise and be active and are often excluded based on their gender or background – but feel welcome with this program. The support from IMB's Community Foundation covered costs and equipment and has allowed the Club to run more netball skills clinics, umpiring courses, and physical and mental health lifestyle programs. Congratulations to all involved in setting up the program including Cherie Aoake Puru, Renee Ridgeway, Bronwyn Vosilla, Shane Vosilla, Sonia Leong, Suzanne Gillett, Jason Gillett, Allira Clemente, Nicole Liva, Emma Redgrove, Corinna Robertson, Helen Forde, Emily Trembath, Sharon Aoake, Michael Ridgeway, Corinne Dryburgh. Andrew Dryburgh, Darrylen Allen, Moana Puru, Hohaia Puru, Paul Forde, Janine Pilarski, Mark Vandermast and Natalie Beckett.

### FIRST CLASS 20 ART EXHIBITION

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—First Class is an annual exhibition that celebrates the art works produced by students from the Hunter and Central Coast regions. First Class 20 is shown at the Museum of Art and Culture in Booragul and displays major artworks produced by Visual Arts students for the 2020 Higher School Certificate. The exhibition is in its 13th year, and runs from 13 February to 2 May 2021. Glendale Technology High School's Jasmine Gibson, Lambton High School's Dylan Arkinstall and Callaghan College Jesmond Campus' Amelia Banister are three of 37 artists with their artworks displayed in the exhibition. Jasmine utilised a Toyota Corolla car bonnet, photomedia, paper, air-dry clay, thread, graphite and canvas for her work to create her artwork 'Bloodline Motormorphosis'; Dylan's artwork 'Behemoth' was created with camphor laurel wood; and Amelia's artwork 'Portraits of Helena', was created with photomedia. Each of the artworks in the exhibition showcase great talent and passion, as well as a great diversity of media and techniques. Congratulations Jasmine, Dylan and Amelia, on your artworks being displayed in the Museum of Art and Culture.

### BUDGIE SMUGGLERS IN THE MANNING

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise Emma Martin who has brought joy to the Manning, Mid North Coast and beyond through her Facebook group Budgie Smugglers in the Manning, Mid North Coast and Australia wide. Following the recent devastating floods Emma made a Facebook post about a community group, thanking 'the guy at Cundletown wearing nothing but budgie smugglers, holding a beer and

mowing the lawn' for making her day. From there things spiralled and Emma created the Facebook group dedicated to pictures of people in budgie smugglers to give those that had been hit by the floods a laugh amidst the devastation. The page now has 3,400 likes and hosts pictures of people in only their Budgie smugglers doing everything from inseminating cattle to waiting for a train, barbecuing and more. Emma and the group are now taking it one step further, working together to create a Budgie Smuggler calendar to raise money for flood victims. I again commend Emma and all those who have joined in the fun spirit of the group for bringing light to our region in a time of devastation.

#### **GREAT LAKES ART SOCIETY OPEN EXHIBITION**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I congratulate the 2021 winners of the annual Great Lakes Art Society Open Exhibition. Ron Davis took out the overall prize for his piece 'Southern Tablelands NSW'. Bettina Digby's piece 'Night Port' won the Best Contemporary award. 'Boulders Big and Beautiful' by Jill Cairns won works on Hardboard or Canvas while 'Low Tide, Camden Haven Point' by Brian Barker took first in the works on paper in water based medium. Judge Bruce Rowland said he was particularly impressed with the pastels section which was ultimately won by Graham Cox for his piece 'Beyond Abermain'. A piece titled Jump by Bernice Daher was awarded first place in the drawing section while Eve Baumgart won the open medium with her piece 'Tackling Point Tempest.' Home by Susie Oldfield was first in the 3D and Sculpture section while David lake took out the final section Small Paintings with his piece 'Morning Light, Lightening Ridge'. I again congratulate the winners and commend every artist which entered for their amazing artistry.

#### **BOBBY SANDS, M.P.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—Robert Gerard Sands, known as Bobby, died 40 years ago today. At the time of his death he had been elected to the House of Commons as the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. He died in prison in what were known as the H Blocks (or Long Kesh or HM Prison Maze). He died after a 66-day hunger strike less than a month after being elected to the House of Commons. The origin of the hunger strike lay in the determination of the Thatcher regime to treat Irish Republican prisoners as criminals rather than political prisoners. His death and that of nine other hunger strikers was of critical import in the Irish Republican struggle against the English Crown. Among its significance was that his election to Parliament while on a hunger strike showed Irish Republicans that electoral politics might have more attraction than they had thought. That path led to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Over 100,000 people lined the route of Sands funeral.

#### **AUSTRALIAN JORDANIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise the Australian Jordanian Community Association. The Association conducted an event on Saturday April 10 at the Granville Centre that celebrated the achievements of university graduates and HSC students in the previous year. This was a good opportunity to recognise significant achievements in a difficult year. The Association also presented a number of community awards. Among other dignitaries present were Dr Ali Kraishan, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Izzat Abdulhadi, Head of the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Australia. The event was also an opportunity to celebrate the founding of Jordan 100 years ago. The date of its founding was 11 April 1921, emerging at the end of the First World War. The Association and the Jordanian Embassy should be congratulated for conducting the event.

#### **ST MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHALDEAN PARISH**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—Easter 2021 saw the easing of restrictions for the community across all of NSW. Locally it meant that church communities could worship the Easter Triduum with traditional practice. The parishioners of St Mary's Assumption Chaldean Parish wholeheartedly participated in the Easter Rituals with much enthusiasm. This was evident by the volunteering efforts of the youth groups, in particular the Choir and the Don Bosco Team. Both youth teams contributed across the four days in Mass and Liturgy. I congratulate all for their work and commitment during the Stations of the Cross. It was a pleasure to join with the parish and acknowledge the Youth Volunteers along with Parish Priest Fr Rudi Sitto, Fr Yusuf and Fr Shady. I commend all St Mary's Assumption parishioners for their enthusiasm and devotion over the Easter period.

#### **FATHER MAJID AL HANNA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I was honoured to join the Syriac Catholic Archdiocese of Mosul and the Syriac Catholic Community in the Archdiocese of Sydney to welcome the rite of priestly ordination of Deacon Majid Al Hanna at St Benedict's Catholic Church, Smithfield. The rite of priestly ordination was officiated by The Most Reverend Mar Basilios Georges Casmoussa and co-celebrated by Fr Lenard and the communion of priests and bishops from the Roman, Melkite and Chaldean churches. After years of study in the seminary and work as a deacon within the local Fairfield Parish of St Therese, Father Majid Al Hanna professed his priestly vows before parents, siblings, extended family and the Syriac Catholic parishioners. The Syriac Catholic ordination of Father Majid was a history-making event for the community. Father Majid is the first Syriac Catholic to be ordained in

Australia. This proud moment was evident throughout the religious service as well as the community reception held in the Montefano Hall afterwards. The reception was immersed in traditional Syrian hospitality, costume and music. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Father Majid Al Hanna and may he be blessed with God's guidance in his ministry at St Therese and beyond.

#### **TRIBUTE TO BARRIE BAKER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I commemorate the life one of Maitland's greatest ever sporting sons, Barrie Baker, who passed away on 6 March aged 82. Barrie was known throughout Maitland and Australia as one of the foremost amateur golfers of his generation. Between 1954 and 1960, Barrie won the Maitland Golf Club A-Grade Club Championship 7 times consecutively, and also picked up the Hunter River District A-Grade Championship in 1957 and 1959. His success continued when in 1964 he won both the Australian and NSW Amateur Championships. Barrie was afforded the opportunity to represent his country at the 1964 World Amateur Golf Championship in Rome, Italy, helping guide Australia to a 5th place finish. Later in life his love and passion for golf was ever-present, becoming the 1997 Australian Senior Men's Amateur Golf Champion, and maintaining a handicap of 7 at the age of 80. His contribution to the game saw Barrie inducted into the Maitland Hall of Fame in 2017. Barrie has left a legacy of outstanding sporting achievement, and stands as a role model for future generations. Vale Barrie.

#### **NSW HOCKEY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR HONEY WILCHER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Congratulations and Gratitude to Honey Wilcher, who was recently awarded the NSW Hockey Community Volunteer of the Year award. Honey has dedicated many years of service to Hockey in Maitland, and in her many years in the game has proudly represented her club and her state. While she is no-longer tearing down the wing, she still dons her Rebels jersey each season and steps out onto the field with great enthusiasm. Her commitment to community support deserves the utmost respect and admiration; community sports clubs survive and thrive in this country due to the hard work of people like Honey. In her time at Maitland Hockey, she has served as President, Secretary, and Treasurer—in her own words a "general dog's body". I thank her for her many years of loyal service, not just to hockey, but to the wider Maitland Community.

#### **IAN EDWARDS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I'd like to acknowledge Ian Edwards from Speers Point for his efforts in not only overcoming adversity but making life better for many others. Also known as The Blind Chef, Ian's culinary career began in 1982 and he later worked as a chef in some of the Hunter's top restaurants. Sadly, he suffered a detached retina in 2015 which left him legally blind. He was told he would never work in a kitchen again. Determined to prove medical experts wrong, Ian rose to the challenge and opened two successful restaurants, appropriately named The Blind Chef, which operate out of Boolaroo Bowling Club and Cardiff Bowling Club. He also launched a program in which he trains other people living with vision impairment in the food service and hospitality industry. Ian has also worked as a mentor with Vision Australia, giving hope to young people, and has donated his time and skills to Retina Australia's Dining in the Dark. I congratulate Ian on his determination to improve not only his own life, but the lives of so many others.

#### **MAX MITCHELL**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I'd like to acknowledge and congratulate Assistant Commissioner Max Mitchell on his outstanding 40-year career with the NSW Police Force. Max's retirement was announced last week and was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony as he stepped down from his role as Northern Region Commander, the region within which Lake Macquarie is incorporated. I met Max on numerous occasions and aside from his rank, he was clearly a leader in the way he approached the job. I know he was highly respected by his colleagues and greatly improved the quality of policing in our region. Max grew up in Lake Macquarie and joined the police force in 1981, he worked across multiple commands achieving the rank of detective in 1989. Among his noteworthy accomplishments are leading the NSW Police Force's response to the devastating 2011 earthquake in Christchurch and being seconded to the Australia New Zealand Police Advisory Agency. He was instrumental in the creation of the Police Transport Command and became its Commander in 2012. I wish Max all the best with his retirement and thank him for his many years of distinguished and highly decorated service.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF BELMONT**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge the efforts of the Rotary Club of Belmont in removing graffiti in Belmont on Graffiti Removal Day. Graffiti Removal Day was established in 2012 to address the state's graffiti problem. Each year, groups of volunteers work together to remove and prevent graffiti. This year, Graffiti Removal Day was held on the 28 March. The Rotary Club of Belmont volunteered on this day, and

recruited assistance from the local community over social media. The Rotary Club of Belmont put in a great effort to remove as much of the graffiti in Belmont as possible. I am pleased to note that their efforts paid off, as several Rotarians and local residents have commented on how much cleaner the Belmont local area now looks with less graffiti. I would like to thank the Rotary Club of Belmont for their dedication to caring for their local area by removing the graffiti.

#### **HOME INSTEAD AGED CARE SERVICE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge the work of the Home Instead Aged Care Service Central Coast and Newcastle. Home Instead provides a number of services to help seniors stay in their own homes longer. The organisation provides support services that range from cleaning services to dementia support. In March, Home Instead partnered with Little Coast Kids in San Remo, and Camp Breakaway to host an Easter morning tea. The morning tea hosted 20 seniors and 10 pre-schoolers, it included activities such as making Easter cards and decorations, along with an Easter egg hunt. The idea for the day was inspired by the documentary of 'Old People's Home For 4 Year Olds'. It was unable to precede last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, but was a great success in 2021. I would like to thank Home Instead, Little Coast Kids, and Camp Breakaway for hosting such a great day.

#### **CASTLE HILL LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the amazing work of Denise Daynes, a wonderful woman within my electorate who for years now has worked with cancer groups within my electorate of Castle Hill. Denise's involvement has taken many different shapes, from being a supporter for those diagnosed, to being key in the fundraising efforts of the Castle Hill region, perhaps most notably with the Relay for Life. She has raised an immense amount of money in this capacity over the last few years, helping to organise the movie night, trivia night, annual ball and, of course, the relay itself. Denise chaired the Hills Relay for Life in 2013, and raised \$380,000, the Relay's highest fundraising year. It was thus my pleasure to recognise Denise as the Castle Hill Local Woman of the Year. Denise is just one of a large team that organises these events, and I'd like to thank each and every individual who has walked at, attended or donated to any of Denise's events.

#### **CASTLE HILL LIBRARY**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—Castle Hill locals will be delighted to hear that the Castle Hill Library, Pioneer Theatre and Community Centre have reopened following extensive refurbishments from the Hills Shire Council. A new lift will allow for increased accessibility, while the improved customer service desk and space will also get a revamp. Recarpeting and sanding will also occur in the complex, as part of an effort to beautify the existing spaces. I know that several reopening events are planned, which I would encourage the community to attend. This includes Blackout Theatre's performance of 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical', which can now be performed in a full-capacity Pioneer Theatre. Furthermore, Mayor Dr Michelle Byrne will be in conversation with popular Australian author Nicola Moriarty, to discuss her latest book 'You Need to Know'. I would like to thank the Hills Shire Council for their continued dedication to the local community.

#### **OLIVIA HALLE AND EMILLY WOODS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Young Charlestown Electorate women are making waves in the local fashion scene. Olivia Halle, of the self-titled label HALLE, and Emily Woods, who launched WOODS The Label in January 2020, have become notable names in the local slow fashion movement. Slow fashion is all about rethinking our relationship to clothing, moving away from the inexpensive, disposable clothes which have come to define "fast fashion" towards a more sustainable model of fashion which respects people, the environment and animals. From conception through to production, each HALLE garment and collection is thoughtfully crafted by Olivia herself. Nothing is outsourced, and every item which leaves Ms Halle's studio or has been made by her hands. Likewise, not only is Emily her label's designer but she does everything behind-the-scenes, including pattern-making, cutting, sewing, packing orders and all of the bookkeeping, website development, and more. Olivia aims to make everlasting garments that can live in the wardrobe year after year and can be adapted to suit their owners' needs. Emily hopes to be able to employ people and aims to keep every aspect of her business local. I wish Olivia and Emily all the best in their endeavours.

#### **DR. JESSICA ALLEN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—The Australian Research Council's Discovery Early Career Researcher Award [DECRA], which supports early-career researchers to focus on advancing their research and creating opportunities to build important connections and knowledge, is one of Australia's most sought-after academic scholarships. Dr Jessica Allen, a resident of the Charlestown Electorate and a scientist at the University of Newcastle's School of Engineering, was one of the worthy recipients in 2020. Dr Allen has a multidisciplinary background, spanning both chemistry and chemical engineering. She has extensive experience in both industry

and academia, with projects ranging from fundamental research to commercial design. After completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Newcastle, she achieved a PhD in chemistry with the CSIRO Energy Centre. Dr Allen's DECRA project aims to develop a novel solar-driven manufacturing process able to produce advanced carbon materials which effectively sequester carbon dioxide, and will investigate the potential to use this technology to offset global carbon dioxide emissions. I congratulate Dr Allen on her achievements thus far, particularly on being awarded a DECRA. I can't wait to see what she does next.

#### **2020 SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI IMPACT AWARD**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Kyasingmong (Mong) Marma and Aula Sakinah Muntasyarah for receiving the SCU International Alumnus of the Year and Community Impact Awards, respectively. Mong is passionate about protecting the rights of Indigenous communities, at-risk human rights lawyers and defenders, and civilians impacted by ceasefire-related violence. His passion has taken him to work in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand. Mong has completed a Bachelor of Legal and Justice Studies (SCU) and a Master in Peace and Conflict Studies (UQ). He is pursuing his PhD in Indigenous Philosophies at SCU. I have known Mong for many years and proud to call him a friend. Aula graduated with a Master of Forest Science and Management. She is passionate about agroforestry and community-led programs that solve environmental problems while creating economic opportunities. Upon returning to Indonesia, the Governor of Nusa Tenggara Barat [NTB] Province selected Aula to be part of a special team tasked with accelerating the zero waste program in the Province. She is now working as a forestry facilitator and trainer at the NTB Agriculture and Plantation Training Centre. I am delighted to see SCU graduates achieving extraordinary things on the global stage.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS ROTARY INTERNATIONAL – 100 YEARS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELAY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate our local Rotary Clubs on 100 years in Australia. 100 years of making a difference in our communities. The Murwillumbah, Murwillumbah Central, Mt. Warning AM, Tenterfield, Kyogle, Goonellabah, Lismore, Lismore West, Summerland Sunrise and Lismore Networking clubs are known and respected in the broader community for their selflessness, compassion and service. The 100 year anniversary of Rotary was marked with a baton relay against domestic violence. The baton started in Grafton and will finish in Tweed Heads for the Rotary International District Conference. The relay is true to the Rotary tradition of advocacy on issues of social justice both locally and internationally. Rotary District 9640 which covers from Grafton to Tweed, have been involved in the organisation of the relay. The relay will pass through 46 towns in total and has included walks, bike rides, car rallies, train rides and displays. Recently passing through Ballina local clubs from Lismore were involved in the Ballina event. The baton also recently went through the Lismore CBD and the Mt. Warning AM Rotary Club. I congratulate Rotary on 100 years and look forward to their continued contribution to our communities.

#### **PETER KYLSTRA - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Yanco cattle farmer, Peter Kylstra, for his achievement receiving the prestigious Urquhart trophy for Supreme Beef Exhibit at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Peter has been actively involved in the beef industry for over 30 years, raising and showcasing cattle, as well as judging at both local and international shows. After a decade of retirement, Peter's triumphant return to exhibiting cattle truly showcases the Murray region's potential within the industry. I congratulate Peter on receiving the Urquhart trophy for Supreme Beef Exhibit at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, and commend his lifetime of dedication and hard work within the cattle industry.

#### **MICHAEL COLEMAN - DARETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Michael Coleman, who was appointed Principal of Dareton Primary School, in the far-west of NSW, in 2019. This school had long had a high rate of behavioural incidents and suspensions. Michael was shocked by what he found, and recognised that a circuit-breaker was needed to re-shape the school. Drawing on more than two decades of teaching experience, Michael brought in a new operational plan, which included alternative and unconventional methods, to bring about change. He engaged the community in the life of the school, encouraging parents and relatives to be part of the learning. His staff embraced the changes, contributing proactively in their own right. Michael's new approach included incorporating Aboriginal culture into every element of school life, through traditional games, language classes – including teaching the school song in the local Barkandji language – bilingual signage, as well as the introduction of a 'comfort dog,' Sheeky. A year on, suspensions are down 65 percent and extreme incidents have reduced by 90 percent. The Dareton community recognises the positive changes within the school, and I congratulate Michael on his creative methods for bringing a community closer together through education.

**JOAN VAUGHAN**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—It is a privilege to recognise a woman who has given so much to our community, Joan Vaughan. Joan is an inspiring woman who is always friendly, polite and willing to help others and this is what makes her truly special. Joan is an active volunteer at the Mulga Road charity bookshop and the Peakhurst Rotary Club which she has been doing for as long as I can remember. Last year I had the honour of recognising her impressive history as a volunteer with a Senior Volunteer Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards recognise people like Joan who go above and beyond each and every day to help out those in need to continually make our community better. I could not think of a more deserving recipient of this award and I look forward to continuing my great relationship with Joan for many years to come. All the best for the year ahead.

**URALLA COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the Uralla Country Women's Association and its impact on the Uralla district, supporting the needs of rural women and their families for 95 years. As much as enormous change has taken place over the years, women's issues are much the same. For the challenges of the day, the CWA stays current, supporting rural folk in drought and the many other battles of the bush, raising funds to support women's issues, taking a stand on environmental issues, and generally keeping up to date with the Association's agenda. The Uralla CWA stands proud having achieved 95 years of active service. I congratulate Uralla Country Women's Association Branch on its 95th birthday. I commend Uralla CWA president Ann Denyer, patron Ruth Jackson, and the many members for the valuable role they perform and the positive example they present to the community.

**NEPALESE PENSHURST COMMUNITY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I acknowledge the continued commitment of the Nepalese Penshurst Community. Led by Laxman Shrestha, the Nepalese Penshurst Community do an outstanding job of connecting local Nepalese people. The Nepalese Penshurst Community is one of the most welcoming organisations I have come across. They host so many memorable events that are always fun and inclusive. Recently, I had the honour of acknowledging some of their members with Individual Achievement Awards as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. These awards recognise some of the many men and women from across the St George area who go above and beyond each and every day to make our community even better. Recipients from the Nepalese Penshurst Community include: Enos Newar, Dinesh Kathayat, Laxman Shrestha and Sabi Singh Maharjan. These are all outstanding individuals who are always a pleasure to deal with and I applaud their advocacy and support for Nepalese people and Nepalese culture across the St George area. I wish you all the best for the year ahead.

**MR AND MRS KARAM – MOREE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Mr Archie and Mrs Rhonda Karam of Moree as exceptional members of the community. Archie and Rhonda are well known identities in the community as proprietors of their successful newsagency, always willing to go the extra mile in service, always positive and smiling, and with a cheerful greeting, a great way for customers to start the day. Archie and Rhonda are dedicated to their family and to the community. They have earned a kind of celebrity status by their popularity. These are the role models that influence and inspire. I congratulate Archie and Rhonda for the awards they have won over the years and for the respect they have earned from the community. I commend Archie and Rhonda for their strong work ethics, their sense of service, and the positive dignity with which they conduct their lives.

**MOUNT GILEAD ESTATE**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—The community of Campbelltown is certainly a tight knit group of people. However, within our local area there are a number of sub-communities who not only work well together, but also look out for each other's needs and have each other's backs. One of those communities is Mount Gilead Estate. Recently I visited residents at the estate to have a look around the grounds and talk about any issues impacting locals. I even hit a few balls at the local nine hole golf course. Not only was I impressed by aesthetics of the over 55's estate, it was also pleasing to see just how close those in the estate were. Organising local golf competitions to tending to community gardens, there was no shortage of activities on offer. There was also no shortage of people on hand to offer to help. It really personified what the Campbelltown community is all about. The residents were extremely accommodating and were eager to show me around the estate. I'm thankful for everyone that took the time out to chat to me and to give me a tour of their home.

### **CAMPBELLTOWN GHOSTS SCOUTS GROUP**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—The skills acquired during scouts and girl guides serve children throughout their entire life. Whether it is something like how to tie a knot, first aid, cooking or orienteering – all those aspects can be transferred to everyday activities later on in life. One scouts group particularly kicking goals in Campbelltown is the Campbelltown Ghosts Scouts Special Needs Scouting Group. The group caters for children with special needs aged between six years old and 15 years old. I have always been impressed by not just the members but also the leaders of the group who run an extremely tight and efficient ship. The flag ceremonies in particular, are an extremely impressive sight to see. I would definitely encourage local children with special needs and their carers to consider joining the Campbelltown Ghosts Scouts Special Needs Group. It is not only a great way of learning valuable life skills, but is also a great way to improve social skills and to develop qualities like leadership. Congratulations to all involved with the Campbelltown Ghosts Scouts Special Needs Scouting Group for all your efforts.

### **20TH ANNIVERSARY: UNITING MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING CENTRE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—This month marks twenty years since the opening of the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in King's Cross. This is an extraordinary milestone, celebrating twenty years of life-saving, compassionate and evidence-based care to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. In 1999, the Carr Government hosted a NSW Drug Summit that recommended the establishment of a medically supervised injecting centre. In the years since, the Centre has provided medical supervision for 1.2 million injections, provided medical support during 10,582 overdoses with no deaths, and made 19,000 health and welfare referrals. The Centre has become a model of care for harm minimisation across the globe. I acknowledge the visionary leadership of Dr Ingrid van Beek, the founding Medical Director at the Centre, and the force of nature that is the current Medical Director, Dr Marianne Jauncey. I also acknowledge all of the extraordinary front line health workers who have provided world-class care over the past ten years. Congratulations to everyone at Uniting and across the community who have contributed to the success of the Centre: you have shown us the value and effectiveness of health focused illicit drug policy based in evidence.

### **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—May is National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day. So far in 2021, 11 women have been killed by their former or current domestic partner. Sydney Women's Homelessness Alliance are hosting a memorial at Parliament House to remember those who have been killed as a result of domestic and family violence. Sydney Women's Homelessness Alliance is a coalition of women and social services organisations, dedicated to removing barriers for women experiencing homelessness. Their work highlights that domestic violence remains the leading cause of homelessness for women and children. As part of the memorial, roses will be laid along the Macquarie Street fence outside Parliament House – red for women, white for children and yellow for men. The memorial forms a poignant reminder of the cost of gendered violence in our communities and is a powerful reminder of just how valuable and important each of these lives was. Thank you to Sydney Women's Homelessness Alliance for their ongoing work supporting women and children impacted by domestic violence and I offer my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones who have lost someone through family and domestic violence.

### **NORTH SYDNEY BEARS RECEIVE SPORTS GRANT FOR COACH ACCREDITATION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Today I congratulate the North Sydney District Rugby League Football Club for their success in receiving funding through the 2020-2021 Local Sport Grant Program. This funding will allow the club to provide coach accreditation, which will equip trainers with a high level of knowledge and skills to benefit members and increase participation. Also known as the Mighty Bears, the club has been a vital part of the North Sydney rugby community by continuing to invest in younger players and helping support the junior leagues. It is excellent to see teams of people, young and old, take to the field again following the more challenging times of COVID-19. Sport is a way of life in our community and the Local Sport Grant Program is another excellent example of the NSW Government delivering for our local area. Thank you to the volunteers who donate their time each week to make sure these recreation activities are available. Congratulations again to the North Sydney Bears for securing this funding.

### **WINNERS OF THE BALMORAL SWIM FOR CANCER**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Hundreds of local residents recently participated in the annual Balmoral Swim for Cancer. Congratulations to Karen Panaretto for taking out the 1km swim, Lindsay Cavanagh who won the 2km race, and Carl Sorensen for winning the 5km race. It was an excellent effort by all participants who made the most of the event on a spectacular blue sky day. The Schools Relay Challenge took place a few weeks later and a number of my local schools battled it out in the water. Well done to Queenwood, Wenona,

Mosman High, Shore, Mosman Prep, and Redlands. Redlands won the Charity Cup for the highest average funds per team and, with a very tight scoreboard, Shore was the overall winner of the Challenge Shield. Due to COVID restrictions last year, the swim could not take place as anticipated and this created more excitement for this year's event, helping to make it a huge success in raising funds for the Children's Cancer Institute. Thank you to the volunteers who made the event possible and to everyone in our community for their continued support of this worthy cause.

#### **BLADE PUCKERIDGE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Blade Puckeridge who received his Queen's Scout Award, the highest award that can be achieved in the Venturer section. Blade has been in the scouting movement since he joined the cubs at 1st Hornsby Heights in 2009. He received his Grey Wolfe Award in 2013, the highest a cub scout can achieve and it seems from that time he has been hooked. He has been involved in a huge range of scouting activities and was an active member of the Unit Council holding a number of positions including the important role of chair. After leaving Scouts he re-established the 1st Hornsby Heights Venturer unit. He committed himself to the work of obtaining the Queens Scout Award which including completing a hike within the COVID-19 constraints. He has also taken on a role on the State and Region Venturer Council. Blade is a keen photographer and has been taking photos for the Hornsby Gang Show along with working as part of the technical team. Blade is a motivator and a role model for all those at 1st Hornsby Heights and I would like to congratulate him on receiving the Queen's Scout Award.

#### **EMU PLAINS CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)**—My congratulations to Emu Plains Cricket Club on winning the Penrith Junior Cricket Association Club Championship for the 2020/21 season. It is also pleasing to note the Club also finished second in the Nepean District Cricket Association Club Championship. It was a fantastic season for junior teams of the Club with the Under 10 Blues, Under 11's, Under 12's and Under 14's winning their respective Premierships. In the senior competition, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade and 8th Grade also won Nepean District Cricket Association titles. To all players of Emu Plains Cricket Club, I wish you all the best for future seasons.

#### **UNITED HEALTH AUXILIARIES NSW**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—The United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW respond to the needs of health facilities across New South Wales communities through their local branches, building on the work of the state's public hospitals and health network and providing support for patients and staff. The network raises much needed funds to auxiliaries operating in and around our health care centres. First formed in 1993, the organisation now boasts more than 190 branches across the state. I was very pleased to join the group for their Regional Conference last month at the Ulladulla Civic Centre, where we heard from State President Linda Swales, Illawarra Regional Representative Sandra Walter, and local guest speakers including Stuart Emslie and Margo Mains. The health and wellbeing of our communities has never been in sharper focus with the pandemic making us all realise the importance of our health services and the frontline staff who take care of us when we are in need. I thank all members and volunteers involved in the United Health Auxiliaries network for the support they give our local community.

#### **NUDGE WINK**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I would like to recognise the fundraising achievements of Nudge Wink. Darren and Sarah Sutton, Laura Peck and Dale Stephen, the event organisers, devote themselves to creating the infamous Nudge Wink and Curious fundraising events, which are held each month at the Billinudgel Hotel. Nudge Wink is a series of monthly parties which bring the community together in an all-inclusive way, whilst raising much needed funds for local charities. 10 percent of all profits go to local charities and since December 2015 Nudge Wink and Curious events have raised over \$325,371 to support grassroots charities from the homeless, women's support, domestic violence, youth, LGBTIQ+ and local community centres to help residents achieve a better quality of life. The family-friendly events are a chance for locals to party with a conscious, enabling patrons to donate and dance for local charities as well as supporting local musical talent. These events are often sold-out, and it is so nice for the community that they are up and running again this year.

#### **LENNOX COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the founders and workers at the Lennox Community Garden on its second birthday. Garden committee president Jimi Gatland and his wife Helene lobbied for two years with Ballina Council to get the gardens up and running. They and their motivated volunteers have turned an empty suburban plot into a fertile, fruitful garden that boasts a wide selection of fruit trees including native bush tucker, several critically endangered species as well as a cutting edge garden shed with solar panels. The garden

is meeting its three start-up goals: to produce organic food and promote ecological practices and a healthier lifestyle; strengthen the sense of community within Lennox Head by becoming a hub for local people, groups and families to meet and develop friendships and links; and address global environmental issues by applying local sustainable living practices and providing a site for environmental education, demonstrating sustainable gardening, recycling and living. The garden is a true community resource, open to anybody to visit and pick something fresh to eat. There are plans in place to construct a series of 15 raised garden beds which will enable the growing of annual crops.

#### **NATIONAL TRUST (NSW) 75 YEARS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to congratulate the National Trust (NSW) as it celebrates 75 years. While initial planned celebrations were delayed because of the pandemic, the Trust will now be holding a series of events, with their properties free to visit on special open days. The National Trust (NSW) was established in 1945, with a vision of protecting and celebrating our heritage. It remains a leading guardian of Australia's built, cultural and natural heritage. Their work champions our sense of place and belonging in an ever changing world. During their 75 year history, the National Trust (NSW) has endeavoured to protect all facets of heritage for all generations and to educate the wider community about the cultural value, role and wonder of heritage. I wish to recognise the trust's important contribution to heritage in NSW, and thank their patrons, donors, members and more than 10,000 volunteers who ensure heritage is valued and respected. I encourage everyone concerned about heritage to get involved with the National Trust and be part of both the 75th celebrations and the ongoing work to protect heritage.

#### **ART GALLERY NSW 150 YEARS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to congratulate the Art Gallery of NSW as it celebrates 150 years. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the acclaimed Archibald Prize. In celebration of these significant milestones, the Art Gallery of NSW is releasing an ambitious vision for the future, while also hosting a vibrant program of exhibitions. After a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Art Gallery is looking forward to a brighter 2021 and a new era with the completion of the major Sydney Modern Project due in late 2022. This year bring with it a program that highlights the Gallery's commitment to recognising the work of women, the centrality of Aboriginal art to our identity, and the importance of the arts of Asia and the Pacific to our understanding of global art. I am proud to support and celebrate this important milestone in the Art Gallery of NSW's history and encourage people in the Sydney electorate and beyond to visit the space and engage with the artwork and ideas.

#### **AMELIA AT ORAN PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I congratulate Amelia M from Oran Park High School who Placed 2nd in the U17 Women's Hammer at the NSW State Championships. Amelia has now qualified to represent NSW at the National Junior Championships next month. I recognise the consistent training and dedication taken to achieve such an incredible result. It is great to see students representing their schools and community in State and National Events. Congratulations again Amelia on your achievements. Safe travels and I wish you the best of luck at Nationals and in your future endeavours.

#### **NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL, PREMIERS GALA CONCERT**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I have received overwhelming thanks from seniors in the Camden Electorate that attended the NSW Seniors Festival, Premiers Gala Concert. On behalf of two residents, I would like to convey the letter they sent to me:

Last week my husband and I were excited and felt fortunate to be attending the free Premiers Concert at the Aware Super Theatre, ICC Sydney, Darling Harbour. For nearly 2 hours the crowd of 5,000 senior citizens were entertained by the world class act of Human Nature. Such beautiful harmonies, energy, enthusiasm and all the group members interacted with the audience encouraging us to sing along with them. Their dance moves were great too! We were taken on a wonderful journey and left the theatre feeling uplifted, rewarded and beaming with happiness. The complementary tickets were made available through Peter Sidgreaves, MP-Member for Camden's office and I would like to thank the staff for making this possible as we were unsuccessful when applying online. It is a great opportunity for all senior citizens to apply and attend the free Premiers Concert as the memory will last a lifetime.

By two very satisfied seniors.

#### **SARAH-JANE PETTS**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Sarah-Jane Petts who received the Baden-Powell Award, the highest Scouting award available to Youth in Australia. Sarah-Jane first joined the 1st Hornsby Heights cub scouts at just 8 years old. She was the first Hornsby Heights Scout to achieve her Australian Scout Medallion and in 2011 received the Queen's Scout Award. Sarah-Jane has had some amazing adventures in the Scouts, travelling to Switzerland, joining the Wagga Wagga Rover Crew and was knighted after completing her Squire Training badge. One of her greatest challenges was the

Baden-Powell Peak in Nepal which she completed as part of the Australian Rover Contingent. In 2018 over a 13-day trek, Sarah-Jane summited 2 peaks, accumulated over 6400m in elevation and reached 5,400 metres above sea level. She also needs to be congratulated on promoting inclusion and acceptance in the Scouting movement having created a Rainbow Scout Scarves to sell to members. This raises money for LGBT+ scouting initiatives. She has led by example and taken advantage of all the opportunities scouting has to offer. Congratulations Sarah-Jane on this remarkable achievement and I have no doubt there are many more peaks you will reach in your future.

#### **AWARD FOR NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Northern Beaches Council, partly covering my electorate of Davidson, was recently honoured for excellence and innovation through the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia - Excellence Awards. Northern Beaches Council's project, 'Little Manly Tidal Pool Renewal', was highly commended within the 'Design and Construction of a Local Government/Public Works Project' category. I commend Northern Beaches Council, led by Mayor Michael Regan and CEO Ray Brownlee, on receiving this award and more broadly, for the innovative projects they have undertaken for our mutual local constituents. I also acknowledge Council's recent decision to call for community feedback on the Wakehurst Parkway Flood Mitigation Study, seeking community views into options for reducing flooding. This follows confirmation that the NSW Government has allocated substantial funding available towards delivering a solution.

#### **KILLARA HIGH SCHOOL UPGRADE**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—I am pleased that Killara High School, in my electorate of Davidson, is making excellent use of learning spaces funded by the NSW Government. A \$15 million upgrade was completed last year but I had not been able to see the finished project due to COVID-19 restrictions. The renovation work added substantial extra permanent and specialist teaching spaces, as well as upgrades to existing facilities. There are 17 new classrooms, new staff areas and new toilets at this highly ranked school. An earlier \$7.9m upgrade, in 2014, delivered 22 permanent classrooms, shared learning spaces, a replacement sports court and removed demountable classrooms. I recently visited Killara High School and am thrilled with the flexible and adaptive learning spaces, and the positive difference this makes for students and teachers. I commend the students, staff and families of Killara High School for their patience and feedback, as well as the NSW Government for its substantial funding. I also acknowledge the lobbying and financial support of the P&C, particularly in relation to the library renovation and new canteen.

#### **WENTWORTHVILLE MEMORIAL SWIMMING CENTRE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On the 29th March 2021, I attended the grand opening of the Wentworthville Memorial Swimming Centre. It was a pleasure to meet the staff of the Centre and join with Mayor Steve Christou and the Cumberland City Councillors, to celebrate this beautiful newly renovated facility. The Wentworthville Memorial Swimming Centre offers opportunities for everyone, with swim programs that assist babies, toddlers, children and adults. The wonderful staff at the Centre understand the importance of swim safety and encourage people of all ages to utilise the public facilities. It is never too late to learn to swim. Wentworthville Memorial Swimming Centre offers adult swimming lessons suitable for adults who do not know how to swim towards to adults that would like to improve their confidence, survival ability, learn new swimming techniques or improve their cardiovascular health and fitness. I would like to thank Cumberland City Council for renovating this essential community facility. I would also like to thank the caring staff at Wentworthville Memorial Swim Centre, including administrators, managers, swimming instructors and lifeguards for their hard work in running the facility, developing helpful programs and keeping swimmers safe in our community. Thank you for your community service.

#### **PARRAMATTA MARIST HIGH SCHOOL 2021 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I acknowledge the 2021 student leaders of Parramatta Marist High School in Westmead. I thank the school captain, Joshua Madeleine, and the vice-captain, Adam D'Costa, for their leadership of the school and the local community throughout the 2021 academic year. I also want to thank the following young men who are part of the Parramatta Marist's student leadership group: George Azizi; Erick Behan; Jock Brazel; Marcus Cooper; Roberto D'Angelo; Samuel Hanna; Dean Jacobson; Johnny Khoury; Mark Khoury; Nathan Khoury; Shivam Malhotra; David Nehme; Jake Nuner; Joshua Ramachandran; Joshua Russell; and, Jacob Voll. Well done to the leadership team on assisting the new Year 7 students into high school and leading the way for students to return to school after the difficulties of COVID-19 last year on pupils in Westmead, across the Seven Hills electorate, and indeed the entire state. I wish all the students of Parramatta Marist High School all the best for their studies for the rest of 2021.

### HINDU BENEVOLENT FUND

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I take this opportunity to recognise the Hindu Benevolent Fund for their diligent support shown towards the Blacktown SES during the recent times of hardship due to flooding in Western Sydney. Since being formed in 2017, the Hindu Benevolent Fund has worked in providing individuals and families in dire need of financial help with necessary support. This has involved financial support towards funding funerals and educational based costs. Their recent work involved providing a washing machine and dryer to Blacktown SES through funds raised by their community initiatives. The volunteered members of the Hindu Benevolent Fund also cooked meals for the Blacktown SES team. With the help of the Hindu Benevolent Fund, individuals are made to feel appreciated and supported through acts of kindness and gestures of goodwill. I thank the organisation for their service to the Seven Hills electorate community and those who need assistance across Western Sydney and the state and recognise their continual efforts in supporting people in times where it matters most.

### MERLE DUNPHY'S 102ND BIRTHDAY

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—It is with great pleasure that today I acknowledge Mrs Merle Dunphy as she recently celebrated her 102nd birthday on 25 April 2021. I am sure Merle celebrated this momentous occasion accompanied by her closest friends and family. I take this opportunity to again extend my sincere congratulations to Merle and wish her good health and happiness for the future.

### BONDI JUNCTION COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On 1 April I had the privilege of visiting the Bondi Junction Community Mental Health Centre with Tara Moriarty, NSW Labor's Shadow Minister for Mental Health. The COVID-19 health crisis has had come with it an associated mental health crisis, as isolation, job insecurity, and other worries have taken their toll. Nearly 75% of young people have reported a decline in their mental health since the start of the pandemic. That is why the work that the Bondi Junction Community Mental Health Unit does is so important. The wonderful staff at the centre are on the forefront of innovation for youth mental health treatment, and it was fantastic to discuss the work that they do. I would like to extend a massive thank you to all of the employees at the centre for all of their work throughout the pandemic.

### ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY (YOM HA'ATZMAUT)

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Yom Ha'atzmaut, or Israeli Independence Day, marks the anniversary of the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948, and is observed on or near the 5th of the Hebrew month of Iyar. This year, Yom Ha'atzmaut was held from the 14th to the 15th of April, marking the 73rd anniversary of Israeli Independence. In the wake of the greatest humanitarian atrocity that had ever occurred, a peoples which only a few years before had been the victim of mankind's largest single act of mass murder in which a third of the world's Jews were killed, the establishment of the state of Israel represented a safe harbour for a peoples that had been exiled, persecuted, and killed for thousands of years. I would like to extend my best wishes to the Israeli and Jewish community, and share my congratulations for the 73rd anniversary of Israeli Independence. Happy Yom Ha'atzmaut!

### PRAIRIEVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Monday 26th April I had the privilege of attending Prairievale Public School to join them for their ANZAC Service. The school community honoured the traditions of ANZAC with great pride and reverence. It was wonderful to see the students participate with solemnity throughout the ceremony extending respect towards the ANZACS to the wider community. It is worth noting that many students are refugees from the Middle East and have experienced war and conflict throughout their lives. I was touched to see our next generation of school students continue to honour the traditions of ANZAC. It is so important to Australian society. I acknowledge and thank the efforts of Principal, Rebecca Challenor, teachers and staff, for their great work at Prairievale Public School. Prairievale Public School is committed to providing a caring and supportive learning environment for all students. The school itself is growing in capacity, creating logistical and operational challenges for the executive team, but they continue to take it all in their stride in their ongoing service to our community. Lest we forget.

### DR DAVID TANG

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)**—I bring to the attention of the House Dr David Tang, President of the Homebush West Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber supports local businesses and promotes Homebush West as a shopping destination. Dr Tang has served as President for 15 years and has advocated tirelessly for Homebush West businesses and residents, establishing long standing connections within the community, and acting as a bridge between businesses, residents and Strathfield Council. Dr Tang is continually involved in community

projects including the Homebush West Village refurbishment to improve local parking, lighting and public seating. Dr Tang also advocated for the upgrade of Flemington Station – in particular, a lift to make the station fully accessible. On top of his volunteer work, Dr Tang also serves the community as a medical practitioner, running a general practice in Homebush West. Dr Tang's commitment to the Homebush West community is truly commendable. Dr Tang was awarded the NSW Community Service Award. I thank Dr Tang for all he has done for the Homebush West community.

#### **MID NORTH COAST BLACK BELT GRADING**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I congratulate the local recipients from Mid North Coast Karate in Kew who recently achieved Black Belt Grading in Sydney. By all accounts it was an impressive display of martial arts skills and technique by the four Mid North Coast Sempai's who showcased their abilities under local Camden Haven man, 6th Dan Shihan Peter Becroft. The weekend results include Sempai Jay Iveli and Sempai Patrick Fisher achieving their Shodan Black Belt (1st Dan), Sempai Anissa Hilton claiming her Nidan-Ho Black Belt and Sensei Shaun Budai successfully awarded his Sandan Black Belt (3rd Dan). Each student was graded on knowledge, endurance, spirit and character with Sensei Shaun co-winning the prestigious Ross James Award for the most spirited grader of the event. The team were commended for their knowledge of basics, sparring and self-defence performances, Kata and teaching applications. Black Belt status requires many hours of training, commitment and focus to receive this level of elevation in Martial Arts. I congratulate the team for achieving their goals and applaud Mid North Coast Karate for cultivating the next generation of highly skilled Martial Arts students.

#### **RYLEE PARRY – YOUNG REGIONAL FILMMAKER**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I congratulate the winner of the Young Regional Filmmaker award, Rylee Parry from Port Macquarie for her original composition of "Remember the Waltzing" shown at Nextwave Film Festival. All the glitz and glamour was on display to mark the Nextwave Film Festival, held on 18th April in Coffs Harbour to recognise our talented, local filmmakers who passionately and effortlessly take audiences on a journey to convey messages of hope, resilience, experiences, humour and loss. Beautifully written and choreographed was "Remember the Waltzing" a six-minute film by twenty-year old Rylee Parry who won the prestigious Young Regional Filmmaker accolade about a young lady named Tilly whose husband failed to return from the Kokoda Track in World War 2. Based on a poem of the same name, by Jim Haynes the tale connects audiences with war and absence from the perspective of a lady who is longing for her husband to return home. Rylee also voiceovers the short film throughout the historical drama, adding feeling and emotion to the actor's performances. An impressive display of local artistry in our community, I wish Rylee all the best for her future career goals in the film industry.

#### **FATHER FADI NEMME**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Father Fadi Nemme of St Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Kirrawee, who was awarded the prestigious Stepan Kerkyasharian AO Community Harmony Medal at the 2021 Premier's Harmony Dinner. Father Fadi is a devoted community leader who has worked tirelessly towards social cohesion and comradery since arriving in Australia 25 years ago. Since 2012, he has led the congregation at St Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church, and joined with them in friendship and faith as they continue to grow in our local community. As a Syrian Australian priest, Father Fadi has dedicated his life to serving Arabic speaking communities, particularly newly arrived refugees and migrants, and has significantly supported our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. From supporting community members with emergency food parcels and relief, to his work as a police chaplain, Father Fadi is an esteemed member of our community and is thoroughly deserving of this prestigious award. I commend Father Fadi for his selfless and outstanding dedication to our community, and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **CRONULLA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the amazing members of the Cronulla State Emergency Service Unit who supported communities impacted by the recent natural disasters in New South Wales and Western Australia. The SES are a crucial part of our disaster response who make rebuilding and recovery possible. Led by Unit Commander Peter Rozea, the Cronulla Unit were deployed across our state and tasked with rescue, repair and the provision of essential supplies to isolated communities along the river systems in Western Sydney. This included the rescue of 25 dogs in Londonderry at a breeding kennel which was rapidly cut off by rising floodwater. I thank Mario Maggio, Michael Marusic, Jonathon Castillo, Michael Phillips, Grant Kirk, Nicole Royan, Brian Ede, Flavio Scaloni, Kyle Riordan, Jack Millett, Colin Curran, Fiona Butlin, Kent Wallin and Daniel Kent for their work in responding to the floods and storms around New South Wales, particularly the Hawkesbury and Nepean areas. I also acknowledge Julian Weaver who volunteered his time to assist the

vulnerable communities in Western Australia devastated by cyclone Seroja. I thank the wonderful members of the Cronulla State Emergency Service Unit for their continued work in protecting our community.

#### **THE RESILIENCE PROJECT IN ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise The Resilience Project. The Resilience Project delivers emotionally engaging programs to schools, sports clubs and businesses, providing practical, evidence-based mental health strategies to build resilience and happiness. Through presentations, school curriculum, events, the TRP App, and Wellbeing Journals, they share the benefits of incorporating and practicing gratitude, empathy and mindfulness, in everyday life. The Resilience Project has successfully delivered programs to over 1,000 schools, more than 1,000,000 Australia school students, over 500 workplaces, and to NRL clubs, AFL teams, and Australian cricket, netball, and soccer teams. I wish to also recognise Wayne Hill of Orange. Wayne is passionate about improving the mental health of our community, in particular our youth. Wayne has worked hard coordinating with local community stakeholders, Orange Aboriginal Medical Service and Orange City Council in funding the delivery of a two-year mental resilience program, participated by Orange High School, Canobolas High School, Orange Public School, Calare Public School, Nashdale Public School, Canobolas Public School and Clergate Public School. Congratulations to Wayne Hill and The Resilience Project for delivering the schools of Orange this important program.

#### **CENTRAL WEST ANIMAL RESCUE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise Central West Animal Rescue and the organisation's president and founder, Jasmine Smart. Jasmine founded Central West Animal Rescue in Orange four years ago, a volunteer organisation which consists of a growing number of animal foster carers. They have expanded across the Central West, and now includes Orange, Dubbo, Mudgee, Lithgow, and surrounds. Volunteer foster carers undertake temporary care of animals in their homes until the animals are rehomed with a compatible new owner. During the period of foster care, carers attend to the medical needs of each animal, which can range from common treatment to specialised veterinary care of medical conditions, disorders and injuries. Central West Animal Rescue have successfully rehomed over 400 animals last year alone, connecting displaced pets with new owners in loving homes. The cost of running Central West Animal Rescue is significant. Jasmine and her team have contributed tens of thousands of dollars of their own money towards costs associated with the veterinary treatment, rehabilitation, keep and rehoming of dogs, cats and other pets. I congratulate Jasmine and her team of volunteer foster carers at Central West Animal Rescue, who undertake an admirable cause and provide a beneficial community service.

#### **RIVERINA CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—The Riverina Conservatorium of Music will this year chalk up an important milestone celebrating 40 years of teaching music. With places for 1200 students, the school has a team of almost 40 professional music educators and support staff. Although based in Wagga Wagga, the Conservatorium extends its educational reach across regional NSW through videoconferencing. Throughout the COVID pandemic, staff at the conservatorium have risen to the challenge of providing the best possible musical education. This has recently been recognised by the Australian Music Examinations Board NSW, which announced that the Conservatorium placed in the top 10 for 2020 in the category of "most outstanding studio or music school for all instruments, grade five to certificate level". In achieving this distinction, the Conservatorium was competing against music schools from across NSW including regional and metropolitan facilities. The Conservatorium is highly respected for its teaching, but to the people of Wagga Wagga, it is important for another reason. The much-loved "Con" is also the Riverina's primary provider of classical music performances. I commend Hamish Tait, Director and CEO, and the conservatorium staff; Andrew Wallace, chair, and the board; and the students on this wonderful achievement.

#### **KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE AUSTRALIA 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)**—I bring to the attention of the House the tenth anniversary of the Korean Cultural Centre Australia. The Korean Cultural Centre was established in 2011, to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and the Republic of Korea. A decade on, the Korean Cultural Centre has been integral in deepening the cultural bonds between South Korea and Australia. The Korean Cultural Centre promotes Korean culture, educating the public on the history, food, art and culture of Korea. Through its exhibitions, film screenings and classes, the Korean Cultural Centre provides a hub for intercultural exchange and friendship. I also commend the Korean Cultural Centre on their continued acknowledgement of Australian veterans in the Korean War. I would like to recognise Director of the Korean Cultural Centre, Ji Hee Kim, and the dedicated staff for their positive impact on Australian-Korean relations.

**DR STARLETTE ISAACS**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House Dr Starlette Isaacs, a treasured local Doctor who has served the Balmain and Rozelle community for 50 years. In 1968 Dr Isaacs migrated to Australia after completing her medical studies in Pakistan in 1966 with a University gold medal. She then became the first female surgical registrar at Prince of Wales hospital at a time when the White Australia Policy was still in force. Dr Isaacs took over the Balmain Medical Centre in 1971 and ever since she has been dedicated to caring for local residents regardless of their financial capacity. Dr Isaacs often worked exceptionally long hours to ensure that each and every one of her patients received the time and attention they needed. While Dr Isaacs retired from the surgery last week, the care and compassion she has contributed to our community will live on for years to come. On behalf of the Balmain Electorate I sincerely thank Dr Isaacs for each and every day of those 50 years of service. We wish you a restful and happy retirement.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 21:06 until  
Thursday 6 May 2021 at 09:30.**