



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 6 May 2021**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Announcements .....	6399
COVID-19 Quarantine.....	6399
Condolences.....	6399
His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.....	6399
Budget.....	6402
Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2020-2021 .....	6402
Bills.....	6403
Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021 .....	6403
Second Reading Speech.....	6403
Members .....	6405
Legislative Council Vacancy.....	6405
Bills.....	6405
Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021 .....	6405
Second Reading Speech.....	6405
Residential Tenancies Amendment (Reasons for Termination) Bill 2021 .....	6405
First Reading.....	6405
Second Reading Speech.....	6405
ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020 .....	6407
Second Reading Speech.....	6407
Second Reading Debate.....	6408
Business of the House.....	6420
Chamber Seating Arrangements .....	6420
Visitors.....	6421
Visitors.....	6421
Motions .....	6421
Rotary Club of Sydney Centenary.....	6421
Announcements .....	6426
Chamber Seating Arrangements.....	6426
Members .....	6426
Representation of Minister Absent During Questions.....	6426
Question Time .....	6426
Asset Privatisation .....	6426
COVID-19 .....	6429
Regional New South Wales .....	6431
Regional Disability Services and Infrastructure .....	6432
Qr Codes .....	6434
Griffith Motor Neurone Disease Research .....	6435
Sexual Assault Law Reform .....	6436
Farmers' Right to Farm .....	6437

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Legacy Contamination Sites .....	6438
Mining Industry .....	6439
Private Members' Statements.....	6440
NSW Plastics Plan .....	6440
VHP Sanskrit School .....	6441
Queanbeyan Police Station .....	6442
Kogarah Electorate Primary Schools .....	6443
Clarence Electorate Mental Health Initiatives .....	6443
Fall of Saigon Anniversary .....	6444
South Coast Electorate Anzac Day Commemorations .....	6445
Petitions .....	6446
Central Coast Council Rates .....	6446
Private Members' Statements.....	6453
South-East Sydney Bus Services .....	6453
Valuing the Teaching Profession Independent Inquiry .....	6453
Australians in India .....	6454
Forster-Tuncurry Bridge .....	6455
Green Valley Public Housing .....	6455
Blackwattle Bay Development .....	6456
Seven Hills Electorate Anzac Day Commemorations .....	6457
Hunter Region Housing and Homelessness.....	6458
City of Sydney Greening Sydney Plan .....	6459
Vaucluse Electorate Anzac Day Commemorations .....	6460
Racism .....	6461
Member for Hornsby .....	6461
Vaping in Schools.....	6462
Electric Vehicles .....	6463
Norah Head Community Hall.....	6464
Ryde Electorate School Infrastructure.....	6465
Laurieton Men's Shed .....	6466
Community Recognition Statements .....	6466
Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Meals on Wheels .....	6466
Dann King.....	6466
Richmond Straight Track.....	6467
International Firefighters Day.....	6467
Hayley Kitching and Jack Sheehan .....	6467
Maitland Pickers Rugby Club.....	6467
Forresters Beach Seventh-Day Adventist Church .....	6468
Wollongong May Day Celebrations .....	6468
Leselle Herman .....	6468
International Workers Memorial Day.....	6468
Chipping Norton Sailing Club .....	6468

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Cerebral Palsy Alliance .....	6469
Hannah Ross .....	6469
Frontline Health Workers .....	6469
Greg Laird, OAM .....	6469
Friends of Grossmann House.....	6469
Peakhurst South Public School .....	6470
Barb and Warren Pengelly.....	6470
Amy Coleman .....	6470
Sustainable Schools Grants.....	6470
June Hopkinson .....	6471
Kerryann Stanley .....	6471
Maitland Samaritans Youth Accommodation .....	6471
Robert "bob" Salt.....	6471
Kogarah Cougars .....	6471
Australian Age Swimming Championships.....	6472
Coast Shelter.....	6472
Liverpool Lions Club.....	6472
Robe 2 Recovery.....	6472
Bobby Woods .....	6473
Community Recognition Notices .....	6473
Hopepoint Christian School Anzac Service.....	6473
Bankstown/south West Division Legacy Bbq.....	6473
Lawrence Area Over Fifties Group .....	6473
Getting to the Root of Domestic Violence.....	6473
Thank You Nimbin Pool Volunteers .....	6474
Carolyn Davis .....	6474
Rina Mandarano.....	6474
Anzac Service at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School .....	6474
Waverley Council Harmony Concert .....	6474
Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals' Care Programs .....	6475
Bert Oldfield Public School 2021 Leaders .....	6475
Mentor Support Network.....	6475
Graffiti Removal Day .....	6475
Milton Ulladulla View Club .....	6475
Islamic Charity Project Association Ramadan Dinner 2021 .....	6476
Appin Massacre Commemoration .....	6476
Roger Lynch .....	6476
Felicity George .....	6476
Westfields Sports High School Clean Up Australia Day 2021 .....	6476
Australian Russian-Chinese Friendship Association Easter Party .....	6477
Lake Macquarie Marine Rescue .....	6477
Lyn Axford .....	6477

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Nepean Food Services .....	6477
Mulgoa Metro Renewal Program .....	6477
Days for Girls Alstonville.....	6478
Jan Hulbert.....	6478
East's Water Polo Club .....	6478
Chloe Bayliss .....	6478
The Hills Trefoild Guild .....	6479
St George Community Transport.....	6479
Zonta Club of Botany .....	6479
Engadine Uniting Church .....	6479
Emergency Services.....	6479
Anzac Day 2021 .....	6480
Emma Wall .....	6480
The Cheltenham Recreation Club.....	6480
NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards .....	6480
Oggs 60th Wedding Anniversary .....	6480
Camden South Swimming Champions .....	6481
Campbelltown Westerners Cricket Club .....	6481
Robert French .....	6481
Cameron Hose .....	6481
Democratic Kurdish Community Centre .....	6481
The Association of Zgharta (Youssef Bey Karam Batal Lebanon) Australia Inc Anzac Day 2021 Commemoration.....	6482
Maitland Youth Express Links to Learning.....	6482
Thornton Public School Wrapped in Love Project.....	6482
Cowra Public School Fundraising Efforts .....	6482
Mrs Barbara Guthrie .....	6482
Leichhardt Public School P&c.....	6483
Neighbourhood Centre Week .....	6483
Dying with Dignity NSW Dr Beverley Symons.....	6483
North Sydney Rotary Fundraising for Black Dog Institute .....	6483
Capo Pizza Voted Best Pizza in North Shore and Mosman Area .....	6483
You Choose Youth Road Safety.....	6484
Food Week .....	6484
Carla Zampatti AC - Condolence .....	6484
Jo Nathan .....	6484
Dr Rachel James .....	6484
Peter and Annette St Clair .....	6485
Anzac Day 2021 .....	6485
Islamic Women's Welfare Association.....	6485
RAAF 100th.....	6485
Chemistworks Wetherill Park .....	6486

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Karl Stewart .....	6486
Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens.....	6486
Southern Highlands Over 60's .....	6486
Newman Senior Technical College – NSW Training Awards .....	6486
Hastings Cancer Trust & No One Fights Cancer Alone Donate Funds to Mnci .....	6487
GyMEA North Public School .....	6487
Brooke Gill .....	6487
Thank Tommy Game - Newtown Jets .....	6487
International Day of Mourning.....	6487

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 6 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.

### *Announcements*

#### COVID-19 QUARANTINE

**The SPEAKER (09:31):** I bring to the attention of the House a statement issued by the Treasurer. I do not have a copy of it in front of me. Yesterday he tested negative for COVID, but he was at the same venue and in the same location as someone who tested positive in the last day or so. As a precaution and as per the advice of NSW Health, he is self-isolating. The coronavirus is a real risk. If people experience symptoms, I urge them to not attend this precinct and to be tested immediately. We will consider how the Chamber operates, particularly at question time. However, I am not pre-empting anything at this stage.

*[Notices of motions given]*

### *Condolences*

#### HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

**Debate resumed from 5 May 2021.**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (09:48):** I make a contribution to debate on the condolence motion for His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip served our Crown and our Commonwealth for nearly 80 years—all of his life but specifically in his capacity as the Queen's consort. Together Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, in particular, put issues of the environment on the global agenda. He was a lifelong advocate for the environment, perhaps before his time. He was a man known for his plain speaking. He once noted that if nature does not survive, neither will mankind, which is a sentiment I share. It was a suggestion from Prince Philip that led to the Australian Conservation Foundation's creation in the 1970s.

After a visit to Australia in the 1970s, Prince Philip penned a letter to then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam expressing his personal views on conservation in Australia at the time. He was vocal about the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu, Fraser Island and many of our country's other natural wonders. Globally he was involved in the creation of the World Wildlife Fund, of which he served as president from 1981 until 1996. I had the profound pleasure of meeting him at Government House many years ago. Prince Philip provided an example of service, self-sacrifice and humanity to everyone in Australia, the Commonwealth and around the world. On behalf of the community of Pittwater, I express our sympathies to the Royal Family.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (09:50):** On Friday 9 April we learnt of the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. His Royal Highness will be remembered for his remarkable legacy as patron, president and supporter of hundreds of organisations and also as a veteran who served his country at war. Prince Philip had a rich and varied career in the Royal Navy. With a deep passion for naval history and seafaring, Prince Philip's Royal Navy career began at age 17 when he attended Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. It was there that he famously escorted a then 13-year-old Princess Elizabeth and her younger sister, Princess Margaret, when their parents, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, visited Dartmouth.

After eight months of training, Prince Philip departed Dartmouth at the beginning of 1940 and was awarded the King's Dirk and the Eardley Howard Crocket prize for best cadet of his entry. From Dartmouth he joined the battleship HMS *Ramillies* in the Indian Ocean as a midshipman, escorting troops from Australia to Egypt, before joining cruisers HMS *Kent* and *Shropshire* in the Asia-Pacific region. In January 1941 Prince Philip joined the battleship HMS *Valiant* in Alexandria, Egypt. During night action off Cape Matapan he was in charge of the ship's searchlight control. For those efforts he was mentioned in dispatches for "bravery and enterprise" which "greatly contributed to the devastating results achieved" by the guns.

Having qualified for a promotion to sub-lieutenant, he returned to the United Kingdom and, after taking a series of technical courses, was appointed to the destroyer HMS *Wallace*, based at Rosyth, for convoy escort

duties on the east coast. At the beginning of 1942 he joined HMS *Wallace* and spent most of the year escorting coastal convoys off the east coast of the United Kingdom before the ship was dispatched to the Mediterranean to support the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. His commanding officers praised Prince Philip's practical seamanship skills, high intellect, good judgement, strong character, zeal and great charm. He was described as an "officer of unusual promise" and it was predicted he would "make his mark in the service".

Prince Philip's next seagoing appointment was as first lieutenant—second in command—of the new destroyer HMS *Whelp*, which sailed to the Indian Ocean for the final year of the war with Japan as part of the British Pacific Fleet. Aboard HMS *Whelp*, Prince Philip was present in Tokyo Bay in September 1945 for the formal Japanese surrender, the last act of the Second World War. The destroyer finally returned to the United Kingdom in January 1946, having helped with the repatriation of Allied servicemen. Prince Philip spent the next 3½ years ashore at various naval establishments, helping to train petty officers and new sailors joining from civvy street as well as studying at the Royal Naval Staff College in Greenwich, interspersed with his marriage to Princess Elizabeth in November 1947.

Prince Philip, now the Duke of Edinburgh, was appointed first lieutenant of HMS *Chequers* in 1949, the leader of the First Destroyer Flotilla in the Mediterranean Fleet. After being promoted to lieutenant commander in July 1950 Prince Philip was given his first seagoing command, 11 years after joining the Royal Navy. He commanded the anti-submarine frigate HMS *Magpie* from September 1950 until July 1951, taking her to a number of ports around the Mediterranean. The Duke of Edinburgh ended his active naval career as a commander in January 1953, after almost 14 years, after which he was promoted to honorary Admiral of the Fleet and given the title of Captain General Royal Marines, a position he held until December 2017.

Other titles bestowed upon him during the period of transition from service to royal life included Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, Colonel-in-Chief of the Army Cadet Force and Air Commodore-in-Chief of the Air Training Corps. His longstanding contribution of more than eight decades was recognised in June 2011 when the Queen conferred the title and office of Lord High Admiral upon him on his ninetieth birthday. In August 2017 Prince Philip reviewed a parade by the Royal Marines at Buckingham Palace; it was most appropriate that this was his final public engagement. I acknowledge the Royal Navy and the Naval Historical Branch for such a detailed account of His Royal Highness's extensive military career.

Further, I acknowledge the establishment in 1956 by Prince Phillip of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The award transformed the perceptions of young people, showing them that nothing can hold them back and that anything is possible through perseverance, dedication and determination. The award recognises young people engaged in a journey of self-discovery and self-improvement and is a pathway to helping them develop life skills and find their place in the world and within their communities. It is an inclusive program, supporting young people regardless of location and circumstances, with participants learning invaluable life skills which assist them in making a positive difference to society.

The award was brought to Australia in 1959. Last year in New South Wales 416 schools and other organisations had nearly 12,000 participants registered, the largest of any division in Australia. In 2021 over 25,000 young Australians will begin the journey to achieving a bronze, silver or gold award, which highlights the value of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Prince Philip will be remembered as a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, his service to his country unquestioned and his contribution to communities around the Commonwealth unrivalled, with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award being a testament to His Royal Highness's life and principles.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (09:57):** With considerable sadness I contribute to debate on this important motion of condolence following the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on 9 April 2021. The Duke of Edinburgh had a strong and lengthy relationship with Australia and in particular New South Wales. His Royal Highness visited our shores 23 times in his remarkable 99 years of service to his Queen, his country and the freedom of the Commonwealth of Nations. From 1940 to 2011 Prince Philip attended countless events and engagements here, including several visits without Her Majesty the Queen. Prince Philip's military service first brought him to Australia prior to his engagement to then Princess Elizabeth. He visited New South Wales for the first time in 1940, aged just 19, as a midshipman aboard the Revenge-class super-dreadnought HMS *Ramillies*.

Prince Philip's second visit to New South Wales was in 1945 aboard the Royal Navy destroyer HMS *Whelp*. The first visit to New South Wales by a reigning monarch took place in 1954, when Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh undertook a tour of all Australian States as well as Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory. They arrived in the passenger-cargo liner SS *Gothic*, steaming into Sydney Harbour. During Australia's bicentenary celebrations in 1988 Prince Philip was appointed a Companion in the Military Division of the Order of Australia—or an AC, as it is known—for "service to the Australian Defence Force as Admiral of the Fleet of the Australian Navy, Field Marshal in the Australian Army and Marshal of the Royal Australian Defence Force".

He arrived on board the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, which passed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge amid great fanfare and celebration. Importantly, the Prince joined Her Majesty in opening the new Australian Parliament House on that same visit.

In 1992 the royal couple visited New South Wales for the 150th anniversary of the city of Sydney, spending seven days carrying out a range of engagements. In 2000 the Duke of Edinburgh joined Her Majesty for a final inspection of various sites that would play host to the Sydney Olympic Games. After attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip waved goodbye to Australia for the last time in October 2011. His Royal Highness assisted in the opening of Parliament on two State occasions, the first being on 4 February 1954 and the second on 20 February 1992.

His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh has left behind a remarkable legacy of service that I know has been an example to all Australians and, indeed, to many locals right across the electorate of Seven Hills. He leaves behind the award scheme in his name, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which no doubt has changed the lives of many locals from the electorate of Seven Hills. I have every confidence that the award will continue to have a profound and positive impact on the lives of many great young people in the electorate. On behalf of those locals, I sincerely thank the Duke of Edinburgh for what he has achieved in his life of service and what he has left behind. I pass on my formal condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the entire Royal Family.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:00):** I recognise the life and service of Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh and prince consort. Prince Philip will be remembered for his service to the Royal Navy, Her Majesty the Queen and the Commonwealth, and through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. He was known as a supporter of and frequent visitor to Australia. In considering the contribution of his life throughout the many years to our Commonwealth and to Australia, I have been reflecting on some local stories of the 1954 royal tour, particularly to Mosman. I understand there was great excitement as the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived in 1954. People were said to have not slept the night before the arrival in February. Some stayed up late to try to get a view of the monarch. I have some interesting contributions that Mosman Collective and my friend Anna Usher have put together on the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh and on his contribution in our own community, which I will read to the Chamber:

In Mosman, crowds lined the foreshore from every possible vantage point, and as the royal masthead slowly appeared, the dreamy drone of bagpipes echoed from the eastern edge of Middle Head. "The first notes of music to reach The Queen and Duke from these shores came from the Mosman District Scottish Pipe Band," Mosman Mayor John Warren would later recall in a minute to the Council.

"Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, received such a welcome that must forever stay in their memory as an outstanding token of the love and loyalty of their Australian subjects."

At 8:30am, the Gothic—

the ship that they arrived on—

made its way around Bradleys Head to anchor in Athol Bay, prompting a thunderous roar from boats big and small on the water. Prime Minister Robert Menzies with the Queen and Duke.

"A mighty hosanna of cheers and sirens, foghorns and whistles and an echo overhead as six RAAF Mustangs and six Vampire jet fighters gave a Royal salute to their Supreme Commander," Britain's News Chronicle reported, "she was here at last".

"There were thousands of sightseers at Taronga," Dolly Baverstock reported in the Australian Women's Weekly, "and even the animals were excited by the crowds streaming in."

"Spectators stretched all the way from the Harbour Bridge to the zoo, where a disused monkey pit provided a prime view of the regal visitors," she said.

In the many days that ensued of the royal visit, they went across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. On Thursday 18 January, their last day in Sydney, it was finally Mosman's turn to officially host them not just on the water but on land. Usher writes:

Council had decided on a striking shield motif flanked with red, white and blue bunting and gold rosettes to adorn storefronts on Military Rd, from Cremorne Junction to the Buena Vista.

"The response of retailers ... was practically a continuous line of awning display right along Military Rd from Cremorne to Mosman," 1954 Mosman Council Minutes state.

At 11:30am, the Royal Dakota arrived at Mascot from Canberra ... More than 600,000 people lined the route, along ... Military Rd and finally Middle Head Rd.

...

In St Leonards Park, North Sydney, nearly 50,000 lower north shore school children stood in searing heat to greet the Monarch when she—

and the Duke of Edinburgh—

arrived at 12:10pm.

"The Queen and Duke sat on the turned down hood of an open car as they drove through a sea of fluttering flags and screaming, shouting children," the Sydney Sun that afternoon.

From North Sydney, the entourage moved slowly amidst heaving crowds, with "women and children evading the cordon, rushing forward to wave flags and cheer at The Queen."

"Thousands of women lined Military Rd, 'coo-eed' and shouted, "God bless you, come back to us," as the Queen and Duke passed, the newspaper report said.

"A happy incident at Cremorne Junction occurred when the Queen signalled to her driver to stop the Royal car, leant out and took a cellophane-enclosed posy from a small girl who ran on the roadway.

There is a significant, extensive history of the Royal Family visiting Mosman and coming through North Sydney as well. We always welcome them. The tradition is within our own streets and communities. We have many roads named after the Royal Family, including Royalist Road. It permeates our local community. There is a deep sense of respect, care and love for this family and everything they have done for us. This was not the last time they visited, although it was the first. We remember the contribution of Prince Philip and the service he provided in particular to the Queen in her duty to us. We recognise his loss and that it must be very heartfelt to his family. We recognise that it will leave a void for us, particularly with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and the Commonwealth. Our commiserations, memories and reflections go to Prince Philip's family. Vale, Prince Philip.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 5 May 2021.**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (10:06):** I will pick up where I left off yesterday. The Bonnie Vale revitalisation and seawall replacement has been brought on by the drought. It was discovered that asbestos had surfaced at Bonnie Vale camping grounds due to the grass dying off. The Bonnie Vale campground has been closed for a couple of years but a budget has now been allocated for the rejuvenation of the whole area. That is great news for the local businesses because they have been struggling at Bundeena and Maianbar. Bonnie Vale brings a lot of business into the town during the summer. It has been two years since it closed. When they started the excavation work and looking at the depth of the asbestos they also found Aboriginal middens so they had to do another 12-month study into that. That work has been completed now. I am pleased to say that the Bonnie Vale campgrounds are scheduled to open in October or November this year.

A couple of years ago the seawall at Bonnie Vale was wiped away by an east coast low. That wall is now being replaced and, I am happy to say, is well on its way to being completed. Every couple of years an amount of money is spent on the seawall when it gets washed away. New blocks and sandbags are put in, but the force of the ocean always seems to win. It was previously replaced only three or four years ago, so it is an ongoing issue. I think the mitigation in that area probably needs a different tack to stop that seawall from being impacted so badly.

Another good announcement in the last budget was the upgrade to the police dog command at Menai. This fantastic part of the police department, the dog squad, has been living out of basic accommodation with buildings that are not permanent. They can be moved. The area has grown organically so that the training area itself is a pretty ragtag field where the dogs do their basic training. They then have drug rooms where they do their intensive training, where they use their noses and their sniffing talent to sniff out micro drops of drugs. It is absolutely amazing to watch how quickly they can pick up the scent and locate the drug.

Helensburgh Police Station is another project that is ongoing. An Aboriginal land claim was made as soon as it was announced and that claim is still being worked through, which is why work on the police station has been delayed, but I hope that in the next six to 12 months we will have a positive outcome. Regarding asset improvement for social housing, people who were moved out of the old fibro half-acre blocks at Menai so that the whole area could be rejuvenated were understandably upset. They were moved to a new area at Padstow and were able to come back once the rejuvenation was completed. The accommodation is dual lock, but a large percentage of people have decided to stay in Padstow. That accommodation is available for people to move into. I believe it is very popular for people within the shire and further afield.

We had a grant of \$1.6 million for the revitalisation of Helensburgh town centre and that work has just started. I suggested to the council that as the town centre is being revitalised, it is a great time to ask the State Government for help to fund CCTV within Helensburgh. I look forward to getting some correspondence from Wollongong City Council on that. The revitalisation of the town centre is a perfect opportunity to install CCTV. Sutherland Shire Council got \$2.5 million for upgraded boat ramps, which is a great boost for Sutherland Shire

Council and will help to look after the assets of boaters. Also in the budget last year, funding was provided for a Service NSW centre at Engadine, which has been a fantastic addition.

**Mr Victor Dominello:** They love it.

**Mr LEE EVANS:** People absolutely love Service NSW. The other week I was talking to some of the girls at Service NSW who said that in the first three months 4,000 drivers applied for their licences through the centre. I am very pleased that the gap has been filled. I congratulate and thank the Minister for all his work to get Engadine Service NSW up and running. Woronora Dam is not sexy, but all asbestos is being removed from the accommodation and working areas of the dam, which was funded in the last budget. The catchment areas for all of the dams in my electorate—Woronora, Cataract and Avon—are being upgraded. Bulli Hospital has not officially been opened yet, but it has been completed, which is a great thing. It is a great opportunity to provide the people of the Northern Illawarra with an urgent care hospital. It has been a longstanding hospital within that area. The original hospital was built by coalminers as the result of an accident. It now has a fantastic new geriatric centre as well as urgent care.

I again pat the Minister on the back for Dine & Discover, which has been fantastic. The other day I was talking to the owner of one of the restaurants in my electorate, who said his income compared to 2018-19 is up six grand a month due to Dine & Discover. It is fantastic for local businesses and fantastic that we have a government that is actually giving people a reason to leave their homes, go out and spend their money—or spend our money or everyone's money. Symbio, a zoological park in my electorate, has also commented on how much turnover and footfall has improved. It is easy, it is straightforward and people love it. I encourage the Minister to consider extending that program, which has been an absolute boon. Even my mother-in-law, who does not have a phone, printed it off at Service NSW and is having a fantastic time.

**Mr Victor Dominello:** You are making your mother-in-law happy.

**Mr LEE EVANS:** It is harder than it sounds. Anyway, she is thrilled because she has gone to the movies twice and is obviously dining and discovering her way around the electorate of Heathcote. All in all, New South Wales is in a safe pair of hands as far as our budget goes. I congratulate the Treasurer on all the hard work and all of our ministers on all the work they do. I thank the Premier for her leadership, especially over the past 12 months or so. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I will review some of the things I was rushing through in my statements yesterday. The Gateway to the South Pinch Point has been a major program. With everything that is coming to the Sutherland shire there is a lot of work going on. We are expanding roads to eight lanes in some areas, which is fantastic. Those areas have been the classic pinch points. It has organically been an area where people stop at a set of lights and then by the time they get to the next set of lights it is already blocked up. As I said yesterday, those works have been delayed due to a statewide ban on live electrical work for 12 months, which is why it is behind schedule. I am sure that once that is finished—I think it is slated to be finished by December this year—that will be a fantastic thing. It will make it a lot easier for people from the south heading into the city and vice versa, so it is fantastic.

The digitising of more trains and more services will be an absolute game changer for the lower half of my electorate—and for the electorate of the member for Wollongong, as well, who is sitting in the Chamber. I describe the T4 line, the trains that get down into the Illawarra, as a cul-de-sac because there is nowhere else to go. You have to go down and then turn the train around and come back. More trains will be able to be stacked up at Waterfall, which will be able to service more trains going south and more trains going north. As I said, that will be a major game changer. Obviously the introduction of the new intercity fleet will be a great boon for people heading south.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Bills*

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from 25 March 2021.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:18):** The proposed Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021 is crucial at a time when we have seen the Australian Turf Club [ATC] campaigning to rezone a number of sections of the park, particularly the area 6 car park. I have some updated news about this: We have had a very small but good win this week. The background is that previously the ATC made several requests to rezone area 6 of the racecourse, particularly when the Government introduced the

Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy 2017. It listed the racecourse as part of the priority precinct. We campaigned very heavily against that. I am for affordable housing and infrastructure—the social infrastructure—but I do not believe this haphazard, ad hoc way of planning is the right way to go in our local community.

We are in what I have been calling an infrastructure deficit and, as we have seen in *The Daily Telegraph* today, Canterbury Hospital is under stress. It is under enormous pressure. Sixty senior doctors have written to the Minister for Health and Medical Research, seeking a meeting to look at the upgrade for Canterbury Hospital because this Government continues to foist thousands and thousands of units on our electorate and our area. Our health workers—our phenomenal, wonderful, exceptional health professionals at Canterbury Hospital and across New South Wales—are doing a phenomenal job.

We are calling for a moratorium on this bill. We are calling for some sensible discussion. We are calling for the need for open space. We have very little open green space in our community. We have seen the recommendations of the Canterbury City Council ICAC report. The Government should tell the media and the public—tell us—what its position is on those recommendations. There is currently a live inquiry with Daryl Maguire, who is involved up to his neck in this so-called ad hoc planning disaster in my community. I am calling on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Health and Medical Research, on all Ministers to come out to the electorate. We will take them around. They should get their agencies to work together to come up with a proper plan that is considered and that fulfils the ambitions of people who want to keep their families in the area. We need affordable housing, but we need to make sure that the hospital is rebuilt and that funding will go towards the hospital and the upgrade of our roads and schools. Those fancy concepts are great but we need the funding.

The strategy allegedly aimed to guide open space, transport and community infrastructure investments as well as appropriate developments in the corridor. That was the previous priority precinct that we fought very hard for. We saw what happened prior to the last election when the Government placed a two-year planning moratorium in Ryde. That was definitely a political decision. Regardless of whether we think it was political or not, a moratorium was required in that area to step back a bit. The Government needs to do the same thing in my community. I am calling for a moratorium on all development and overdevelopment without the infrastructure. The previous strategy that the Government had foisted on our area meant that around a 400-metre and 800-metre radius around the train stations there were 15- or 20-storey buildings. Anyone who comes to our area will see that it is congested and that there is inappropriate planning along Canterbury Road. I am not making this up.

Those opposite know how bad it is. We need to stop and think, and we need to have a proper conversation about how we want this part of Sydney to look. But we need to have that conversation with my community. We need to have the conversation with the local representatives and we need to get the agencies and the council there. We cannot just jump around excitedly because a bunch of developers or big companies are providing millions of dollars to the turf club as an incentive for them to do this bit by bit, particularly when this racecourse is zoned recreational. We cannot get cheap land and then rezone it to try to make gazillions of dollars and pull the rug out from under people's feet. Residents in my electorate have already seen units going up. It is devastating for them because they bought at a prime time. They have spent a lot of money, but those buildings have a lot of problems. Our local community is massively under-resourced in terms of open space.

The demand for adequate open space has only increased in the past few years under this Government. We have been petitioning, campaigning and rallying. The pressure is initiated by action groups in the local community who oppose the proposed overdevelopment, the priority precincts and the associated rezonings. Before the priority precinct proposal was abolished—and that was after a massive community fight—the Australian Turf Club and the property group Mirvac announced their commitment to developing this area. The proposal related to the development application to remove car parking at area 6 has been withdrawn by the ATC. I acknowledge and welcome the ATC withdrawing this application and encourage it to work within the master plan. I urge the council, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—everybody—to work together. However, members know that I prefer that we leave the racecourse as it is so that it is an open recreational space. There is opportunity to invest in this area to do some really great things.

I have a lot to say about this development application but it will not be necessary at this time because it has been withdrawn. But I say to the ATC and to the Government that we all need to work together. Our residents want to work together, but they are fatigued. I am talking about some of the most socially disadvantaged, low-income families. Why are they having to lob up every couple of months to campaign against overdevelopment? My community is for progress. They want to see better education and an upgrade to the hospital. We want to see an investment in jobs in our area. We are for progress. But we will continue to fight if we continue to get dumped with all of those silly, ridiculous plans that make no sense and that do not fit into the area. Our commitment to the residents is that we will continue to fight.

I urge all residents to make their submissions to this master plan process. Previously I have said that our Labor leader, Jodi Mackay; MP Tony Burke, member for Watson; Jo Haylen, member for Summer Hill; me; our local councillors; wonderful residents; and the Canterbury Racecourse Action Group are all working together, but we put everybody on notice. We are saying to all Government members and councillors that they have to listen to our community. They are very fatigued. Read the Canterbury City Council ICAC report and transcripts from the live inquiry now.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Members*

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 10:30 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect a member to fill a seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. John George Ajaka, resigned.

At 10:55 the House reassembled.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing a member to fill the place in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. John George Ajaka and that Peter John Poulos has been duly elected. I table the minutes of the proceedings of the joint sitting of the Houses of Parliament of New South Wales to choose a person to hold the place in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. John George Ajaka. I order that the minutes be printed.

*Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:56):** The withdrawal of this development application is not a guarantee that the Canterbury Park Racecourse will be maintained as open recreational space. Accordingly, the moratorium that this bill proposes will act as a bastion against any rezoning while the master plan is in development. The bill before us would ease community concerns by preventing the rezoning of the racecourse for another five years, allowing a holistic master plan to be implemented that is committed to open green spaces and that caters to the needs of the local community. Recreational open space is a valuable community resource, as we have seen during COVID with millions of people using their local parks. In my community people needed and appreciated open spaces like Wolli Creek, Cooks River and Canterbury Park. The proposed provisions outlined in this bill are integral to maintaining one of the biggest open recreation spaces in our community. Given the recreational use of the racecourse parking facilities within and near the site is crucial, the moratorium covers the entirety of the Canterbury Park Racecourse to ensure that even the non-racing infrastructure at Canterbury Park is protected from overdevelopment.

The community's confusion, concern and lack of trust reiterates why the passage of this bill is imperative and why the new proposed moratorium is essential. The moratorium will allow a master plan to be put forward, as it has by the council. I urge the council to continue to undertake extensive community consultation. After much urging of members of Parliament like the member for Summer Hill, the Leader of the Opposition and Federal MP Tony Burke, the Canterbury Racecourse Coordination Committee was established. I acknowledge the members of that committee for their efforts, volunteering their time and putting their heart and soul into their work. We need the council, the Greater Sydney Commission and the Government to listen to them. I urge members of this place, in particular the crossbench, to support this bill. I will be very interested to hear what members have to say in debate on the bill. I urge members to support the bill.

**Debate adjourned.**

### **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (REASONS FOR TERMINATION) BILL 2021**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Julia Finn, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:00):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am delighted to introduce the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Reasons for Termination) Bill 2021. Under current laws, renters can be evicted for no reason through no fault of their own. That has to stop. There is always a reason, and the bill ensures that the only reason to evict a tenant must be a good and valid one. I confirm today that Labor will end unfair no-reason evictions in New South Wales. Ending no-reason eviction—that is the ability for a landlord to evict a tenant without providing a reason—is the cornerstone of introducing greater security and stability to the rental market. The temporary tenancy moratorium introduced to restrict when landlords could evict tenants due to rental arrears as a result of COVID-19 ended on 26 March 2021. The Government's COVID-19 Recovery Act sets out a six-month temporary moratorium on no-grounds evictions, which began on 27 March 2021 and will last until 26 September 2021.

There is a history of no-grounds eviction being used to evict tenants in retaliation for asserting their rights, such as overdue repairs or maintenance or discrimination. Without addressing no-reason eviction, it is possible that landlords will evict tenants during the transition period and afterwards so they can re-let the property at a higher weekly rent and potentially expose evicted tenants to overheated rental markets across the State. Changes to no-grounds evictions are not to the detriment of landlords because the private member's bill includes additional specific grounds for termination such as the premises needing renovation or the landlord moving in. The changes will disadvantage only those landlords who use no-reason eviction to get out of doing the right thing by their tenants.

The New South Wales Government has failed to support landlords through the pandemic. Its measures compare very poorly to Victoria, which instituted a rental assistance fund to provide rent relief payments of up to \$3,000 to Victorians experiencing rental hardship due to the pandemic. As at 5 May 2021, \$78.9 million in grants had been approved for 33,551 renters. The Liberal-Nationals Government had a choice to make. It could have chosen to support renters and landlords like Victoria and other States but chose not to. It could have supported renters and landlords through Labor's hardship scheme, which passed this Parliament, but it chose not to implement it. Unlike New South Wales, Victoria recently bolstered the security of tenure by ending no-fault evictions. Victoria recently chose to end evictions without a reasonable ground, and it is time for New South Wales to do likewise.

New South Wales Labor promised that, if elected in 2019, we would remove the no-grounds provision that allows landlords to evict tenants without giving a reason. It is a vital plank in Labor's policy on making housing affordable and fair. Tenant advocates, academics and community groups have pointed to the use of no-grounds eviction by unscrupulous landlords to remove tenants who have asked for basic repairs. With housing becoming less affordable and stagnant wage growth, renters now represent a broad cross-section of society. The need for landlords to provide a notice indicating the reason for termination is already law in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory and, more recently, Victoria. In New South Wales one in three people who currently rent their homes are being ignored by this Government. More and more people, especially in Sydney, are renting long term, but it is not just Sydneysiders who are feeling the pinch in the rental market. People all across New South Wales are facing the same affordability problems.

Recently Anglicare found that even with a \$50 per week increase in JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment still no affordable properties are available for many people relying on those payments in the private rental market across Sydney and the Illawarra. The snapshot taken between 27 and 28 March surveyed almost 25,000 rental listings across Greater Sydney and the Illawarra. It found that no suitable rentals were found for single parents with one child on the Parenting Payment or JobSeeker, or a single-person household on JobSeeker or Youth Allowance. Six rentals were affordable for a single person with two children—one aged under five and one under 10—where the adult was receiving JobSeeker payments.

Twenty-six rentals were affordable for a single person on the Age Pension and 117 rentals were affordable for a couple with no children on the Age Pension. For a single person with two children—one aged less than five and one aged less than 10—816 rentals were affordable when the adult was on the minimum wage and Family Tax Benefit A and B were available. Minimum wage earners have a far greater chance than people on benefits of obtaining housing without being put under housing distress, but they still struggle. Median rental prices for houses are at a record high of \$550 per week across Greater Sydney, but apartments are down by about 10 per cent at \$470 per week.

Renters across New South Wales deserve to feel safe and secure in their own homes and should not be scared to ask their landlords about maintenance requests. The bill will deliver a vital reform, which will mean renters will feel secure in their home and free from retaliatory action of agents and landlords. Despite widespread support for reform from tenancy and welfare groups, the Berejiklian Liberal-Nationals Government has stubbornly refused to abolish no-grounds evictions. We want to bring rental rules into the twenty-first century. More families than ever are in the New South Wales rental market for the long term, and they deserve stable homes. The

consensus to end no-grounds evictions is overwhelming. The Tenants' Union of New South Wales has said about the Residential Tenancies Act:

The most significant way the Act undermines tenants' housing choices is by allowing landlords to end tenancies without grounds.

...

Landlords do not need to prove or even justify their reason for termination – they simply hold the right to end tenancies on their say so.

Put another way, tenants can be made to move – at considerable personal and financial cost – without a good reason. Or, as is more likely, for a bad reason, because there is always a reason to end a tenancy. These provisions become landlords' trump card, and tenants are acutely aware of this. In our 2014 Affordable Housing Survey, 77 per cent of respondents said they had put up with a problem, or declined to assert their tenancy rights, for fear of an adverse consequence.

But it's not just a question of whether tenants will balk at raising concerns with a landlord. It is a common occurrence for tenants to receive a notice of rent increase with a no-grounds notice of termination in the same envelope, inviting them to choose which one they prefer.

**Debate interrupted.**

## **ICAC AND OTHER INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT FUNDING) BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:07):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is my pleasure to introduce the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020 to the Legislative Assembly. Corruption is rampant across New South Wales and Australia. Governments are using taxpayers' money as their personal slush fund. Sports rorts, dodgy dams, dodgy Daryl, Watergate, bushfire relief pork-barrelling, council grant scandals, icare, pipeline rorts, foreign corporates using government water accounts, secret emails from government officials favouring irrigator groups—a new scandal emerges every single day. But the Government survives and thrives, with no consequences, no apologies, no resignations. If we do not address this issue now, we will descend into a banana republic. That is no exaggeration. Having proper rules and accountability over how taxpayers' money is spent is what separates First World democracies from Third World dictatorships. We need to draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough. We must protect our democracy. This bill is the perfect start.

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

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the bodies entrusted to oversee government are independently and properly funded, so that ICAC staff can do their jobs without worrying about losing them. The bill will mean that ICAC will no longer be reliant on the whims of the Liberal and National parties for its funding. It provides clear oversight on the adequacy of funding for ICAC, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission and the NSW Ombudsman. That is a good thing. It does that by allowing the annual funding to those bodies to be allocated separately from funding to other agencies and to be free from political interference. It is such a no-brainer.

Much like my previous bill—which forced members of Parliament to declare their water interests—the upper House passed this bill in a landslide victory. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, Labor, The Greens, One Nation and the Independents all supported the bill. But, of course, the Liberals and The Nationals voted against it. They have the chance to right that wrong in this Chamber and vote for measures that I am sure have overwhelming support amongst the public. My party, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, asked for the bill to be drafted on the basis of the four recommendations that were made in the *NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Special Report*. This bill gives effect to each of those four recommendations.

Recommendation 1 proposes that the parliamentary oversight committee for ICAC, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Ombudsman and the NSW Electoral Commission make recommendations on funding priorities. It states a parliamentary committee, not Cabinet. Recommendation 2 proposes that the annual

budgets for the abovementioned oversight bodies include a set contingency fund to address unbudgeted financial demands, with access to the funds governed by prescribed criteria and the approval of the relevant parliamentary oversight committee. Recommendation 3 proposes that the abovementioned oversight bodies be directly allocated their annual funding through appropriate legislation rather than funding being allocated to the relevant Minister, so that they are not subject to reductions in funding during the financial year. The last recommendation, recommendation 4, which is probably the most important recommendation, proposes that the New South Wales Government remove those oversight bodies from the dreaded Premier and Cabinet cluster.

**Ms Gabrielle Upton:** Dreaded?

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** Yes. Implementing those recommendations will allow our oversight bodies to do their jobs in a frank and fearless way, and that is what we want. This is absolutely essential to democracy. It is the first step in curtailing the scourge of corruption that is undermining our society and economy. I therefore urge all members to support the bill.

### Second Reading Debate

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (11:12):** The Government opposes the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020, which was introduced by the Hon. Robert Borsak in the other place late last year. It is good to see the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party doing some work but the bill is misguided and misdirected. I make the point that the platitudes that were offered up by the member for Murray were stultifying. If that is the best that she can rustle up in support of the bill, it deserves to never be seen again in this Chamber. I will go through some of the provisions in the bill and, on behalf of the Government, provide argument as to why the Government strongly opposes the bill.

The bill before the House seeks to amend the Government Sector Finance Act 2018. It has three objectives: first, to require that appropriations made by the annual Appropriation Act to certain integrity agencies are to be paid directly to those agencies; secondly, to require a contingency fund for four integrity agencies, equal to 25 per cent of their respective appropriations; and, thirdly, to require the Treasurer to authorise the payment of a requested sum out of the contingency fund for one of those integrity agencies if their appropriation has been exhausted and if certain other conditions are met.

The bill seeks to amend the Electoral Act 2017, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 and the Ombudsman Act 1974 by requiring that each agency refer any requests for contingency fund payments to the parliamentary joint committee and that the parliamentary joint committee for each agency review information prepared by the relevant agency for use in budget preparations and then make recommendations to the Treasurer on budget priorities, having regard to that information. Lastly, the bill seeks to amend the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to include the ICAC as a separate public service agency.

As I said before, the Government strongly opposes the bill. I will provide some background to the bill and make clear why it is unnecessary. In November 2019 the Government requested that the Auditor-General undertake an independent review of the effectiveness of the financial arrangements and management practices of all integrity agencies, including the ICAC. The Auditor-General, Margaret Crawford, has tabled her report. I thank her for that important work and for all the work that she conducts on behalf of the community of New South Wales.

The Commissioner of ICAC also made a special report regarding funding arrangements on 6 November 2020. The Government is carefully considering both the Auditor-General's recommendations and the complex matters that were raised in that report. Lastly, I note that the Public Accountability Committee of the Legislative Council has conducted its inquiry into the budget process for independent oversight bodies and the Parliament of New South Wales and has tabled its reports. The Government is considering a number of pieces of considered, thoughtful work from parliamentary oversight bodies, and we thank them for their work. The Government will finalise its position on the matters that were raised in those reports after due consideration. I imagine that position will be finalised shortly. It would be totally inappropriate to fail to give those matters the due consideration they deserve, given that we have such a body of reports from respected oversight bodies. I emphasise that the Government is committed to ensuring that the funding of the State's integrity agencies continue to be based on three key principles: transparency, accountability and independence.

In relation to the proposal in the bill that the office of the ICAC become a separate public service agency, I note that the ICAC is actually afforded greater independence under current staffing arrangements. Specifically, under section 104 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, the Chief Commissioner of ICAC may appoint a chief executive officer and such other staff of the commission as may be necessary to enable the commission to exercise its functions. Therefore, the Chief Commissioner has the authority to make those

appointments if he considers that the work that must be conducted requires extra resourcing. The authority is already there.

In evidence before the Public Accountability Committee on 12 December 2019, the Chief Commissioner of ICAC said that no ICAC employees were covered by public service regulations and he personally did not raise a concern about those arrangements. I note that establishing ICAC as a separate public service agency would position its employees as public service employees and subject them to the legislative arrangements that apply to public service agencies. That may not be appropriate. The Government is always open to the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC saying he has concern about the current arrangements. But the Government's view is that the latitude to create the transparency, accountability and independence that is so important on the part of ICAC is protected in the current process.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's bill pre-empts the outcome of a series of complex issues that require careful consideration. The Government is daily alive to the concerns of the integrity agencies, and we will address those concerns in the usual and appropriate ways. I also note that the Government is preparing its budget for the coming financial year and we are only a couple of weeks away. It is currently on foot and being worked through. That is a process that all integrity bodies are involved in. The passage of new legislation so close to a budget process, which is what the bill before the House proposes—quite dramatically, I must say—alters integral funding arrangements for the integrity agencies, particularly ICAC, and would be highly disruptive and cause a great deal of confusion. So there is also a practical issue that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has failed to take into consideration.

The current system of providing funding and supplementary funding to the ICAC is working. The ICAC has been provided with an increase in its funding last year in the 2020-21 budget. It was announced that the budget envelope for that agency was \$32.3 million, comprising \$30.9 million in recurrent expenditure plus \$1.4 million in capital expenditure—just under \$31 million in recurrent expenses. That is a 60.7 per cent—let us not forget the 0.7 per cent—increase in the level of expenditure from the final budget of the previous Labor Government in 2010-11, which had an allocation of only \$20.1 million for the ICAC—just two-thirds of its current budget. The Government is providing more than \$114 million in funding to the ICAC over four years. The 2019-20 budget allocated \$26.6 million plus an additional \$3.5 million in supplementary funding.

With that solid base of funding given to ICAC, it is consistent with previous practice that the need for any additional funding is assessed throughout the financial year to ensure that the ICAC continues to be fully equipped to investigate, expose and prevent corruption at all times. Of course, that is consistent with the important role it has in relation to the principles of transparency, accountability and independence. The Government has provided supplementary funding to the ICAC on every occasion that it has requested it over the past 10 years. For example, in 2018-19 supplementary funding of \$1.72 million was provided to the ICAC and in 2017-18 the supplementary funding was \$1.68 million. It is clear by way of action and example that the New South Wales Government has been providing the ICAC with the funds it needs to conduct its important work. The Government is always open to hearing from the commissioner and the agency as to whether more is required and will take the case put forward on its merits. We have acted on those requests from the ICAC as recently as the 2018-19 supplementary funding in the budget.

To cope with a surge of work between 2011 and 2016, the Department of Premier and Cabinet provided additional grants to enable the ICAC to hire additional staff to handle the special investigations it was undertaking. As members would be aware—and I would have thought the member for Murray would be aware—I am referring to the investigations into two former members of this House: the Hon. Eddie Obeid and the Hon. Ian Macdonald, or not so honourable. Those investigations required resourcing because they led to serious criminal findings and legal proceedings. The Government provided the supplementary funding for those special investigations, which was required during a period of intensive work on the part of ICAC and which led to the serious outcomes that we see daily prosecuted in the papers in relation to members opposite. But I digress. I want to come to the central principle, which is that the ICAC is properly funded at this point. The work of several agencies, including the Auditor-General, is before the Government and it must be considered with respect and thoughtfulness. The Government is to consider a report from the Parliament's own committee—which will be done, as I said, with the respect it deserves, given the important role of ICAC.

The bill before the House may be goodly intended by a member of the other place and goodly proposed with lots of aphorisms—I have not heard so many in one speech in this place in ages. The member for Murray is well intentioned; I might give her that. Maybe it is just that. But the bill is not fit for purpose. It dabbles in some complex matters raised by the integrity bodies in our State as to their own funding arrangements. For the reasons I have outlined, there is no need for the bill. The Government will assist the ICAC if it has issues that we are convinced should be supported by way of funding or other resourcing. We are open to reform wherever that is required. The Government recognises that for agencies such as the ICAC to be able to exercise their principal

functions, it must ensure that these bodies have the resourcing and powers to ensure transparency, accountability and independence of their functions to protect our community in New South Wales. For those many reasons and the fact that no good reasons were articulated by the member for Murray in support of the bill, the Government does not believe the bill is necessary and thoroughly opposes it.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:26):** I speak in support of the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020. I thank the member for Murray and her colleagues in the other place for bringing this important legislation to the Parliament. It is not the first time the member for Murray has done so. She works extremely well as a parliamentarian in this place and is a strong advocate for the people whom she represents in rural and regional New South Wales. I witness that firsthand as the rural health inquiry moves around this State and hears explosive evidence from communities, many of which she represents.

The bill will see the ICAC, the NSW Electoral Commission, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Ombudsman's office all move to an independent funding model rather than having their funding decided by the government of the day. It is a simple principle: Agencies designed to police corruption should not have their funding decided by those they are policing. We have seen the most stark example of why the bill is needed over the past 12 months in relation to the former member for Wagga Wagga. This reform is not just something politicians are calling for. The ICAC Chief Commissioner, who was appointed by the Premier, has repeatedly called for ICAC to receive independent funding.

When the Premier has been asked questions about her involvement in and knowledge of Daryl Maguire's corruption and the House has debated motions referring the Premier to ICAC, the Premier has responded by saying that we should all trust those integrity agencies and let them do their job. We agree with the Premier that they should be able to do their jobs, but to do their jobs they must be properly funded, and that means having their funding determined in a way that is independent of the government of the day. This is an important issue and one that I thought all sides of politics would have supported. We need strong, robust, independent watchdogs to make sure that those who are doing the wrong thing are identified and the behaviour is stopped in order to, as much as possible, prevent corruption in all of our institutions. I commend the member for Murray on this important bill. I wish it had the bipartisan support it deserves. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:29):** I make a contribution to the debate on the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020, which was introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the other place. As has already been canvassed, there has been quite a bit of discussion already on this bill. The bill seeks to amend the Government Sector Finance Act and makes a number of miscellaneous amendments. Key among the amendments is the new requirement that appropriations made under the budget to four bodies we commonly refer to as the integrity agencies are to be paid directly to those agencies. Currently they are paid through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which then passes on the funding.

The bill will also provide for a contingency fund, which would be structured in such a way that each of the integrity bodies might access additional funds of up to 25 per cent of the appropriation that they received. This will, in effect, be a top-up if the integrity bodies spend their allocated sum. To access this additional sum the bill provides that the Treasurer is to authorise the payment out of the contingency fund from one of those integrity agencies, if their appropriation has been exhausted and if certain other conditions are met. The bill also seeks to amend the governing Acts of the other pieces of legislation that underpin the integrity framework in this State. This includes the Electoral Act, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act and the Ombudsman Act.

The pathways established under the bill mean that the integrity body will need to go to its regular oversight committee here in this place—many of us here are members of these committees—and essentially request the additional funding. This means that the Auditor-General would need to go the Public Accounts Committee—a committee that I sit on, as do you, Mr Temporary Speaker—the ICAC would need to go to the Committee on the ICAC and the Ombudsman and Law Enforcement Conduct Commission would need to go to the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission. These committees would be charged with the additional responsibility of reviewing the bids by the integrity bodies and making an assessment as to their worth and validity. Once the committee has made its assessment it would then refer to the Treasurer its recommendation about whether or not that body should access the additional funding—presumably either to accept that request, reject the request or vary the request.

Lastly, the bill seeks to amend the Government Sector Employment Act to reconstitute the ICAC as a separate public service agency. What this bill does not do is determine the way in which all sides of politics in this place view our integrity agencies and want to see them be able to fulfil their roles and continue to receive the funding that they need. The first thing I wanted to reflect on in my comments on the member's bill is the suggestion that we just heard from the member for Keira in representing the Opposition, that we as all members of this place, in a bipartisan sense, should support our integrity agencies. There is nothing about this bill that suggests that any member of this place

does not support the integrity agencies, but there is the implication in the contributions made by those opposite that the Government does not.

I want to be clear about our approach to our integrity agencies, and the Premier has made statements about this quite regularly. We respect our integrity agencies; we want them to be able to do their job; we do not interfere in their work; and we expect them to do their job fiercely and independently of government. But key to the suggestion from those opposite that the integrity agencies need this additional funding model in order to do their jobs is the imputation that the Government does not currently fund them appropriately. However, the facts do not suggest that. The facts show that the Government has provided supplementary funding to the ICAC on every occasion on which it has requested additional funding—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** After you cut it.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** —for at least the past 10 years.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** After you cut it.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** So when it requests funding, on every single occasion—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** After you cut it by 20 per cent.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** —on which it has been requested, supplementary funding has been provided to the ICAC.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Yes, but you cut this funding.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** We argue that the current system of providing funding and supplementary funding—because this bill does talk about supplementary funding as well, and if the member opposite wants to debate funding and supplementary funding she can listen to my contributions about supplementary funding—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Auburn will cease interjecting.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** —because it is core to this bill, and she can listen if she would like to. It is our contention that the current system of providing funding and supplementary funding to the ICAC is working. The ICAC has been provided with an increase in its funding in the budget for the 2020-21 year. It was announced that the budget for the ICAC is \$32.3 million, comprising \$30.9 million in recurrent expenses and \$1.4 million in capital expenses. That is a 60.7 per cent increase in the level of expenditure from the final budget of the previous Labor Government in 2010-11, which had an allocation of \$20.1 million for the ICAC.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** A decade ago.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I note the interjection of the member for Auburn, who keeps saying "after you cut it". I am not sure whether the member for Auburn can comprehend that a 60.7 per cent increase from the last time Labor had a budget is an increase, not a cut.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Auburn will cease interjecting. The member for North Shore will address her comments through the Chair.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Let us make sure that our assessments of this bill and the funding of the ICAC are based upon fact. As I said, there has been a 60.7 per cent increase: \$32.3 million compared with \$20.1 million, which was the Labor Government's last budget in 2010-11. Those are the facts; they are publicly available. There is no reason to debate the facts. Members can debate their own interpretations of those facts, but the facts are on the table.

The Government is providing more than \$114 million in funding to the ICAC over four years. The 2019-20 budget allocated \$26.6 million, plus an additional \$3.5 million in supplementary funding. As I have already said, when supplementary funding has been requested it has been provided. Consistent with previous practice, we assess additional funding requests throughout the financial year. We assess those requests to ensure that the ICAC continues to be fully equipped to investigate, expose and prevent corruption at all times, because that is our goal. Our goal is to ensure that our integrity agencies can do the job that we as a Parliament and the people of New South Wales so fundamentally rely on them to do. So this suggestion, this imputation, this slur from those opposite is, frankly, offensive and is not borne out by the facts. In 2018-19, supplementary funding of \$1.72 million was provided to the ICAC and in 2017-18 the supplementary funding was \$1.68 million. It is clear, based upon the facts, that the Government has been providing the ICAC with the funds that it needs to conduct its incredibly important work.

There was a surge of work between 2011 and 2016—I will not go into why, but we know that there were a number of instances of corruption by members of the party that now forms the Opposition—and the Department

of Premier and Cabinet provided additional grants in that time to enable the ICAC to hire additional staff and to make sure that it could fund the special investigations it was undertaking. Once those investigations ended, the Government provided the ICAC with temporary supplementary funding in 2015-16 to specifically fund redundancy payments. When requests are made, the contention from those opposite is that the funding might be inadequate, that the ICAC needs more funding and is not receiving it, and that the way in which it seeks funding is inadequate.

What the facts bear out is that, first, funding is adequate because the ICAC has done a significant amount of work in the past 10 years. The second contention about whether or not it can receive additional funding when required is inaccurate because, as we have shown, over those 10 years requests have been met and supplementary funding has been provided. Thirdly, in relation to this question about the process, the way in which funding is requested currently goes through a system that is not ad hoc; it goes through a system and a process that the integrity agencies already work through successfully to receive funding. It does not go through members of Parliament picking through what the integrity agencies are seeking and making a judgement call on whether that is acceptable or appropriate. We have a lot of question marks about whether that is the right model for funding integrity agencies: whether members of Parliament in this place and committees should be questioning these agencies to ascertain whether or not it is appropriate for them to undertake the work they are undertaking when we already have a system that is at arm's length. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

While we on the Government side of the House believe that there are good contentions behind this bill—there is no question of the intentions of the member for Murray in putting forward this bill—it is not a fit-for-purpose bill. It does not address the complex matters raised by the integrity bodies as to their own funding arrangements. For these reasons and others raised, the Government is not supporting the bill because it does not believe it is necessary, and I will also be opposing the bill.

I will talk through what we as a government are doing to hear from these integrity agencies and ensure we are enacting what their expertise suggests we need to do to ensure we provide them with fit-for-purpose funding and appropriate processes to access their funding over time. Members are probably aware that in November 2019 the Government requested the Auditor-General undertake an independent review of the effectiveness of the financial arrangements and management practices of all integrity agencies, including the ICAC. The Auditor-General has now tabled her report and we thank her for her work. On 6 November 2020 the ICAC Commissioner also completed a special report relating to funding arrangements. As the Government has said many times, it is carefully considering the Auditor-General's recommendations and the ICAC Commissioner's report. We on this side also note that the Legislative Council's Public Accountability Committee undertook an inquiry into the budget process for independent oversight bodies. That committee's report has been tabled in Parliament and the Government is finalising its position on all the matters raised in these reports.

The Government is committed to ensuring the funding of the integrity agencies and ensuring that they continue, that they be based on principles of transparency, that they be accountable and that they be independent. These three principles are core. Unfortunately this bill does not ensure that those funding principles are maintained. One of the suggestions in the bill is to create an office of the ICAC as a separate public agency. In evidence given by the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC to the Public Accountability Committee on 12 December 2019, he referred to the fact that none of the ICAC's employees are covered by public service regulations and he did not raise concerns for these arrangements. So the suggestion from those opposite that this is a necessary bill has not been borne out by the expert evidence provided by those who work in these integrity agencies and who have the weighty responsibility of ensuring integrity in our public offices.

If the ICAC were to become a separate public agency, its employees would become public service employees. They would be subject to all the legislative requirements of public service agencies. Many integrity agencies have concerns about the way in which that would apply to them. At the moment this legislation is pre-emptive. It does not take into consideration the advice and expertise provided by our integrity agencies. It either misunderstands or misrepresents the way in which funding has been allocated and is allocated. It pre-empts a budget that is only weeks away, a budget that in and of itself is the appropriate form of legislation to involve the consideration of funding for all of our integrity bodies.

This legislation—which we know is quite dramatic sledgehammer legislation—by altering those funding arrangements would be incredibly disruptive and during this period of time would have significant impacts. What the Government is going to do is take the five reports which it has to consider—the two reports from the Public Accountability Committee, two from the ICAC and the report commissioned from the Auditor-General. The Government is going to undertake an assessment of those reports and recommendations, some of which are inconsistent with each other. It will carefully comb through those and provide considered and nuanced responses to them. The bill is quite simply a blunt instrument response that does not address the myriad of complex issues raised by the various reports. Even if the bill is well intended, what it will not do is improve the quality or capacity

of our integrity agencies to do their job. What we as a government want to do is always ensure that the principles for our integrity agencies remain paramount. That is what the Government will do in any response to these reports and recommendations. The Government and I oppose the bill.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:44):** I make a fairly brief contribution to the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2021. I note that the matter of ICAC has been one of great interest to those opposite over the last little while. In fact, members were here last night debating yet another trumped-up referral that has been cooked up, imaginatively conjured up, by those opposite. This goes to the heart of some of the challenges with this particular bill. If you strip away a lot of what has been put by those opposite, at the foundations of the bill is a political attempt to continue to make this an issue that is debated and discussed at the expense of discussing the issues that matter to people in this State.

Only this morning we have experienced an additional community transmission of COVID. This is in addition to other important matters throughout New South Wales in electorates across the State where there is investment taking place, good projects underway and a strong record of delivery by this Government for the community. Nonetheless, those opposite seek to deflect from that and want members to concentrate and waste our time on matters such as this. Some of the issues in this bill have been incredibly well canvassed. Many of those have been mentioned this morning, but it is timely to make a few additional remarks.

I begin by acknowledging the complexity of this particular issue. Right now the Government has up to five different reports relating to this matter which it needs to consider. The complicating factor is that some of the recommendations in those various reports are in conflict with each other. Therein lies a challenge and a concern that, if those opposite want us to vote on a bill, it has been presented without giving due consideration to five other reports that are in play at the moment, and those recommendations contain differences of opinion and view. Also, we on this side are not aware—and I have no idea whether those in the Labor Party are aware either—of the process by which the shooters party undertook to consult with key stakeholders in preparing the bill.

To what extent did the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party sit down and speak with those bodies that have input, with peak associations and with various stakeholder groups whose views should be sought from the outset? There is no clarity as to what extent that has taken place, if it has taken place at all. By stakeholders, I refer to four integrity bodies that the bill relates to that would have liked to have had input and some consideration: the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the NSW Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Electoral Commission. The scope and the scale of those four bodies and the work that they do is far reaching and important. Undoubtedly they would have liked to have had some input and to have been able to provide their views on the mechanics of the bill. They could also have provided some serious and worthwhile views on how the bill could be improved, the worthiness of it and the extent to which it muddies the five other reports that are being considered at the moment. But we have no idea of the extent to which consultation took place or, indeed, whether any consultation with various stakeholders took place in relation to this bill.

Therefore it is entirely plausible that these bodies—one or all of them—have not been asked their views on the bill. We are not aware—and the shooters have certainly not provided any information to deliver any clarity around that—of the opinion of these bodies on this bill. We could be in a position today where each of us in this place is being asked to vote on this important piece of legislation, in the broader context, without having a view or an understanding from these bodies. The bill would seek us to adopt a statutory mandate for new funding arrangements of these bodies without their concurrence.

I do not think that is a particularly good way to go about creating and implementing legislation. I am sure members of the public equally would not want to see that take place. Members are being asked to make decisions and deliver a statutory mandate for the funding of those bodies when we are not aware of and have not been advised of the extent to which those organisations have been considered. In the absence of proper consultation and advice from the ICAC, the Ombudsman, the Electoral Commission and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, it would be absolutely improper, imprudent, reckless, inconsiderate and completely inconceivable to pass such legislation.

I note that a number of provisions in the legislation will render it inappropriate for passage. Key amongst them is a new provision which will amend the Government Sector Employment Act to make the ICAC a public service agency. That will make the ICAC comparable to government agencies such as Investment NSW, which is doing a fantastic job. I encourage those opposite and the shooters party to turn their attention to the good work that Investment NSW is doing. That is the sort of thing that we should be talking about in the Chamber. That is where those opposite should be turning their minds in terms of what is next for New South Wales as we have made our way through the COVID pandemic. What does the vision look like? What does the future of the State look like?

Instead they are creating political sideshows, if I may be straight about what this is, and trying to divert the public's attention from what really matters. The bill would seek to make the ICAC comparable to government agencies such as Investment NSW or Resilience NSW, which is headed by Shane Fitzsimmons and which does wonderful and important work. It also fundamentally means that the Minister of the day would be able to choose the CEO. I think that is an unintended consequence of this particular piece of legislation. We are unsure if that was by accident or by design. We do not know if the view of the agencies has been sought on whether that is appropriate. The bill is now before the House and there is no clarity as to whether that has been appropriately considered.

I am not sure the ICAC would be satisfied if the Government adopted a provision which gave it even less independence than the current employment arrangement provides. I am sure many members in this place—and, indeed, those opposite because they have such a focus on, and are very interested in, the matters and the business of the ICAC—would agree. Those opposite are about to talk about why we should pass the bill when, in fact, they are arguing against what it is they are proposing we do. To be very clear, the bill would give the Minister of the day the ability to choose the ICAC's chief executive officer, thereby diluting and diminishing the independence of the agency that the current employment arrangement provides.

There it is: The bill is deficient for the two reasons I have listed, but there are many more. I go back to the important point that we are simply not aware of what consultation, if any—and I labour that point—was undertaken by the shooters party to arrive at this position. I am sure members opposite would expect consultation and no doubt are equally surprised that consultation has not taken place. I find it difficult to accept that members are asked to support the bill when we have no idea to what extent consultation, if any, was undertaken by the shooters party to arrive at this position. I am sure the public would equally find it difficult and absurd. If indeed it is the case that the shooters party has arrived at the bill simply off the back of the reports that are publicly available— [*Extension of time*]

This is very important. Members are being asked to vote. We are going to hear from those opposite about why we should do that. But there are questions that they will not answer and cannot provide insight into. To what extent has consultation taken place? For example, do they seek to strike or amend the bill to challenge the position that the CEO can be appointed by the Minister of the day? Is that something they are willing to discuss? Is that going to be raised by members opposite? We are unsure. Before the Parliament adopts what would be a fundamental reform into funding arrangements for those particular bodies, the Parliament should be given the courtesy of understanding what the integrity bodies think of this dramatic piece of legislation.

If those opposite cannot elaborate on that, then it is simply far too premature to adopt the bill or any bill of that nature. When it comes to the House considering the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020, there are some significant concerns and serious flaws. The House should consider the political nature of the bill that has been introduced. Last night members were in the Chamber dealing with a trumped-up referral to ICAC. Again this morning we are dealing with a matter of ICAC. It is a point of obsession and fascination for those opposite because they do not want to talk about how well the State is doing. They do not want to talk about any policy ideas that they potentially have, because there are none. They are tired. They are sluggish. They are old. They have no energy or get up and go, so here we are, wasting time on this matter.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Oh, diddums. That's so mean of you. That's just terrible. I'm going to go home and cry now. I'm going to get my hankies out.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I note the interjection.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** I'm going to get my tissues out and have a little cry in the corner.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I know it hurts and I note the interjection. As I said, if those opposite could elaborate on those three matters that were raised earlier, that would be wonderful. I have no doubt that they will not be capable of doing that, because the bill has been incredibly poorly considered. It does not take into account the views of our four major integrity bodies. The views of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Electoral Commission were not sought. They are missing in action because the shooters party has conducted absolutely no appropriate consultation. For those reasons and the others I have articulated, the Government does not believe the bill is necessary; therefore, it opposes it. Anybody with any common sense would equally oppose the bill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (11:57):** I make a contribution on the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020, which the Government and I will be opposing for various reasons that have already been cited by members of the Government, for reasons I will put forward and for reasons that learned colleagues on this side of the House will put forward in the future. The

inference by the mover of the motion is that the Liberal-Nationals Government does not treat corruption seriously. I find that absurd, ludicrous and quite frankly offensive, especially as I have repeatedly supported amendments to strengthen and give greater powers to the ICAC and to provide it with more funding so it can oversee and stamp out corruption, whether it is in the Government, the public service or across the public authorities in New South Wales.

The reason I also find it absurd is that it was indeed a Liberal-Nationals Government that introduced the ICAC in 1988 under the then Hon. Nick Greiner. He took it upon himself, once in government, to introduce the ICAC because of the 12 years of the previous Labor Government that have been labelled some of the most corrupt and worst in the history of this nation. However, one would struggle to find a period, in the 16 years prior to this Government, that could be compared as better than that period of government. To add a bit of support and weight to the comment that I make, it is ironic that in the press at this point in time a request has been made to review, of all things, the Luna Park fire, which happened under the Wran Government's 12-year term. Inferences have been made to the collegial friendship between the then Labor Premier Neville Wran and one Abe Saffron. When one talks about Abe Saffron, one really is starting to scrape the murky bottom of the barrel of sleazy, corrupt people who have been involved in New South Wales. To suggest that there has been not only a relationship between Labor members and Abe Saffron but rather a friendly, collegial relationship, I think everybody in this State would say, "Why would we not investigate—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** There were three royal commissions. Not one of them put them in the same room.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** Order! The member for Auburn will come to order.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** It is a shame that the only contribution of the member for Auburn is to interject rather than stand up here—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** To the best of my ability I will manage the member for Auburn without the assistance of the member for Castle Hill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** I would greatly appreciate the Chair's assistance in that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I ask the member to continue his contribution through the Chair. The member for Auburn had been so helpful to the Chair earlier. I ask her to adopt that demeanour.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Only unintelligent comments and contribution by the member for Auburn come by way of interjection—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The comments of the member for Castle Hill were most unhelpful.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: As you would be aware, during debate people are required to speak to the long title of the bill that is before the House. The member has veered way off that now. Chucking insults on the other side of the Chamber is fine but I ask that you bring him back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** To the point of order: I remind the member opposite of Standing Order 52—that a member should be heard in silence. She has failed to do that. With regard to the conduct of the member for Castle Hill, I remind the member for Auburn that under Standing Order 52 members should be heard in silence.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** To the point of order: When someone gets up to speak to a point of order that is before the House, they should restrict themselves to that point of order—as the member who is speaking should restrict themselves to the long title of the bill that is before the House.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Have you got a point of order?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** Order! The member for Castle Hill and the member for Dubbo will come to order. The member for Auburn will resume her seat.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order: I speak in support of the response by the member for Terrigal and Government Whip to the point of order. There was repeated interjection. The member who was speaking did not even get to the fact that the Hon. Neville Wran was found guilty of contempt of court by the New South Wales—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** We do not need to go further down this particular rabbit hole. The member for Ku-ring-gai will resume his seat. We all understand where the point of the debate is. The member for Castle Hill will address the rest of his contribution more closely to the actual bill. The member for Auburn will resist interjecting. The member for Castle Hill will resist inviting interjections. We will all get through this as best we can.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Far be it from me to ever invite interjections. I can absolutely guarantee I will not be inviting anything of the sort but will be very keen to go back and establish the reasons for our opposition to this bill. But when we are discussing issues about corruption I do take that on board. I thank my learned colleague for once again enlightening us on a little bit of history. Contempt of court by Neville Wran had slipped my mind. One of the other reasons that this Government, I believe—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Contempt of the Lionel Murphy trial, in fact.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will cease interjecting from the backbench.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: My point of order is again the long title of the bill. Unless the member has made a reference to the ICAC, or the Government has made a reference to the ICAC, in regard to the Luna Park fire or, indeed, has started an investigation, it has no relevance to the bill before the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** My considered ruling is that the discussion and contribution are, in the broadest terms, in accordance with the debate that I would anticipate on this bill. I have asked the member to come closer to the intention of the bill, which he has indicated he will do. The member for Castle Hill will continue.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Absolutely. The bill pertains to giving weight to strengthening provisions around the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I merely stated that the Independent Commission Against Corruption was originally undertaken and implemented by Nick Greiner because of those issues that were stated previously. It was within the remit of this bill to state them. I believe that an investigation of some type will be pursued in regard to that horrific fire in Luna Park all those years ago when lives were taken—as it should. If there was corruption in any way, shape or form, it should be investigated.

I support the fact that the ICAC was introduced and still continues to this day to expose corruption when it should; that it will continue to expose corruption and drag those—whether it be members of Parliament or public officials—to account; and, whether that needs to be done publicly or in closed session, that it is undertaken so that our State and the people of New South Wales have the greatest certainty that our governments and the people who act within them are not corrupt and, if they are, that they are exposed. I make one point in regard to the ICAC and the inference, as I have said before, by the mover of this bill that this Government in some way does not support strengthening or funding ICAC. I request an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I appreciate the indulgence of the House. Going back to what I said before in regard to this Government's support for strengthening ICAC, I will cast the minds of members back to 2016, when the Independent Commission Against Corruption amendment bill was brought into this House. That followed on from a parliamentary committee that was established. Various members in this House and in the other place were involved in that on behalf of the committee. That amendment bill was put forward in 2016. I was more than happy to support and speak on it, given that I was on a backbench committee overseeing the framing of the new amendment from the parliamentary committee. No less than 35 recommendations were contained within that amendment. The ironic thing about it is that, whilst the Labor Party has not had too much to say—although the member for Wollongong has spoken on behalf of the Opposition in support of these changes—it opposed that amendment in 2016.

When one looks at some of the proposals from the committee, and especially one where it is seen in last year's budget that ICAC would receive \$32.3 million comprising \$30.9 million in recurrent expenditure plus \$1.4 million in capital expenses, that gives one an idea of the size of the funding from this Government that goes towards ICAC each and every year. It represents an amazing 61 per cent increase in the level of expenditure from the final budget of the previous Labor Government in 2010-11. When one looks at that massive increase in funding, it is quite hypocritical for Labor members not to support that amendment in 2016 and now to cry a few crocodile tears in support of this private member's bill that could in some way be seen to support a strengthening of the ICAC.

As I said, that bill in 2016 introduced other amendments to improve the structure and governance of the ICAC. It also promoted fairness in the exercise of ICAC's powers and provided enhanced evidence-gathering powers for criminal prosecutions and improved oversight arrangements for the ICAC. The bill also introduced amendments to improve the ICAC's structure of governance by restructuring ICAC as a panel of three commissioners. The restructured ICAC would then consist of a full-time commissioner appointed by the Governor and two part-time commissioners appointed by the Governor after consultation with the chief commissioner. At all times this Government has gone out of its way to do whatever it could to improve oversight by ICAC, not only through funding but also by altering the structure of that particular body, to ensure that corruption is stamped out across New South Wales. Restructuring the ICAC as a three-member commission has strengthened its

decision-making process and brought a more diverse set of skills and experience to bear on the ICAC's deliberations.

I also stated at that particular time, and I remind members today, that the only politicians, members of Parliament and Ministers found guilty of corrupt conduct by the ICAC to this day have been Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald. Previous Ministers of the Labor Party are the only people who have been found guilty by the ICAC. Who can forget Operation Napier and Currawong, when Tony Kelly and Warwick Watkins were found to be corrupt? Operation Jarilo found the famous luncher Ian Macdonald and Ron Medich to be corrupt. Operation Jasper, about the Mount Penny exploration licences, found Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald to be corrupt for a second time. Who can forget Operation Acacia, relating to the Doyles Creek line and involving John Maitland and Ian Macdonald? The list goes on but it all pertains to Labor members and Labor Ministers who have been found guilty of corruption. That is why the Liberal-Nationals Government will do everything in its power to ensure the strength of the ICAC in the future and to make sure that we do not see any more corrupt Labor politicians and Labor Ministers. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:13):** I make a contribution regarding the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2021. I start by acknowledging the excellent and very detailed contributions by the member for Vaucluse, the member for North Shore, the member for Manly and, most recently, my colleague the member for Castle Hill. It was very illuminating indeed, especially the last part that he articulated with regard to those members of Parliament who have actually been found guilty of corruption by the ICAC. That was very interesting indeed. As a new member who was elected to this place in 2015 I look at this with a bit of dismay, to be honest. As the member for Castle Hill outlined before, the only members of Parliament who have been found guilty of corruption were Obeid, Macdonald, Tripodi and Kelly. They are the only members of Parliament who have actually been found guilty of corruption under the ICAC, which is very illuminating and very telling indeed.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** So you think acting with the intention to overturn laws is not corruption, do you? Is that what you think? He was found guilty of acting to overturn the donation laws.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I draw your attention to Standing Order 52, Mr Temporary Speaker, which states that a member should be heard in silence. The member for Auburn keeps interjecting, which is very disorderly.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** If you keep getting up and lying, what do you reckon?

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** That is unparliamentary, Mr Temporary Speaker. I ask you to ask the member for Auburn to withdraw that comment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Terrigal has asked that the member for Auburn withdraw the comment that he was lying.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** I withdraw.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The comment has been withdrawn. I appreciate that a certain amount of ambience is provided by the interjections.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Try sticking to the truth.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I will thank the member for Auburn for not interjecting on me. I note that it has come from both sides, but Standing Order 52 should be applied equally, notwithstanding the fact that there is some form of invitation for interjections from time to time—or possibly seeking them accidentally. I ask that the member for Terrigal be mindful of that as well.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: I am concerned about two things. The first is that the member for Auburn called the member for Terrigal a liar.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** It has been immediately withdrawn.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The second thing—and it was something that I observed yesterday—is the disrespect for the Chair. When you were speaking and giving a ruling, Mr Temporary Speaker, the member for Auburn continue to interject and speak over you. The House is becoming undignified. We also saw it in the other place the other night. It was disgraceful, and I would not want that sort of conduct to be creeping into our House.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** To the point of order: Normally when members stand up in this Chamber they identify which point of order they are taking, which the member has not done. You made the point yourself, Mr Temporary Speaker, that people invite some comments. To get up here and bald-facedly say that no Liberal has ever been found guilty at ICAC will obviously prompt a response when it is completely untrue and the members have continued to make those points.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Auburn. That is not further to the point of order. I will not allow it to go down this path. It is unnecessary. I appreciate the defence of the honour of the Chair by the member for Ku-ring-gai. The Chair was quite unmoved and unperturbed by the comment from the member for Auburn, all in the heat of the moment. Let us proceed with the debate. The member for Terrigal has the call.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I also acknowledge the fact that as I articulated before, not one Liberal member of Parliament has been found guilty of corruption through the ICAC. That is on the record; I am happy to stand by that record. The member for Auburn misrepresented the truth a minute ago when saying that was not the case.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: If the member wants to accuse me of improper motives, he can do so by way of substantive motion. The reality is that Liberal members have been found guilty by ICAC.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member of Auburn will resume her seat. There is no point of order. I shall deal with that issue after this debate. I believe that can be very clearly confirmed one way or the other.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Read the report. You don't know what you're talking about.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The interjections will cease. I ask the member for Auburn to be careful on that particular allegation. I shall seek clarification of that later for my own purpose, but I do not believe that is necessarily the case. It is not necessarily germane to this debate. The member for Terrigal has the call.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** As I said, I acknowledge the great contributions that we have heard this morning from the member for Vacluse, a former Attorney General; the member for North Shore, who gave a very illuminating and detailed account of why the Government is not supporting this piece of legislation; my colleague the member for Manly, who was able to articulate very clearly the shortfalls and the lack of consultation with the agencies that would actually be impacted—including the ICAC and others—by this piece of legislation; and also most recently the member for Castle Hill and Parliamentary Secretary.

I now make my contribution. This bill, quite frankly, is far too premature to consider. We are still only a few months into having received a number of complex reports that deal with this exact issue. The member for North Shore also repeated those reasons earlier. Without overemphasising what has already been debated in this House, the Government is well progressed and is considering these issues at hand. It was this Government that requested the Auditor-General, Margaret Crawford, to undertake a review of the effectiveness, the financial arrangements and the management practices of integrity bodies. Her report was tabled in Parliament in October 2020.

I acknowledge the great work done by the Auditor-General, Margaret Crawford, an outstanding public servant of the highest magnitude. The report took a little while to produce, obviously. It is wide ranging. Again, Margaret Crawford's team has done a very good job. It took a bit longer than the Government would have expected it to. This is not in any way criticising the Auditor-General. As I said before, her team does an amazing job. I have had the privilege of working with Margaret Crawford as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, of which I know you are the chair, Mr Temporary Speaker, and I hold the Auditor-General in the highest possible regard.

The point I am trying to make is that the Auditor-General recognised the enormous complexity of these issues at hand. She needed more time to develop her recommendations. It therefore stands to reason that the Government needs more time to consider her recommendations in detail as well. The Auditor-General recognised that she needed time to go carefully and forensically through the financial arrangements of each of these integrity bodies, and particularly its relationship to the Executive. This bill was introduced just a month later in the other place. I find it very hard to believe that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party was able to consider all of the recommendations put forward by the Auditor-General, consult with all of the relevant stakeholders, especially the integrity bodies directly affected by this bill, and draft this bill within that time frame.

This bill is a knee-jerk reaction. It is dog whistling. It is ill thought out and ill considered. I cannot be satisfied that this bill addresses the issues raised by the Auditor-General. As the member for Murray was scant on the details in her second reading speech, what I can be satisfied of is the lack of cogent thought and detail that has gone into this bill. As others have said before, this bill is just a stunt. Even the Opposition only had one speaker come in and speak on the bill. That was the member for Keira. While I hold him in very high regard, his summary of the bill literally consisted of a couple of minutes and that is it. The Opposition has not had any other speakers come in and support this piece of legislation other than a couple of minutes thrown out by the member for Keira.

Actions speak louder than words. There has been little discussion in this Chamber other than from the Government with regards to this bill and the concerns that the Government has about the lack of detail, the lack

of engagement and the lack of general thoughtfulness that has been put into drafting this piece of legislation. To say it is shoddy would be an overstatement, but to say it is light on detail and light on consultation is absolutely appropriate. I think that has been made very clear by the number of the speakers on this. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

This bill seeks to amend the Government Sector Finance Act to require that appropriations made to certain integrity agencies under the annual Appropriation Act are to be paid directly to those agencies. It also would require a contingency fund for four integrity agencies, equal to 25 per cent of their respective appropriations. In addition to this, it would require the Treasurer to authorise the payment of any requested sum out of the contingency fund to one of those integrity agencies, if their appropriation has been exhausted and if certain other conditions are met.

The bill also seeks to amend the Electoral Act, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act and the Ombudsman Act. It would require each agency to refer any requests for contingency fund payments to their respective parliamentary joint committee. It would require each parliamentary joint committee to review information prepared by the relevant agency for use in budget preparations and use this information to make recommendations to the Treasurer on budget priorities. Lastly, the bill seeks to amend the Government Sector Employment Act to include the ICAC as a separate public service agency.

The reason the Government is so concerned and opposes this is that in November 2019 the Government requested that the Auditor-General undertake—as I said, with the fantastic efforts of Margaret Crawford—an independent review of the effectiveness of the financial arrangements and management practices of all of these integrity agencies, including the ICAC. The Auditor-General has now tabled her report and I deeply thank her for all of the hard work that she and her exceptionally qualified and talented staff have done. On 6 November 2020 the ICAC Commissioner also completed a special report regarding funding arrangements.

The Government is carefully considering both the Auditor-General's recommendations and the report. We also note that the Public Accountability Committee of the Legislative Council has conducted its inquiry into the budget process for independent oversight bodies and the Parliament of New South Wales, and has consequently tabled its reports. The Government will finalise its position on the matters raised in all of these reports shortly, as has been outlined by other speakers. The Government is committed to ensuring that the funding of the State's integrity agencies continues to be based on principles of transparency, accountability and, of course, independence.

I note that the ICAC is actually afforded greater independence under current staffing arrangements as well. Specifically, under section 104 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC may appoint a chief executive officer and other staff of the commission as necessary to enable the commission to exercise its functions. In addition, in evidence before the Public Accountability Committee on 12 December 2019, the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC referred to the fact that none of the ICAC's employees are covered by public service regulations, and he did not raise concerns about these arrangements.

In addition, establishing the ICAC as a separate public service agency would position its employees as public service employees. They would then be subject to the legislative arrangements as they apply to public service agencies. The Government is alive to and very well attuned to the concerns of the integrity agencies and will address these concerns in the appropriate and usual ways. I also note that we are weeks away from the budget and there is a budget process that appropriately involves all of those integrity agencies that I have mentioned before, and more. Passage of legislation that quite dramatically alters the funding arrangements would be highly disruptive and confusing at this time.

The current system of providing funding and supplementary funding to the ICAC is working. The ICAC has been provided with an increase in its funding for the 2020-2021 year in the budget, contrary to some of the spurious claims mentioned by other members earlier. It was announced that the budget for the ICAC was \$32.3 million, comprising almost \$31 million—\$30.9 million—in recurrent expenses and \$1.4 million in capital expenses. As outlined by the member for Castle Hill, that is a 60.7 per cent increase in the level of expenditure from the final budget of the previous Labor Government in 2010-2011, which had an allocation of a measly \$20.1 million for the ICAC. The Government is providing more than \$114 million in funding to the ICAC over the forward estimates of four years. This 2019-20 budget is allocating \$26.6 million plus an additional \$3.5 million in supplementary funding. This is one of the many reasons that the Government will not be supporting this piece of legislation.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (12:28):** I speak in debate on the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2020. The private member's bill seeks to pre-empt the proper processes not only of the Government but also of the Parliament. The Government

announced that it was considering independent funding models for various agencies. It is in the process of considering a number of reports, including the Auditor-General's report entitled *The Effectiveness of the Financial arrangements and management practices in four integrity agencies*, the Public Accountability Committee's first report entitled *Budget Process for Independent Oversight Bodies and the Parliament of New South Wales – First Report*, and the second and final report of the Public Accountability Committee's inquiry, which was tabled on Friday. The ICAC was established by the 1988 Act. Section 63 of that Act constitutes a joint committee of Parliament to be an ICAC committee, which under section 64 has the following functions:

- (a) to monitor and to review the exercise by the Commission and the Inspector of the Commission's and Inspector's functions,
- (b) to report to both Houses of Parliament, with such comments as it thinks fit, on any matter appertaining to the Commission or the Inspector or connected with the exercise of its functions to which, in the opinion of the Joint Committee, the attention of Parliament should be directed,
- (c) to examine each annual and other report of the Commission and of the Inspector and report to both Houses of Parliament on any matter appearing in, or arising out of, any such report,
- (d) to examine trends and changes in corrupt conduct, and practices and methods relating to corrupt conduct, and report to both Houses of Parliament any change which the Joint Committee thinks desirable to the functions, structures and procedures of the Commission and the Inspector,
- (e) to inquire into any question in connection with its functions which is referred to it by both Houses of Parliament, and report to both Houses on that question.

The functions of the joint parliamentary committee are extensive and operate within the territory of this private member's bill. Notwithstanding that, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has chosen to depart from all the usual processes of the Parliament and sought to put in place a private member's bill on the very subject matter that traverses parliamentary committees and what the Executive Government has commissioned by way of report. The bill does not incorporate any recommendations of those parliamentary committees. Some people have perhaps unkindly described the bill as a bit of a stunt and as grandstanding, but it properly accords with a more generous but similar description.

It is important to put on record that corruption is obviously a pox on the body politic and it is important to have independent agencies that will ensure proper and corruption-free processes by government. But after listening to the member for Murray speak on this private member's bill and reading the second reading speech in the other place, one might think that we live in a country and a State that we do not actually live in. It is undeniably the case that Australia—and New South Wales is one-third of Australia—has incredibly low levels of corruption of its political processes and that we are, on international measures, a country which has good and transparent processes that are rarely interfered with by corrupt conduct.

One need only look at the various international agencies that monitor such things. As I mentioned yesterday in my condolence speech for Prince Philip, one such agency is Freedom House. It is an independent non-government body based in New York that looks at those matters. It looks at how a country adheres to United Nations covenants on political rights and civil liberties. Guess what? Contrary to what the member for Murray would have betrayed in her speech, we are in the top 10 free countries in the world by reason of our adherence to those United Nations covenants. We are not a country or a State that is racked by corruption and poor process. We are in fact doing very well and that is a matter that needs to be considered and put front of mind when considering this private member's bill.

I did something that is novel for members of this place: I read the bill. I will make some comments on the bill because there will be people like you, Mr Speaker, who will consider the bill independently and consider what it achieves as a matter of legislation. Schedule 1 to the bill makes the chief executive officer of the ICAC subject to the Government Sector Employment Act. The effect of that provision is to take away independence from the ICAC.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

#### CHAMBER SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That consequent to recent health advice, and unless otherwise ordered, this House make provision for 52 members to sit on the floor of the House and in the Speaker's Gallery, Cooper Gallery and Northern Gallery in designated positions as part of the expanded Chamber.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I welcome students from EA Southee Public School, guests of the member for Cootamundra: Cooper Dabin, Deklan Smith, Halle Nicka, Dakodah McNiff-Garett, Charlotte Terry and Jarrah Newman. I welcome their teacher Lyn French and chaperone Luke Dabin.

*Motions***ROTARY CLUB OF SYDNEY CENTENARY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:39):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Rotary Club of Sydney on its centenary.
- (2) Acknowledges Rotary is celebrating 100 years in Australia in 2021.
- (3) Recognises all the humanitarian projects Rotary does to improve people's lives in Australia and around the world.

It gives me great pleasure to move a motion to congratulate the Rotary Club of Sydney on its centenary. The Rotary Club of Sydney was the first one in New South Wales and was started by two Rotarians from Canada. They came across from Canada for the specific reason of starting Rotary clubs in Australia. Rotary's first article was in *The Argus* in Melbourne on Saturday 26 March 1921. It stated:

Lieut.-Colonel J L Ralston, CMG, DSO, KC, and Mr. James W Davidson are visiting Australia as commissioners for the extension among professional and business men of the 'Rotary Club' movement, which claims about 80,000 members in Canada, the British Isles and the United States. The Rotary Club movement had its beginning in 1905 and has for its slogan 'He profits most who serves best.' In each club there can only be one representative of each line of business and each profession. Its aim is to encourage and foster high ethical standards in business and profession.

The Rotary100downunder website states:

Ralston and Davidson only met in Los Angeles on their trip to Australia and New Zealand. But from their endeavours, within weeks, the first Rotary meetings were conducted in Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington and Auckland.

I congratulate Rotary Club of Sydney on its centenary. Dr Hugh McDermott and I attended one of its meetings a few weeks ago. We were both honoured by receiving Harris Fellows, which is the top honour within Rotary. Dr McDermott received his first Harris Fellow and I received my double sapphire. I really appreciate that from the Rotary Club of Sydney. My Rotary club is Caringbah. Its president is the Hon. Malcolm Kerr, who was a previous member of this House and who is doing some fantastic work within Rotary. Our club holds projects across the community. Once every month we run a community market and, on average, we raise about \$120,000 a year. Last year was a bit down, for obvious reasons. We put the money into our humanitarian work.

We have a 20-foot container currently being packed with school equipment, which is going overseas to the South Sea islands to help with setting up proper schools and classrooms. It will be fantastic to have students sitting on seats rather than sitting in the dirt. Our club as well as many other Rotary clubs have sent several shelter boxes during floods and tsunamis around the world. It is a fantastic thing because the club can pay for a shelter box, which costs about A\$1,200, to be delivered to any area of need. The network of Rotary can do all sorts of things around the world just by paying the dollars to have donations sent to people in need.

A few months ago Dr McDermott and I started the Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International. Subsequently we have found out that the Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International is the first of its kind in the world. New South Wales Parliament has started the movement so that all parliaments around Australia will have Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International. Having a common goal will be a good thing for bipartisan work within Rotary and other volunteer organisations. As members of Parliament we know that Rotary does fantastic work in all our communities. I congratulate the Rotary Club of Sydney on operating for 100 years in New South Wales. I look forward to Parliamentary Friends of Rotary spreading the love far across Australia and New Zealand and possibly further afield. Dr McDermott and I definitely are committed to making that happen over the next few years. I thank everyone for their attendance, and I look forward to hearing about all the work that Rotary is doing in their local community.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:45):** I thank my co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International, the member for Heathcote, for moving this bipartisan motion. I congratulate Rotary International on celebrating 100 years in Australia and, in doing so, recognise all of the humanitarian projects that Rotary has undertaken during this time. Rotary International has played a pivotal role in improving people's lives in Australia and throughout the world. Rotary International had a fantastic and challenging beginning in Australia, being interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. The first attempt to bring Rotary to Australian shores was by young Melbourne architect Walter Drummond in 1914. Drummond had heard good reports of the Rotary

organisation during his travels in the United States. However, the outbreak of war foiled any attempt to extend Rotary to Australia between 1914 and 1921.

Finally, in 1921, two Canadian special commissioners, James Davidson and Layton Ralston, were appointed to bring Rotary to Australia and New Zealand. We have our Canadian friends to thank for introducing this wonderful organisation to Australia. When Davidson and Ralston first landed on Sydney's shores on 22 March 1921, they faced another challenge. New South Wales was celebrating the Royal Easter Show. Davidson and Ralston reported, "When they do a thing in Australia they do it well." However, the festivities meant that the timing was not quite right to begin Rotary in Sydney. The legend is that they could not find anybody to meet because they were either on holidays or at the show.

Davidson and Ralston then travelled to Melbourne, where they met Walter Drummond, and the Rotary Club of Melbourne was established. After this success, the men returned to Sydney, where they met with some of society's most influential citizens: Sir Henry Braddon, who became the first president; Professor Sir Tannatt William Edgeworth David, a famous geologist and Antarctic explorer; and Sir Thomas Bavin, a future Premier of New South Wales. They went on to become charter members of the Rotary Club of Sydney. On 17 May 1921, the inaugural meeting of the Rotary Club of Sydney was held. At its genesis, Rotary operated in Australia and New Zealand with 163 members and four clubs. Rotary has expanded since its humble beginnings. In 2021 over 1,300 clubs are operating in Australia and New Zealand, with some 35,000 members.

During the past 100 years, Rotary has delivered remarkable service to the wider Australian community. Its core motto from the very beginning being "Service above self", Rotarians have gone above and beyond to deliver humanitarian services to those in need. There are many examples of Rotary Service's projects in Australia. One of the very first early projects of Rotary Service includes holding an outing in 1921 for 120 children and their nurses residing at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. Rotary also responded to the devastating impact on families in the aftermath of World War I. There was a lack of ability to assist war widows and orphans, meaning they could not afford to celebrate Christmas that year. Rotary was given a list of war widows and children by the Red Cross Society and it provided Christmas gifts and food parcels for each family. To this day, Australian Rotarians serve with the features of fellowship, goodwill, high ethical standards and concern for others.

Rotary Australia currently undertakes a long list of diverse projects in and outside Australia. Those projects service disadvantaged youth and the elderly; they work to improve individual health and education, both domestically and abroad; they work to protect the most marginalised and vulnerable people in society; and they provide care to those who have been affected by natural disasters and other devastating events. Currently, Rotary Australia is involved in a myriad of humanitarian projects that touch the lives of people both domestically and abroad. Outstanding examples include the Rotary "sunrise community connect" program, which brings together Rotarians, local tradies and organisations to respond to the recent floods on the mid North Coast of New South Wales; and the Safety Bags Tag Initiative, which provides every student in Brisbane and in other parts of Queensland and across Australia with a "safety bag mate", which contains the phone numbers of welfare agencies that students can call in the case of any safety issue that they may be experiencing now or in the future.

Rotary is involved in other individual, personalised projects such as the Carroll family project, which has provided financial support to the Carroll family, who needed to relocate to Melbourne for their daughter Ava's bone marrow transplant. Rotary Australia repeatedly delivers fantastic initiatives abroad. One such project is Rebuilding post-Cyclone: Healthy Villages for Children in West Timor, which assists children who live in the poorest provinces of Indonesia by improving access to water and sanitation, establishing food security and rebuilding educational infrastructure such as preschools. Rotary also supports impoverished families and communities in remote villages in Nepal through the Care for Nepal project, which focuses on improving sanitation, education and health care, and also on promoting leadership and empowering women.

Rotary is involved in hundreds of other programs that time does not permit me to mention. I am extremely proud to be involved with Rotary International in my capacity as Joint Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International. The New South Wales Labor Opposition congratulates Rotary International on 100 years of outstanding humanitarian service and on improving an enormous number of lives both domestically and internationally. We thank all Rotarians for their selfless dedication and service to our community. Their work truly makes our world a better place. Labor supports the motion before the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:51):** I make a contribution to debate on this very important motion. I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing the centenary of Rotary to the attention of the House. I concur with the comments that have been made by previous contributors. Who would believe that it is a century for Rotary in Australia this year? To tally up the work that it has done in communities across New South Wales and, indeed, across Australia would be wonderful. I speak from the heart when I acknowledge the wonderful work of the three Rotary clubs in the electorate of Manly: the Rotary Club of Balgowlah, the Brookvale Rotary Club and the Rotary Club of Manly. Those clubs are powered by the most wonderful volunteers in my community. The number of

organisations and charities that they support is simply astounding. The Rotary Club of Manly has conducted its Manly Fun Run for many years now. Since its inception it has raised over \$10 million for a number of charities and organisations throughout Manly. Importantly, Manly Rotary services and supports not just the people of Manly, but also people right across New South Wales.

The Brookvale Rotary Club pioneered what was called the Pub2Pub run, which started in the northern part of the northern beaches and finished at the Dee Why Hotel. It has not started or finished at a pub for some time, so this year the Rotary club chose to reflect on that by renaming the annual event the Beach2Beach. Again, the Rotary club has used that event to bring together people from the community. The race is not competitive for many people; it brings together families, including mums and dads with their kids in strollers. People really enjoy that wonderful morning to raise funds for important charities across the peninsula. The Rotary Club of Balgowlah has also done fantastic work. I was privileged to join the club for its recent annual dinner. Unfortunately its annual Charity Golf Day was washed out, but the club held a dinner that evening instead, which was attended by beneficiaries of the charities that the club supports. One of those organisations is Bear Cottage, which takes in terminally ill young people—that is a very unfortunate reality—from across every electorate in this State.

The fundraising that the Rotary Club of Balgowlah does for Bear Cottage provides benefits to people in each and every one of our communities in this State. I congratulate the Rotary clubs not only in my particular area but also across the State. If those clubs are an indication of the wonderful work that Rotary does in each of our electorates, then one must stand back and consider the profound impact that Rotary has had in Australia over the past 100 years. For that reason I join with other members in this place in thanking the member for Heathcote for moving the motion. I join with him in congratulating Rotary on a century of service to our community. I wish Rotary all the best for the next 100 years of work that it will do throughout Australia.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:55):** I join with members representing the electorates of Heathcote, Prospect and Manly in congratulating Rotary on celebrating its 100th anniversary. To commemorate that centenary, all of the founding clubs in Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland and Wellington will join together and celebrate. I congratulate Rotary on that magnificent milestone and acknowledge the work of Rotary in our community. Established in 1921, Rotary has been a fixture in our local communities. For the past 100 years the organisation has prided itself on the motto "Service above self", which is testament to Rotarians' enduring commitment to making better communities and to making the world a better place by actively participating in the push for change.

The philosophy behind Rotary's commitment to public service starts with a network of like-minded people who care about the community and who seek to serve the community. From that vantage point Rotary seeks out opportunities to provide service to the community. Our local Rotary clubs in Wetherill Park, Holroyd and Liverpool have embraced the philosophy of "service before self" wholeheartedly over the years. They have been involved in countless community projects and they have assisted our community in many ways. I will share some of the activities that local Rotary clubs in my local area have done to assist the local community. Those activities range from awarding scholarships and bursaries to students through to helping out the local police and SES. Rotary is always there to lend a helping hand.

During the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rotary Club of Wetherill Park managed to find a way to raise money for the community through a huge online Christmas raffle, which included prizes worth up to \$8,000. The Rotary Club of Holroyd was very active with its bushfire recovery project, sourcing funding for affected areas and communities that really needed a hand during that crucial time. The Rotary Club of Liverpool West took its fundraising efforts to Cambodia, raising money for areas that were devastated by major flooding. There is a large Cambodian population in Fairfield, particularly around the Canley Heights and Canley Vale area. The Liverpool Rotary Club has been very active lately with its "pamper pack" campaign, which will provide women in the country with gifts on Mother's Day. As we all know, our regional communities have been doing it tough, so Liverpool Rotary has stepped in to lend that helping hand and to make regional mums feel special.

Those are just some of the things that our local Rotary clubs have been doing for our citizens. The list of community projects that they have contributed to is endless. I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the following local club presidents: Wetherill Park president Brigette Pecora, Liverpool president Barry Hancock, Liverpool West president Charles Hili and Holroyd president Vera Liondas. I also thank their teams for their outstanding work, and for their continuing efforts in rounding up businesses and community members and encouraging them to embrace a role of service in the community. Rotary makes a real difference in our local communities. Those communities would not be the same without Rotary. The efforts of Rotary members are much appreciated. I commend them for their service and I congratulate Rotary on its 100th anniversary.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:59):** I say happy birthday and happy anniversary to Rotary International. Rotary plays an important role in our communities, particularly in regional communities, which rely on Rotary for so many services and help with various community organisations. In my area,

Myall Lakes, there are five Rotary clubs, which have played a significant role over the past two years through drought, fires, floods and the pandemic. If we go back to the drought, our community Rotary clubs helped raise funds for hay for farmers. During the fires the Rotary clubs of Myall Lakes banded together straightaway with the Lions clubs and other community organisations to set up a one-stop shop for food, clothes and other things for those affected by the fires, with the assistance of the council.

They also worked hard for our community by banding with the Lions club to gather funds, including \$50,000 from the amalgamation money of the council, to build the riverside stage at Taree. Since then they have received another \$90,000 grant for a series of concerts that will begin this year and into next year to bring the community together after it was affected so much by those natural disasters. This is a time when we are trying to get the community back together and Rotary is leading the charge. The Rotary clubs in my electorate include the Rotary Club of Great Lakes, with president Lyn Martyn and secretary Peter Driese; the Rotary Club of Taree, with president David Denning and secretary Dianne Wollard; Taree North Rotary Club, with president Ian Cahill and secretary Peter Smith; the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning, with president Richelle Murray and secretary Elizabeth Tollis; and Wingham Rotary Club, with president Allan Brown and secretary Ian Herd. As I said, they have done a fantastic job.

They have also raised money for other projects with the help of a government grant leg-up, including \$10,000 for a covered electric barbeque area at Lone Pine Memorial Park, Tuncurry; the organisation of Opera by the Lakes, bringing great opera to the regions; \$20,000 for a "keep fit" walking track and adult exercise station; \$15,000 for a SunSmart canopy over the exercise station for the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning; and \$178,649 for a new shed to base operations for three Rotary clubs so that there is one central place when they need to band together. As I said, over the past two years they have had to do that. Now they can go to one place to get the trailers and the gear and go out to help the community. Wingham Rotary Club received \$30,000 for exercise equipment at Central Park; \$234,772 for new amenities with disability access and a covered walkway down by the riverside; a driver simulator at Taree PCYC to help young people learn how to drive; and \$10,000 to complete four murals of the history of Wingham, which is part of a program to use art to help ex-servicemen veterans and other first responders with PTSD get better. I commend the motion to the House.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:03):** I congratulate the Rotary Club of Sydney, the first Rotary club in Australia, on its 100th anniversary. From that club we now have some 21 districts, 1,100 clubs and more than 30,000 Rotarian members in Australia. I take this opportunity to thank the five local Rotary clubs in my electorate: Maitland, East Maitland, Rutherford Telarah, Maitland Sunrise and Greenhills Maitland. I was a member of the Rotary Club of Maitland Sunrise before I entered Parliament, and am now an honorary member of Rutherford Telarah Rotary. Rotary does so much amazing work across the world and in our communities, as has been well articulated by others in this place. I know firsthand the important work they do and the opportunities they provide for young people through programs such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Rotary Community Corps, Youth Exchange, New Generations Service Exchange, scholarships and Friendship Exchange.

In 2017 my 19-year-old daughter, Jess, undertook a Rotary exchange to Germany. That amazing experience was the catalyst for her to choose to study tourism at TAFE, which was difficult during times of COVID. But she stuck to her guns and last weekend she left for a tourism job at Uluru, something I know she would not have had the resilience and independence to do had she not had that experience through Rotary. I am grateful but also sad about that. The Rotarians in my electorate have been working hard to celebrate this important milestone for the Rotary movement and to include the community in those celebrations. I pay tribute to them for that. Maitland City Council has helped by flying Rotary flags in the city and having the Rotary logo installed at Minister's Park in Maitland. I joined Maitland Mayor Loretta Baker on 11 April to open the Rotary relay at the city's new athletics track. It was great to see so many Rotarians out and about encouraging each other in the relay to pass that baton on.

On 18 April they had a tree planting celebration, planting 100 trees to celebrate 100 years of Rotary, which goes to show the desire to leave a lasting legacy for everyone in the community to enjoy. I have enjoyed lots of activities with Rotary, including Days for Girls, ShelterBoxes, and vaccination programs for eliminating polio, human papillomavirus, rotavirus and meningococcal. Of course, drought relief has been a big part of Rotary in my community. I encourage all members in our community to consider joining Rotary and to remember the motto, "Service above self". The four-way test that was developed in the 1940s and copyrighted in 1954 for Rotary is important for all of us in this place and in every walk of life to remember:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

That is a great set of truths to live by and I pay tribute to the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, and the member for Prospect, Dr Hugh McDermott, for starting the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Rotary club, which allows us to continue to pay tribute to the hardworking Rotarians in all of our communities and to work across the aisles to help them in their efforts to assist everyone in our community.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:06):** I am happy for the opportunity to speak on this motion of the member for Heathcote. I firmly echo his congratulations to the Rotary Club of Sydney on its centenary. From Narromine in the west to Mudgee and Mudgee Sunrise in the east, Rotary clubs perform "Service above self" across the Dubbo electorate. I pay tribute to just some of those acts of service. The Rotary Club of Narromine was pivotal in getting the Narromine Wetlands precinct up and running, which is now the home of Narromine park run and a fantastic outdoor community asset that the club continues to maintain. It works closely with Narromine Shire Council to cater for many community events, including the Royal Far West bike ride just last weekend. The funds raised—usually about \$20,000—are donated back to community organisations like the Cancer Council and the Royal Flying Doctor Service [RFDS].

The RFDS has been a huge beneficiary of the work of the Rotary Club of Dubbo South, which has raised more than \$1 million for the local branch of the flying doctors through its Destination Outback event. Dubbo South was also a key player in Macquarie Home Stay—a home away from home for the many thousands of people from across western New South Wales who access medical care in Dubbo. The Rotary Club of Dubbo South raised more than \$500,000 for Macquarie Home Stay through its Tour de OROC bike ride. Now that it is built, the volunteers continue to support that homestay by cooking meals about once a month for the visitors there.

The club also runs Dubbo's annual Christmas fair, providing inexpensive family entertainment for the entire community as well as supporting LeaderLife, a not-for-profit that I have spoken about a few times in the Chamber that aims to give disadvantaged youth a brighter future. Without the assistance of the Rotary Club of Dubbo, the community might not have the annual eisteddfod or the New Year's Eve fireworks, both of which have been funded by that club, with the latter also supported through significant contributions of volunteer time and effort. Internationally, the Rotary Club of Dubbo has partnered with the Rotary Club of New Delhi, the Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie and, more recently, the Indian government on Project Dignity, helping to install more than 2,000 public toilets in some of the poorest communities throughout India. That project was pioneered by Dubbo's own Gargi Ganguly, who is a cracker.

Another project of international significance has been the construction of the Chum Kriel English language school in remote Cambodia, helped out by Dubbo's own Mark Horton and a great team. Not only has the club helped to fund the construction but also members from the Dubbo, Dubbo South and Dubbo Macquarie clubs travelled to Cambodia to help build the school and its gardens. Both clubs also contribute to the ongoing costs of teachers' wages. The Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie has coordinated plenty of events. In fact, the Michael Egan Memorial book fair, which has been going for 11 years now, was held last weekend, with 25,000 books on sale. Proceeds from the book fair go towards the Royal Flying Doctor Service and cancer research. The Rotary Club of Dubbo West supports a Baby Steps program at Orana Early Childhood Intervention and has also contributed considerably to the Western Cancer Centre Foundation. The Rotary Club of Wellington proudly runs the local markets at Cameron Park each month—an initiative it has run now for about nine years.

Across in Mudgee there has been a terrific spirit of collaboration between the clubs there, Mudgee and Mudgee Sunrise. The clubs have partnered to run the Mudgee Town Hall cinema, including an accessible session once a month for people in the LifeSkills Plus program. The clubs raised more than \$115,000 for those affected by the Sir Ivan bushfires. The Rotary Club of Mudgee Sunrise is a major supporter of the Mudgee Clock Tower Business Awards. Rotary is one of those things that I think many people across the community like to be involved with. There are so many projects across my region—too many to mention at this time. This is an opportunity for all of us to say a big thankyou to every single Rotarian, past, present and, hopefully, future who makes such a significant contribution to life in the Dubbo electorate. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:10):** By leave: I acknowledge the mover and seconder of the motion, the member for Heathcote and the member for Prospect, who are co-chairs of the very first Parliamentary Friends of Rotary anywhere in Australia.

**Mr Lee Evans:** The world.

**Mr MARK COURE:** And, I think we determined, anywhere in the world. This year Rotary is celebrating 100 fine years as a club in Australia, but it is 116 years since it was formed in Chicago. Rotary has come a long way since 1905. Rotary now has 1.2 million members across the world, with 35,000 clubs worldwide. I acknowledge the contribution of the vision of one man, Paul Harris. Rotary started with that vision of Paul Harris, the Chicago attorney who formed the Rotary Club of Chicago in 1905 so professionals with diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas for meaningful and lifelong friendships but at the same time come together to

service the community. Since then, we have seen that same commitment endures today through an organisation that remains truly international.

Only 16 years after it was founded, Rotary had clubs in six continents and its members now span the globe, working to solve some of the world's most challenging problems. They began as Rotarians to fight against polio, with a project to immunise six million children in the Philippines. Today polio remains endemic in only three countries—down from 125 in 1988. Rotary's programs are developing the next generation of leaders, providing funding to make the world a better place and making peace a priority. Its programs are not just for club members. Rotary has a number of programs throughout the world—many of them undertaken in my electorate through the Rotary Club at Hurstville. Its programs include the Rotary Peace Fellowship, where each year Rotary selects up to 100 professionals from around the world to receive fully funded academic fellowships at Rotary Peace Centres, and the Rotary Community Corps, which finds community solutions to community challenges. Rotary Community Corps unites Rotary members with non-members to make a positive difference.

**Debate interrupted.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Announcements*

**CHAMBER SEATING ARRANGEMENTS**

**The SPEAKER:** Following a resolution of the House, 52 members of this Chamber will sit in designated positions on the floor of the House and in the Speaker's Gallery, Cooper Gallery and Northern Gallery. However, for today's petition debate, guests of members will be permitted to enter the Cooper and Northern galleries, which will be treated as public galleries for that period. Those arrangements were already in place, and with suitable social distancing we will accommodate that. We will continue to monitor any community transmission of COVID-19 and relevant expert health advice over coming days, and review Chamber seating arrangements prior to the next sitting week. In the circumstances, but also mindful of the conduct of members over the past couple of days, I put members on notice that I will have minimal tolerance today for behaviour that I regard as inappropriate in this place.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that the Premier will answer questions today in the absence of the Treasurer.

*Question Time*

**ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. In 2017 the Minister said this in relation to public transport services:

They will all be private. In 10 to 15 years' time government will not be in the provision of transport services.

The Government has already privatised buses and ferries and now it is about to embark on its next round of privatisation, so what is next?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:17):** Before I refer to what the Premier just gave me in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's support of privatisation, I personally congratulate the Speaker on becoming the best presiding officer in the Parliament. There is no doubt: How good is he compared to the bloke upstairs? Whilst I think about this issue—

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There is a bit of late mail in relation to the President of the upper House. I am glad the shooters are in the Chamber because I understand there was a party room meeting of the shooters the other day.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Are you going to answer the question?

**The SPEAKER:** I will give the Minister a little bit of leeway, but not for much longer.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Really? It has nothing to do with the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** If he wants to do this, he can do a ministerial statement.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Or he can walk out there and he can do a media conference.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand. Resume your seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** We do not get time to ask questions.

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat now.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You're kidding me! So he gets up and does anything he wants.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** As I was saying, I understand there was a shooters party room meeting and there were chairs thrown at the meeting.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Next time you have a party room meeting, guys, take your firearms; it will be far more effective.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown rises on a point of order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Do not throw chairs at each other. But I do understand that the President of the upper House is going to be joining you in the party room with the shooters next week.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Resume your seat, please, Minister.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is what Jodi McKay has delivered.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown has the call.

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is obviously Standing Order 129. This is a joke, this is not just a circus.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard your point of order. I will rule on it.

**Mr Greg Warren:** There is a legitimate question, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. Before you resume, Minister, in the first minute of an answer I allow a little bit of leeway. It has now been a minute and a half, albeit some of that time has been taken up with points of order. I expect the Minister to come directly to the question shortly.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** In fairness, I digressed. I will come back to the Leader of the Opposition, who asked me a question about privatisation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There is a whole raft of quotes here in relation to the Leader of the Opposition and her support of privatisation. She does go on to say privatisation is a good plan and the State needs it. This theme of talking about privatisation—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Campbelltown have a point of order?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Sorry, you said this in 2008, when you were a Minister in the last corrupt government.

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is Standing Order 129.

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is flattered—

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat, please.

**Mr Greg Warren:** —by the interest in all that she does—

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat.

**Mr Greg Warren:** —but it is—

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point is that the Leader of the Opposition has a long history of supporting privatisation in this State. In actual fact, when the Leader of the Opposition was in government—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Shellharbour rises on a point of order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —as a Minister in the last Labor Government she sat in a Cabinet that signed off on—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Can you ask the Minister to resume his seat as per standing orders?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —bus operations run by the private—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Can you ask the Minister to sit down as per the standing orders?

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, please resume your seat.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Minister, you were asked a question. You have already privatised buses and ferries. What is next?

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

**Ms Anna Watson:** Standing Order 129. What is next, Minister? Just answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Shellharbour will direct her comments through me. Minister, please continue.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point that I was making is that if someone is going to stand up here and ask a question about being anti-privatisation, they should actually reflect on their own record, don't you think? The point is that in relation to electricity assets, Jodi McKay has a long history of supporting that and I am pretty confident that Morris Iemma might have a view—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is a fairly direct question.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Prisons, social housing, aged care, bus operations.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will direct her comments through me.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** When you were in the last—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, please resume your seat. The Leader of the Opposition will direct her comments through me.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** He is the Minister for Transport; it is a question on privatising transport.

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You have already privatised buses and ferries. Please tell us what is next in your next round of sell-offs.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will continue.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Come on, Minister, what's next?

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, resume your seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Is it the trains? Come on, Minister.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The hypocrisy of asking a question about the use of the private sector to support government, quite frankly, when you were last in government—I am quite well within my right to point out the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to these matters. Those opposite were running 80 per cent of the State's buses by the private sector when you were last in government—fact. The bottom line is—

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —you know we are going out with region 7, 8 and 9.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Thank you for your question. Have a nice day. Pretend to be angry and enjoy question time.

**COVID-19**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:22):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will she update the House on the current COVID situation?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question. No doubt she, as well as many members, are making sure their constituents heed the health advice, especially in the inner east where a number of venues have been mentioned as being places where close contacts or people with the virus may have been exposed. I commend her and all members of this place for supporting the Government's efforts in keeping our community safe. Mr Speaker, I also commend you and the leadership in this place for making sure that we made arrangements with very short notice to accommodate the new situation following the next three days.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to thank our frontline emergency services workers for their role during and post the recovery phase in relation to the natural disasters New South Wales has faced. Overnight I am pleased to say that our health experts yet again demonstrated their world-class capacity to contact trace. They were able to, through genomic sequencing, work out the actual source of the—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I am tired of you talking throughout question time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They were able to work out the source of the original breakout. I commend those health experts for doing that work overnight because they not only provided advice to the Government, but also allowed the Government to take some precautionary measures over the next three days to ensure that it keeps the community safe. As all members would be aware by now, whilst we had only one additional case of community transmission overnight, we have not yet been able to identify the missing link between the original source of the virus and the person in the community who acquired it and was diagnosed yesterday. Whilst there is that missing link, all of us have to be on high alert and take precautions.

We ask everybody to continue business as usual over the next three days, continue to visit hospitality events and continue to attend family gatherings, but please make sure that family gatherings in a home do not have more than 20 visitors. Please make sure that when you go to a hospitality venue, you use the QR code. Please make sure that when you use public transport or are in an indoor place, including when you go shopping this weekend, you wear a mask. These are some of the precautionary measures the New South Wales Government has put in place to prevent any further community transmission. I am very proud of the fact that New South Wales has been able to keep its economy open in large part during the pandemic.

We know that from time to time, unfortunately, we will have these incursions, we will have these outbreaks. It is really important to note that not only are we balancing the health and economic risks associated with the pandemic, but it is also critical for us to encourage our constituents, to encourage the community to come forward to receive a vaccine when it is their turn. From Monday, as we have already announced, Minister Hazzard and I are keen to visit the new vaccination hub in Homebush. I stress that this is on top of the five major vaccination hubs we already have in Greater Sydney, plus around 100 sites in rural and regional New South Wales. Some of those sites are large—some of them are bespoke sites—to make sure that our communities in rural and regional New South Wales have access to them when they are eligible to take the vaccine.

I encourage everyone who is asked to come forward to get the vaccine to do so. It is in our State's interest and in our nation's interest to keep all of us safe. It is pleasing to know that the efficacy of the vaccines that are offered in New South Wales has been reiterated. Whilst it does not prevent you from getting the virus or from passing it on, it massively reduces anyone's chance of severe illness, and it does reduce the likelihood of transmission and also the likelihood of getting the virus in the first place. Yesterday was a timely reminder that, unfortunately, we cannot be complacent. No matter how well we are doing and no matter how many days we have zero community transmission, the risk is always there. Every time we have asked the community to take our advice they have done so. I thank the community for that. I thank our health officials and health experts, but also the police and emergency services that are critical in managing our quarantine system and also ensuring compliance measures with business.

I remind everyone how important it is for us to use our QR codes. I thank the Department of Customer Service not only for implementing the QR code system in New South Wales, but also for supporting police in their compliance efforts. Some weeks ago we were concerned that people were getting complacent; QR codes were being placed in parts of the venue that were not visible to patrons. Following that, we increased compliance by 30 per cent at all venues and events. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of businesses and the vast majority of organisations participating in those activities have done so in a COVID-safe way. [*Extension of time*]

Again I acknowledge the efforts of members and others—and the member for Sydney in particular, whose constituents are the most impacted—to make sure that the health advice is followed. I also make the point that every day in the Chamber this week the Opposition Leader has asked a question about privatisation. She is entitled to do that, but she should also be clear on her views on this issue, which are on the record.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** She put on the record—

**Mr Ryan Park:** This is about a COVID update.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has been overwhelmingly relevant for the entire 5½ minutes. I will allow a slight digression.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: It is 129 on COVID—

**The SPEAKER:** No. I am going to allow, as I normally do—

**Mr Ryan Park:** But this is an important public health issue.

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down.

**Mr Ryan Park:** That's all.

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down, please. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not mind being asked, and I am sure my colleagues don't mind being asked. We have to be held accountable. But when someone gets up here and asks us a question on an issue, when she has supported privatisation consistently—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I just ruled on relevance.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In fact, she said—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I will hear your point of order.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is Standing Order 129. We have always been bipartisan—

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. I have just ruled on it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** —in these matters of COVID.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. I rule again. The Premier will continue. Thank you, Premier.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** If you are the true leader that you pretend to be—

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down, please.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** —then get up there and answer the question on COVID—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time. You have been defying my rulings.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** —and do not politicise this pandemic.

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down now! Sit down now!

**Ms Jodi McKay:** How dare you!

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will remove herself from the Chamber. I have warned you repeatedly this week. I will not take defiance of this Chair. Out, overnight. The Premier has the call.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Over COVID? Are you serious?

**The SPEAKER:** Go—out!

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Over me defending my right to ask a question on COVID?

**The SPEAKER:** Go out. Premier, please continue.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Is that what you are doing?

**The SPEAKER:** Continue.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Because she is being political, I get thrown out?

**The SPEAKER:** If you want to defy my ruling further—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** We sat there—

**The SPEAKER:** —you will be named.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You're going to name the Opposition leader over COVID?

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the House, would you please escort your leader out of the House?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Are you serious? You are kidding me!

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, would you please continue?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** We have every right, Mr Speaker, to stand here and expect the Premier to give a response on COVID and—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** —not to make that political, like she has done today.

**The SPEAKER:** Leave the House.

*[The Leader of the Opposition left the Chamber at 14:30 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

Your time has expired, Premier. I make it very clear: I have warned the Leader of the Opposition repeatedly this week to not defy the Chair's instruction to sit down. She has repeatedly ignored the instruction of the Chair, which is ignoring the authority of this Parliament. I thank the crossbench for taking the position of Opposition because the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that she does not want to do that today. I will take the next question.

#### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:31):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will he update the House on how the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are continuing to keep regional economies strong?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:31):** I thank the member for Cootamundra for her very good question. She is passionate about her electorate. On the eve of the Upper Hunter by-election I remember when we had a by-election for Cootamundra. We had a very young, new and vibrant Steph Cooke ready to take on the challenge. She is still young; she looks younger today than she did when we first saw her hit the campaign trail. I remember at the time I thought, "I have a very good candidate here; fingers crossed we can get through the by-election of Cootamundra", and we did.

Everybody who knows Steph Cooke knows she is a hard worker who represents her community on all the tough issues. She turns up to everything. Today Cootamundra is the second-safest electorate in the State, which clearly shows that the electorate will always acknowledge hard work and the commitment that the Liberals and Nationals, while in government, have been delivering for regional and rural New South Wales. My message to anyone who wins the Upper Hunter by-election on 22 May is to follow the footsteps of Steph Cooke, because if you do the hard work, your constituents will repay that. They will always repay hardworking local members.

To the question about how we have been keeping New South Wales, especially regional New South Wales, strong: 1932 was a significant year. It was the year that the Sydney Harbour Bridge was officially opened. The Australian Olympic team had won three golds. The average salary was \$1,650, unemployment was at 32 per cent and Brad Hazzard was born—or maybe not. Maybe that was a bit later. It was a good year because The Nationals had won the seat of Upper Hunter. If you look over the decades past and the investment we have seen in regional and rural New South Wales, it is clear that the Upper Hunter pretty much represents the State. It is a bit like the electorate of Monaro: a little ecosystem of its own that has a bit of everything.

The Upper Hunter has a strong mining and manufacturing sector where industry is strong, a strong viticulture sector that we are very proud of, and agriculture, dairy and tourism industries. That one electorate called the Upper Hunter has it all. That is why it is important as a Government to stop to celebrate some of the achievements we have seen in the Upper Hunter electorate or in regional and rural New South Wales. Over the past decade on the Liberals' and Nationals' watch, we have seen investments in schools, hospitals, roads, transport and community amenities. We just have to look at some of the investments through our fantastic policies and

programs of funding right across the regions, where we are giving communities the ability to respond to need, and have a say and a voice—like Resources for Regions and the Stronger Country Communities Fund, where we give communities the opportunity to identify and highlight projects in their community.

In the Upper Hunter one can see playgrounds, footpaths, road infrastructure, upgrades at the showground and investment right across the board. Of course, we are proud of some of the achievements that we have made and we are prepared to take some of the tough decisions. In this by-election the issue around TAFE has been politicised by those opposite, especially the Labor Party, but look at what we have done when it comes to TAFE. By investing \$6.5 million in the Connected Learning Centre at Scone we have seen a 50 per cent uplift in enrolments, because we are not stuck on an asset. We have now sold the Scone site to Racing NSW, which will bring an equine and racing centre of excellence to Scone.

One does not have to believe the politicians. Listen to the bosses—people like Peter V'landys—who have a vision for the old Scone TAFE site to bring more opportunities for the people of Scone and the Upper Hunter. We have committed to an additional \$3 million at TAFE Scone and another \$1 million upgrade at TAFE Muswellbrook. Whatever proceeds we have got from the Scone site we have invested back in the Upper Hunter. I know the Labor Party always wants to bang on about privatisation of assets. Labor actually sold 20 sites or campuses in its time in office, including Cessnock, Cootamundra, Woy Woy, Charlestown and Mona Vale—all to private purchasers with no net benefit back to those communities.

Again, on the eve of an election Labor Party members are jumping up and down and picking the TAFE privatisation narrative because it suits them. It suits the Labor Party's mates, the teachers union, which supports the Labor Party through campaigning. Our vision for the people of the Upper Hunter through people like our candidate, David Layzell, is a future that is built on foundation industries. Those industries that I spoke about—agriculture, viticulture, equine, mining—are the foundation industries that will lend themselves to the future. That is why we have also identified that some of those industries, like mining, will come to an end at some time in the future. [*Extension of time*]

There is no question about that. On top of the \$75 million a year through Resources for Regions, we are setting aside another \$25 million a year in perpetuity to set up those communities for the future as we transition away from certain industries or empower new industries in the region. When things get tough, we are prepared to do the heavy lifting. We are prepared to work with the people of the Upper Hunter. Through the worst drought, COVID, floods and bushfires we were there. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition we will not walk away when things get tough. Remember these famous lines from when she was the local member for Newcastle:

Newcastle and I have separated, permanently,

...

Newcastle is a hard place ... I have no desire to go back to Newcastle,

...

Newcastle has always had a mentality of saying 'no'.

When things get tough the Leader of the Opposition disappears. As the member for Strathfield, she went on to say that she has a "kind" electorate:

They value me as a local member, even if they didn't vote for me, they know I'm there to work for them ...

When she was the member for Newcastle she gave up on the Hunter—she walked away. The message for the people of the Upper Hunter is this: Jodi, the Leader of the Opposition, is actually saying, "If you do not vote for the Labor candidate this next election, they are going to turn their back on you again", like they have done in past years. When she was the Minister responsible for the Hunter, she delivered nothing for the Hunter—no roads, schools, hospitals, vision, transition plan, blueprint, support for industry, agriculture or equine. On the eve of another election Labor has a candidate who talks about casualisation of the workforce but who pockets \$300,000 after doing a deal. It sounds like a dodgy deal because he will not answer any questions. Labor says it is going to beef up the ag commissioner yet Labor members come into this House and vote against our farmers. Again, on the eve of another election, we should not trust Labor.

#### REGIONAL DISABILITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (14:38):** My question is directed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. Every day people with disabilities face challenges navigating society. Those challenges are exacerbated in the bush. The tyranny of distance, thin markets and access difficulties to older buildings for people with mobility problems are all raised with me frequently. What is the New South Wales Government doing to address these inequities for people with a disability in the bush?

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (14:38):** That is how you do it, colleagues. That is the best-looking Opposition I have ever seen, although I remind Opposition members that I am visually impaired. I can see my friend the member for Oatley on the Opposition benches. Even in opposition he is still on the backbench. He will get there eventually.

*[Government members interjected.]*

I will do as instructed, Premier. I thank my friend and colleague the member for Barwon, who is an outstanding advocate for people with disabilities, not only as a member of this place but also as somebody who worked in the sector, who passionately cares for people with disabilities and who is making sure that we realise the true intent of providing choice and control to people in regional communities. As somebody who comes from a regional community and as the first Minister for disabilities to have lived experience of disability, I am passionate about the same things as the member for Barwon. I thank him for using this opportunity to raise this issue. For the benefit of the House, the Government's record investment in disability supports has seen the number of participants in the NDIS rise to 140,000 people in New South Wales. Seventy-five thousand are receiving supports for the first time—they never qualified for supports before.

The latest NDIS quarterly report shows that in far west New South Wales 579 participants are on the NDIS; however, an average participant in the Far West only uses 55 per cent of their combined NDIS supports. The New South Wales NDIS Thin Markets Project is trialling a range of approaches to address NDIS thin markets in a range of geographic locations, support types and participant cohorts. I point out that I took this up at the NDIS Ministers meeting. I raised it in December and it is something that the Federal Government agreed to engage with. I am very proud that this was a bipartisan push and we achieved it. The New South Wales trial site locations in western New South Wales are in the local government areas [LGAs] of Walgett, Wentworth, Bourke and Brewarrina. These LGAs were selected due to their low plan utilisation rates and high number of Aboriginal participants, which is often the case in regional New South Wales where we see such a low utilisation of plans. Wentworth was also selected for potential learnings on specific issues faced by border communities.

The New South Wales trials involved around 220 NDIS participants. At least 50 per cent of those trial participants are Indigenous New South Wales residents. The National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] has engaged NDIS participants in the New South Wales trial sites to identify issues affecting low plan utilisation and develop tailored solutions to low plan utilisation. This engagement has occurred via the relevant support coordinators, NDIA planners and local area coordinators. The NDIA has engaged existing and potential NDIS participants in order to develop and deepen the market within the trial sites. I note the member directly asked me about things that are happening. I will go through some of the things that councils are doing. I acknowledge the Minister for Local Government, a champion for people with disabilities, who is making sure that councils comply with their requirements to have disability inclusion action plans. I look forward to bringing in some reforms to the Disability Inclusion Act later in the year to address the issues around the disability inclusion action plans and to give them more teeth.

For the benefit of the House and my friend the local member for Barwon, councils in the Far West do a number of things. I am proud of the work that they are doing. Brewarrina Shire Council has developed and facilitated ongoing disability awareness training for staff. It has promoted universal design practices to home owners, house designers and builders. It has audited activities and events run by council for accessibility. In Broken Hill it has amended its customer service framework to incorporate inclusion and accessibility awareness and effective methods for communication with customers who may have a disability. The Broken Hill Civic Centre has also been upgraded with accessibility features, including a lift, accessible toilets, hearing loops and a theatre area suitable for people with wheelchairs.

Warrumbungle Shire Council's children services facilitate a social inclusion policy and practice with individualised social inclusion plans for children with specific disabilities or sensory and cognitive development needs for early intervention. In the Bourke Shire Council the installation of additional disability parking ramps and tactile paving was included in the main street upgrade. There are upgrades to the Back O'Bourke Exhibition Centre to include access for persons with disabilities, and installation of toilets with disability access at North Bourke as well as Central Park. *[Extension of time]*

From our employment policies to accessible IT through to physical upgrades that make our public amenities and centres open for everyone, the Government is working closely with councils and government agencies to improve accessibility, which also includes disability inclusion action plans for all of our government agencies. I note that, from the regional transport Minister right through to the arts Minister, funding streams are available. I note that the member for Barwon has met with me about Coonabarabran council and the plans that he would like to see in relation to accessibility for that town. I commend him for his campaign. I would be pleased to assist him with sourcing government grants and opportunities for that community. I thank him for genially bringing that forward.

I was pleased to enjoy the hospitality of the member for Barwon in Broken Hill as we went to Silverlea, which is a disability service that operates in his community. One of the things that it raised was the fact that a market-driven NDIS scheme means that it is very difficult for it to operate. I shared with it our State Government's aspiration to see the reserve fund established, which is part of the full scheme agreement and was meant to be established. I have called on the Federal Government in the past to do so and I call on it again. There is \$1.7 billion sitting in that fund and I want to see that used for people with disabilities.

I point out that we have seen a change in Minister and I welcome Senator Linda Reynolds to the table. She came to our State on my invitation and met with disability stakeholders last week. She has also announced that she will pause any future reforms in relation to independent assessments once the trial has been completed to make sure that we work with people with disabilities, their carers and the States and Territories to get it right. The other thing the Minister has said that I am so pleased about is that she has listened to my calls to make sure that any future changes to the scheme are done by way of exposure draft and we do those things with people with disabilities. This is the second largest social reform in our country's history. As a nation and as a State, we can be proud of what this delivers for people with disabilities and we can be proud that our State was the first to sign up to it.

### QR CODES

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:46):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service, and Minister for Digital. Will the Minister update the House on how the Service NSW QR code system is keeping the community safe and assisting the NSW Health contact tracing team?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:46):** I thank the member for Holsworthy, also known as the member for south-west Sydney, for her question. It is very opportune that we talk about the impact of the QR code and how it is being utilised by NSW Health and its amazing contact tracers. To give members an update on the stats, about 4.9 million people in New South Wales have downloaded the app and are using the QR code system that Service NSW has implemented. For context we have eight million people in New South Wales, six million adults and about five million who are digitally connected. Out of that five million, 4.9 million is an extraordinary uptake from the great people of our State.

We have had about 240 million check-ins to date, which is an extraordinary number. We have received feedback about 6.3 million times, so it is a pretty good statistical average. Out of the 6.3 million pieces of feedback, we have had a thumbs-up rate of 94.97 per cent—call it 95 per cent. Again, that is extraordinary. It means that there is confidence in the use of the app. If there is confidence then that means more people will use it, and that is why we are seeing those large numbers. I recall the Minister for Health and Medical Research explaining why we needed to mandate it. It is because, when there was a proliferation of QR systems used by the private sector, we were not necessarily getting a great customer experience.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 58. I move:

That the member for Ryde be not further heard.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I am not sure that that is in order. My advice is that it is in order. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

### Motion negatived.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I find that extraordinary. The Labor Opposition does not want to be in government and now it does not even want to be in opposition. When I am talking about the safety of the people of New South Wales and giving information about QR codes, those opposite do not even want to hear about it. It is an extraordinary dereliction of their duty as the Opposition. I find it extraordinary. Anyway, we will continue to be the adults in this place, to put the people first and to serve the people of our State.

Let me continue from where I left off. I thank the people of New South Wales for embracing the Service NSW app and for keeping us safe. I thank the contact tracers. I thank the businesses that are doing the right thing by not only checking that customers have swiped their phones but also having a look at the green ticks. That is critical because if people use the Service NSW app, as the Minister for Health and Medical Research said, it is a much better experience because they do not have to enter in their details over and over. It is also faster, as the Minister for Health and Medical Research has also said. Contact tracers are getting it virtually in real time. As a result of that, yesterday Dr Chant was able to release to the public the list of places that people have been to so they can identify if they need to isolate.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** It takes minutes instead of a week or so sometimes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Exactly. It is not the only part of our arsenal but it is a critical part of the arsenal in addition to the other settings that we put in place in relation to masks and the like—as is required and

proportional, as the Premier said today. I will go through some other things. We have seen a decrease of 25 per cent in QR code use over the past three months and I put that down to complacency. People have seen how we have handled the virus, but people must realise that we are always on a war footing. This is a wake-up call. I ask members of the public to make sure they do the things that NSW Health is asking us to do—whether it is using the QR code, wearing masks or getting a vaccine when their cohort is being called. Whether someone is in a high-risk category or within an age bracket, when you get the call, please do the right thing and get the vaccine. We need to be on our A game in this. A country that I look to in its response to COVID is Singapore. It is a very mature country when it comes to digital transformation. [*Extension of time*]

Notwithstanding Singapore's digital maturity and the fact that it has a very strong grid, it is also going through a meltdown. It is wrestling with conditions related to COVID. Just because we have great systems in place does not mean that we are immune. Technology can help us but we also have to help ourselves. If we can do that, we can get through this together. Some of the feedback on the QR code from the people of our State is that it is easy to use. All venues now have the Service NSW QR code. The Minister for Health and Medical Research has mandated it in the higher risk venues. I encourage all venues to come on board because it is effective and it is efficient. One of the customers said today that it is easy and it only took them five seconds to check in. They are faster than me; it took me 6.06 seconds this morning. My message to the people of New South Wales is: Please use the current circumstances to galvanise where we were over the past six to 12 months. We have gone through this; we know how to respond. Now is the time to bring our A game to the table.

### GRIFFITH MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE RESEARCH

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Griffith has seven times the rate of deadly motor neurone disease [MND] compared to the national average. However, the New South Wales Government has rejected more than 20 grant requests from researchers trying to discover the cause. Macquarie University research into Griffith's skyrocketing MND rate has collapsed due to the lack of New South Wales Government funding. If Sydney had seven times the rate of MND compared to the national average, would the New South Wales Government try to find out why?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:54):** I thank the member for Murray for her question. Motor neurone disease is, of course, a very challenging disease for the individuals who suffer from it. A lot of research work is going on more broadly into motor neurone disease. I can only say to the member that I am happy to discuss with the local health district if there is further evidence of a particular issue in her area. I do not think you have written to me about that.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** I think I would have.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I do not think you have.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** I bet you I have.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** We will not play games with it. I am not being negative.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** We have made it very public anyway.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister can have the discussion outside. I ask that he direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There is not a member in this place—perhaps with the exception of the member for Murray—who would not raise an issue of such substance with me personally, and they know that I would immediately respond to it. It might be helpful if the member gives me the statistics she is talking about. Overall, in any one year the New South Wales Government is putting into research about \$1 billion—by the time one works out the amount of money paid to clinician researchers and also the money that goes into research across a whole range of areas, including the member's area of interest. So a lot of money goes into research and clinicians, who are effectively working at the bench and then going straight to the bedside. The amount is quite vast. If the member believes there is a particular issue in her electorate, by all means come and see me about it. I am happy to see you. You have been up to my office on a number of occasions.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I again ask that you direct your comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I do not think you have been to my office, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I have for scones, thank you.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I direct my comments through you, Mr Speaker, and I appreciate you reminding me. After 30 years, I still forget. It is terrible.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** It is not 30 years, not until 25 May.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Is it 25 May? Is that right? There you go. I did not know that.

[*A Government member interjected.*]

It is a very ageist debate, directed towards me. I indicate to you, Mr Speaker, that I am happy for the member for Murray, like every other member in this place, to come and see me about the issue. She has been in my office on a number of occasions to raise issues with me, particularly about Griffith Base Hospital. She knows that the Government has responded to the issues that she has raised—where it is appropriate, obviously. We have allocated, I think, \$250 million to the rebuild of Griffith Base Hospital and that is proceeding well, although there was a slight delay when Aboriginal artefacts were found in the early works. Happily, that is being addressed. If there are any issues that the member would like to raise, I am happy to consider those issues and to deal with them.

More broadly, I take this opportunity to highlight that our Government is spending more on medical research, more on hospital infrastructure and more on ambulance service and new regional ambulance stations than any government in the State's history. More than \$10 billion is being spent on new hospitals—as I said, a quarter of a billion dollars just in this member's electorate. Griffith is a very proud area, the Riverina is a very proud area, and it deserves to have first-class medical services. No other government has done what we are doing in the Riverina. Our Government will continue to provide services to the region.

It is always challenging but money has gone into and is going into Tamworth with a new hospital there, a south-eastern regional hospital down at Bega, massive money going into Dubbo Hospital, money going to Broken Hill and a new hospital at Mudgee. Effectively there is almost no part of the State that has not had this Government's attention, in both the infrastructure rebuild but also trying to ensure that of the 8,300 new staff that are being employed in this current period of four years, the regions receive their percentage. It is close to 50 per cent—about 45 per cent—of those staff who are going out there. It is fair to say that this Government has a focus on the regions and on Griffith. If the member for Murray wishes to come and talk to me about the matter, I am very happy to pursue it with her, as I would have done if she had approached me prior to asking this question.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW REFORM

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:59):** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given the urgent need for action to address sexual assault in our society, will he give the House an update on when he will be acting on commitments and the Law Reform Commission report to introduce enthusiastic consent law reform in this place?

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:59):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question and for her advocacy and passion on this very important issue. We have seen revealed in the past several months some shocking stories of sexual assault on women, including in the very citadel of Federal democracy, our Federal Parliament House. These stories have shocked women in general and indeed the whole nation. I know that there is a groundswell for reform to our laws of consent. That groundswell started with the shocking case of Saxon Mullins a few years ago, in response to which I asked the Law Reform Commission to review the law of consent in New South Wales. In New South Wales the relevant mental element for sexual assault at the moment can be established in one of three ways: if the accused intended to engage in a sexual assault; if the accused was reckless as to sexual assault; or if there were no reasonable grounds for believing that the victim-survivor consented to the sexual act.

The Law Reform Commission has made a number of recommendations, which the Government is considering closely. They include refining the definition of "consent". The recommendations include, in that respect, making it clear that consent cannot happen unless there is an act or a word—a statement—by the complainant that manifests consent. One cannot assume consent; one cannot internalise a thought process about consent. There are some advocates who propose we go further and deal not only with that element of consent but also with the mental element—that there be a requirement that inquiries be made or questions asked by the accused. At the moment the taking of reasonable steps is a circumstance to be taken into account when determining whether there are reasonable grounds for believing that there was consent. There are advocates, such as the member for Newtown, I believe, who propose to go further. The Government is looking at all of these issues very closely, not just that definition of "consent" but also the state of mind of the accused. The Law Reform Commission recommendations go beyond that to look at questions of education and research into the experience of complainants in the criminal justice process. We are looking at that very closely and I hope that the Government will be in a position to respond to that set of recommendations sooner rather than later.

## FARMERS' RIGHT TO FARM

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:02):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government is supporting farmers and their right to farm?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:03):** I will tell the member for Myall Lakes what we will not be doing as a government. We will not be engaging in pathetic, childish conspiracies and games to block and vote down quality, transparent regulations around floodplain harvesting which will guarantee the future viability of an important sector in agricultural industry and also the viability of our country communities. We will not engage in that and we will not refuse to meet with groups that represent people from country New South Wales who are interested in having those rules in place to provide certainty for the future of an industry that is worth billions of dollars to this State, that employs thousands of people and that underpins the livelihoods of many communities west of the Great Dividing Range. That is what we will not do.

Instead, on this side of the House we believe intrinsically in a farmer's right to farm and that farmers have an inferred property right to be able to undertake their lawful activity and not to have it blocked, interfered with or taken away by the enemies of agriculture or the enemies of rural and regional New South Wales. On this side of the House we condemn anyone who says that they stand up for farmers, but when it comes to walking the walk, they walk away from the very people whose name is in their party's name. They walk away from them and throw that industry and those people into a world of uncertainty and concern. And do not take my word for it: Listen to the many industry associations and groups that are walking the halls of this Parliament at the moment, scratching their heads trying to work out why those who pretend to stand up for farmers are actually doing the exact opposite. They are knifing them in the back. They are doing it in the other Chamber right now—wielding that knife.

But to change the subject slightly and to address the question from the member for Myall Lakes, last week I was very interested to see that the member for Maitland—I am disappointed she is no longer in the Chamber—and the Leader of the Opposition awoke from their long COVID-19 slumber to say something about agriculture for the first time in a very, very long time. They dusted off the old Akubra and the boots, and trotted out somewhere in the Upper Hunter to announce that they were going to establish an agriculture commissioner—even though we established an agriculture commissioner in New South Wales nine months ago. There is nothing like a good copy and paste a bit later on.

Realistically, why would anyone in the Upper Hunter in New South Wales take the Opposition seriously on agriculture? The Opposition has had only three proactive agricultural policies in the past three years. That is one for each year. First they wanted to tax tractors and farm vehicles. That was their first proactive policy. Secondly, they wanted to reinstate the failed, discredited and criminal Native Vegetation Act 2003—to strip property rights from farmers, make properties unviable and make farmers pay personally for biodiversity conservation right across the State. Farmers own the land, they pay rates on the land but the Opposition wants to go back to the bad old days of Bob Carr and strip that land away through legislation. The third and most interesting proactive policy is to reinstate private prosecution abilities under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. They backed the Animal Justice Party amendments in the upper House to ensure that animal liberationists can take any farmer in the State to court and prosecute them for animal cruelty for simply being farmers.

Forget about allowing only the prosecutorial authorities—the RSPCA, the welfare league and, God forbid, the NSW Police Force—to do that. No, Opposition members do not trust them. They need to give the right to private citizens to take farmers to court to prosecute them because obviously those other organisations are not doing their job. Those are the only three proactive agricultural policies of those opposite. Then they oppose everything else. They voted against the Right to Farm Bill that we brought into this place. They voted against the reforms to the Land Management Framework and to make private forestry easier for farmers. And of course they are going to vote down flood plain harvesting regulations. I tell you what, it is lucky for the farmers of this State that those in the Opposition did not win the last election. When dealing with the most crippling drought in the history of the State, one would have thought that Opposition members—the alternative government—would have had some sort of drought policy.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Nothing.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** They had nothing—a blank piece of paper. If they won office there would be no \$4 billion in subsidies or rebates. [*Extension of time*]

There would be no assistance with water infrastructure, waiving Local Land Services rates or grants to help with the cost of council rates. There would be none of that whatsoever; absolutely nothing. As the Deputy Premier said, when it got tough those opposite completely walked away because it was all too hard for them. On

this side of the House, we are not just standing by our farmers; we are backing that up through the chequebook as well. We are investing where it counts. We are investing now to support farmers, but we are also investing for the future through the Farm Innovation Fund, the wild dog fence, and by doing the Commonwealth's job and building three new Doppler weather radars. We are even part funding its water infrastructure rebate, which is the Commonwealth's program as well.

We are always there for the farmers, unlike the Labor Party. My message quite clearly, not just to the people of the Upper Hunter but also to the people of the State, is: Don't be fooled by some cheap and lazy announcement of something that the Government is already doing. Look at the Opposition's record. Judge people by what they do and not what they say. Every opportunity Opposition members have had in this Parliament since the last election and before demonstrates their lack of commitment to the agricultural sector and farmers. They have betrayed them. They have failed. They have walked away. Across there they have wielded the knife—not just happy to be ignorant, but they want to stab them in the back at every opportunity. One would think they would have the decency to at least come through the front.

### LEGACY CONTAMINATION SITES

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will remain silent during the question.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** Notwithstanding the adoption of certain recommendations contained in a report by Professor Mark Taylor in 2017, what is the Government doing to ensure that legacy contamination, including coal ash and heavy metals from sites such as the former Pasminco lead and zinc smelter in Boolaroo in Lake Macquarie, do not burden communities and the environment in the future?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:10):** It is great to be brought back off the bench. It has been great to come out of witness protection. It is good to get a question from the member for Lake Macquarie. And is it not good to see what an effective Opposition looks like? We should be sending an important message to those people voting in the Upper Hunter by-election of what Labor looks like under the leadership of Jodi McKay: Not only will they not work for you, they will walk out on you. Under Jodi McKay Labor will not work for you; Labor will walk out on you. That is what we have seen here today. That is the message.

But it is great to see a member of this Parliament sitting on the Opposition benches who is interested in policy—interested in policy and interested in standing up for his community. That is what the member for Lake Macquarie does. His community was adversely affected by Pasminco, which ran a smelter in that community for a long time. Unfortunately lead contamination was left on the site and the community had to deal with that mess. But worse than that, Pasminco went broke and Pasminco left the community to foot the bill. This Government supports industry and it supports investment in this State. We want to see industries creating jobs in all sectors of the economy. But the general principle that we believe in is that where those industries have degraded the environment they should foot the bill for it and not leave the rest of us to pay for it. That is the principle that this Government believes in.

When it comes to Pasminco, the site up in north Lake Macquarie, the Government undertook a full study by the professor to look at what we can do to ensure that we protect the community and keep them safe, but also ensure that we manage the financial liability for everyone. So we are adopting all 22 recommendations in that report. In fact, we have already taken action to implement 21 of the 22 recommendations, and the remaining recommendation will be implemented by December 2021. This Government will always prioritise public health. This Government will always seek to protect the environment, and where industry impacts on the environment it should foot the bill for it. That is what we believe in.

So whether it be the site up at Lake Macquarie, whether it be asbestos that has been left around the community, whether it be the PFAS that has contaminated communities around Williamstown—I know the member for Port Stephens is very passionate about that—we will pursue those polluters to the ends of the earth. That is why we have a tough environmental cop on the beat, the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. The EPA in New South Wales is there to enforce the laws, to hold dodgy polluters accountable and to protect the community from harm. That is what it is doing. And who was it who set up the EPA? Not those who claim to be the guardians of the environment in the green movement and not those from the Labor Party. It was a Coalition Government, a Coalition Government right here in New South Wales led by a Coalition environment Minister, Tim Moore, who set up the EPA to keep communities around New South Wales safe. That is why it is a Coalition Government that will always stand up for communities, always stand up for the environment and ensure that we look to the future and protect people from harmful industry. We want industry to thrive in New South Wales. We

want to create jobs. We want to drive investment. We want to grow our economy. But we will do it in a way that leaves our planet to our kids better than we found it. That is what we in the Liberal and Nationals parties have always been about.

I say to the member for Lake Macquarie that we will continue to work through those issues in north Lake Macquarie. We are working with Lake Macquarie City Council and the Environment Protection Authority to develop a standard approach to remediation of lead-impacted properties, to save residents of the need to get specialist consultants when redeveloping their land. The New South Wales Government's response will save tens of thousands of dollars in remediation costs for each property owner impacted by the historical contamination. I will work with the member for Lake Macquarie on these issues. I have been up to visit the Pasmenco site. The Government is taking responsibility for it and will ensure that we continue to protect the community from dangerous lead on the site. But there are other sites of contaminated land across New South Wales. We have recently seen this Government step up to the plate to protect the community in Hunters Hill. We will dispose appropriately of the contamination on that land at Hunters Hill, take it out of the community and ensure that the property values in those areas are able to remain high.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is providing security and certainty to mining communities in regional New South Wales?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (15:16):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question, which relates to regional New South Wales. On the subject of regional New South Wales, I thought I would give an update from the regional seat of Epping. I understand the Treasurer is doing well in lockdown. Obviously, it is hard for him but there is an upside. He does not have to commute very far, which is always good. I understand the Treasurer is something of a kinetic learner and quite an extrovert, which makes lockdown difficult for him. I understand he has made a new friend in the garden. He is called Wilson, and they are playing a lot of basketball together.

**Mr Paul Toole:** He has got six kids. He is still busy.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Our real sympathy has to lie with Mrs Perrottet. Normally she has six children at home. Now she has seven. But every cloud has a silver lining. With Dom in self-isolation, fortunately there will not be eight children. But I digress. I thank the member again for the question. For the first time the New South Wales Government has produced a whole-of-government statement with our Future of Coal document, the first strategic look at the future of the coal resource as we transition toward new sources of energy but recognise the need for what has been a mainstay of exports from this State for many years. It also remains important in steelmaking, in the case of metallurgical coal, until hydrogen is able to come online. This strategy has the support of the Cabinet and included input from the department of planning. This document is significant because, for the first time in this State, the mining sector has very clear guidance on which areas we see as suitable for mining and which areas we do not, based on minimising conflict over land use and environmental impacts while maximising the economic return for our regions.

The maps accompanying the Future of Coal strategy highlight these decisions, including the decisions we have taken over the former BHP Caroonna site and the Drayton South project. I thank the Deputy Premier for his strong leadership in setting the vision of where mining should occur and the areas where it should not, to provide clarity for everybody. The State environmental planning policy concerning mining has been amended to give effect to these changes, making clear the areas where mining should not occur. We do not want to see companies spending millions of dollars on developments that will likely never stack up. We want them investing their time and effort on projects that can deliver jobs.

Part of our challenge is cleaning up the legacies left behind by the previous Labor Government. This includes the original exploration licence granted over the Shenhua site on the Liverpool Plains and the release of petroleum exploration licences that once dotted much of New South Wales. The Labor Government haphazardly approved mining projects, reactively and with no strategic plan. The Liberals and Nationals in government set about fixing that mess. We want companies to invest in exploration and mining where it is most beneficial for the people of New South Wales. We are providing guidance and greater certainty to project proponents, while bolstering a robust system of development assessment.

Last year, in concert with the Deputy Premier, I made important changes to the Independent Planning Commission to provide proponents with clearer time lines around decisions and promote greater transparency in the decision-making process. This gives companies the confidence they need to invest and employ as well as provide more clarity to surrounding landowners. This is another way the New South Wales Government is

providing certainty and confidence to the mining sector because a robust, consultative and transparent planning process is critical to secure the jobs stemming from these developments.

One of the challenges we will always face revolves around conflict over land use. We have shown how agriculture, traditional farming practices, wine growing and mining can coexist. In the Central West, there is an exploration boom for rare earths and metals, which helps to drive investment in mining, even as tourism numbers rebound strongly. Some of these rare earths will be important as new energy technologies progress. The decision to buy back the Shenhua exploration licence and to protect the Liverpool Plains from both open-cut and underground mining is another step in righting Labor's wrongs. This was the wrong mine in the wrong place, and that is a key point of difference between those on this side of the House and those opposite. We are strategic; they are chaotic. On the point of being chaotic, I note that the Labor candidate for Upper Hunter, Jeff Drayton, was quoted in the *Newcastle Herald* today under the heading, "Jeff Drayton defends his credentials as a 'coal miner'". He said:

"My only regret was that I didn't run for Congress right away."

That is confusing, but I certainly encourage him in his campaign for the United States Congress. [*Extension of time*]

You have heard it here first. Jeff Drayton is, it appears, off to the United States rather than the State of New South Wales. In contrast, our Future of Coal strategy is not chaotic. It is strategic. It is helping to guide companies to develop the right mines in the right places. A competitive allocation process is underway for the release of the Wollar resource, which is a significant site adjoining the existing Wilpinjong mine. We have recently seen the Independent Planning Commission approve the Mangoola mine extension, the Tahmoor south extension and last year the Vickery coalmine extension in the Gunnedah Basin. These projects are driving jobs and investment in regional parts of New South Wales, as the economy seeks to rebound from the height of the COVID pandemic.

While we strongly support the jobs that mining brings, it should also be made clear that the Government is serious about ensuring that we get the right balance between sustainability and economic prosperity. Our expectation is that mining companies will fulfil their obligations and rehabilitate their sites in accordance with the conditions imposed on their approvals. This is fundamental in ensuring that we both reap the benefits of our resources while protecting our environment for future generations. Today I will be issuing a new direction to the department of planning to ensure that the rehabilitation requirements imposed on mining companies are properly enforced. Our investment in mining has never been more critical.

This Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering certainty and security for the mining sector. As the planning Minister, I am proud of the role my department is playing in providing a robust and transparent process in assessing mining projects. This is crucial for the future prosperity of every person across New South Wales and gives mining companies the confidence to invest and create the jobs of today and tomorrow. I recognise that mining is not just important in relation to coal now but also in relation to those rare earths that will drive the new energy transition we are seeing underway right now.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **NSW PLASTICS PLAN**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:24):** According to the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia, Australians use 130 kilograms of plastic per person every year. Only 9 per cent of that is recycled. The rest ends up either in landfill or in our parks, waterways, beaches and bushland. In my electorate, single-use plastics including shopping bags, straws, drink bottles and containers too often end up in the Cooks River, putting local birds and wildlife at risk and holding back our communities' efforts to restore health to the river. Overwhelmingly, the plastics we use are disposable and probably the most systemic issue is single-use plastic bags. New South Wales is dead last when it comes to banning lightweight, single-use plastic bags. Despite the promises from the media-savvy environment Minister, nothing appears to be happening. Over a year ago the Minister announced that the Government would develop a plastics plan and 20-year waste strategy, with a promise that plastic bags would be phased out over a six-month period. Very little appears to have happened since then.

Ocean Crusaders estimates that 100,000 marine creatures and one million seabirds die from plastic entanglement or ingestion every year. The slow disintegration of plastics means that it passes through the food chain, killing smaller and smaller animals along the chain. Two-thirds of fish stocks across the globe suffer from plastic ingestion. We are not immune either. Plastics make their way onto our plates via the ocean and our water sources. A recent study by the University of Newcastle suggests that we eat up to a credit card's weight of plastic each and every year. It is distressing to know that every time we feed fish and chips to the kids we are potentially feeding them plastic. It is also distressing to talk to them about seabirds that lie dead on the beach, about turtles

with straws lodged deep in their noses and about the fact that we are approaching a time when there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Our kids get that. I am really proud to see many initiatives across my electorate teaching kids how to reuse, recycle and reduce waste.

Local schools are running plastic-free days and encouraging families to keep plastic out of lunch boxes. Marrickville-based Reverse Garbage does an extraordinary job of teaching kids in preschools, schools and Out of School Hours centres about plastics and what they can do to help reduce their use. Creative reuse experts visit kids in educational settings, encouraging them to create art projects from industrial and commercial discards. The process is fun and engaging and encourages kids to think about waste in a different way. Volunteers with Boomerang Bags make reusable bags from fabric offcuts. Across our suburbs fewer consumers are accepting plastic bags when they do their shopping. Local businesses are also thinking differently; businesses like Village Wholefoods and Bulk Foods in Marrickville are ditching the provision of bags and containers altogether, and customers are encouraged to bring their own. The community gets it and they are changing their behaviours.

However, leadership is missing from the State Government. In March this year Minister Kean announced those aforementioned strategies to much fanfare. Those plans acknowledged that 60 per cent of all litter produced in New South Wales was made from plastic and that the Government wants to reduce that by 25 per cent by 2025. The plan also signalled a six-month phase-out of single-use plastic bags, giving businesses the opportunity to transition to other packing methods. However, almost a full year later all the website says is that the New South Wales Government is reviewing the feedback it has received. But that is too slow. We need to get on with the job. The community wants to see action. We need real leadership.

In March last year the Australian Council of Recycling warned that urgent action was needed to stem the increase in plastics entering our environment due to COVID. During the lockdown businesses had to offer takeaway, which increased the use of non-recyclable plastics. There is action on the Federal front; the nation's environment Ministers met last month to phase out a range of single-use plastics nationally. It is embarrassing that all our environment Minister could do was to commit to turning up to the meeting. Queensland banned single-use plastic bags in 2018, Victoria followed suit in 2019, South Australia banned all single-use plastics this year and Queensland will do the same in September. Now we have a situation where the community, business, the Federal Government and our State and Territory governments are taking action and they are leaving New South Wales behind. That is embarrassing. We do not need any more discussion papers or empty promises. We need the State Government and the environment Minister to show real leadership. Ban the bag and phase out single-use plastics.

#### VHP SANSKRIT SCHOOL

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:29):** I recognise the great work of the VHP Sanskrit School in New South Wales. Today New South Wales has a robust Hindu community. According to the 2016 census 189,400 people in New South Wales identified as Hindu. Hinduism is one of the most youthful religions in Australia. Some 34 per cent of Hindus are under the age of 14 and 66 per cent are under the age of 34. Hindus have established many temples and celebrate a myriad of Hindu festivals, which I am fortunate to attend in my capacity as both the member for Parramatta and the multiculturalism Minister. In that respect, on Saturday 17 April I was pleased to join the VHP Sanskrit School—which is part of Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia, or VHP—at its training day for Sanskrit teachers in Quakers Hill. I saw firsthand the work it does to ensure that generations of Australian children learn ancient Sanskrit and absorb its messages of peace, harmony and inclusiveness.

The VHP Sanskrit School is an integral part of language education in New South Wales. I congratulate the volunteers on their passion, dedication and enthusiasm for teaching the Sanskrit language and culture to the next generation. The VHP Sanskrit School is a community organisation that aims to promote the principles of unity in diversity, social cohesion, multiculturalism, harmony and inclusiveness in Australia. I put on record my concerns about the remarks that were made by Mr David Shoebridge from the other place about the Vishva Hindu Parishad during a recent budget estimates hearing. I have conveyed to him my view that his comments were unhelpful and I have asked that he reconsider them, noting the undesirable impact they have had on community harmony. The NSW Department of Education and the NSW Police Force have stated that VHP is not an organisation of any concern in this State. New South Wales is one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. We come from more than 307 ancestries, speak nearly 220 languages and practise nearly 150 religions. That is a lot of diversity. But here is the thing: What makes us a success is that we find unity in our diversity.

Being a multicultural society means that we are connected to the world. We have enshrined in legislation the principles of multiculturalism and we actively live out those principles every day. Our resilience as a multicultural society can be measured by the way we respond to global issues as a unified community. No matter what happens overseas, we must remain united by our common commitment to Australia. In New South Wales

we work together and discuss our differences with mutual respect. Overseas events can have a substantial impact on our communities and we recognise that. But the great thing about living in Australia is that we have learned to live alongside each other and to celebrate our many common values and priorities.

From the First Peoples to the newest arrivals, we all have a stake in the future of this land and we all share a vision for the future in which we all stand together, united by our Australian values. New South Wales is a place of acceptance, opportunity and hope for a better life. At all times, and particularly during times of difficulty, we must come together in support of those shared ideals. It is part of the great success story of multiculturalism in New South Wales that, despite our differences, we can still live together and support each other in times of need. I congratulate the VHP Sanskrit School as well as VHP National General Secretary and Hindu Dharma Scripture Coordinator Mrs Akila Ramarathinam. I thank all the volunteers for the work they do in the community. Their efforts ensure that our children understand the value of history, language, culture and the eternal messages of peace and harmony, which is so important to our future.

### QUEANBEYAN POLICE STATION

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:33):** On Monday 26 April I was pleased to open the \$31 million, state-of-the-art Queanbeyan police station. The opening was attended by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott; the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor; the NSW Police Force Commissioner, Mick Fuller; and members of the police district. That beautiful, brand-new building will house the men and women in blue who serve our communities. In the crowd was one important face: former Police Sergeant Paul Batista. I said it on the day and I will say it again: If it was not for Paul and his determination, we would not have been there that day to open that fantastic police station. It is a credit to his persistence that what was once a dream became a reality. Sergeant Paul Batista joined the NSW Police Force in 1987 and was attested as a probationary constable in 1988. He was initially stationed at Maroubra and was confirmed as a constable in 1989. Paul also worked at Randwick and Tumut before transferring to Queanbeyan in June 1995.

At Queanbeyan Paul performed a number of duties including general duties, shift supervisor, education and development officer and, at times, duty officer. He was a highly regarded weapons instructor who developed a number of initiatives that were adopted across both New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Paul served with distinction as the Queanbeyan-Palerang local emergency management officer and guided the local community through countless emergencies, including the Canberra bushfires in 2003. Paul was fully committed to passing on his knowledge and experience to others. During his time with the NSW Police Force he would have trained hundreds of probationary constables in their formative years with the police. Paul's strong passion and commitment saw him awarded the Australian Police Medal in the 2012 Australian Honours List. Paul has also been nominated numerous times for the New South Wales Rotary Police Officer of the Year Award in recognition of his commitment to his community and the NSW Police Force.

Unsurprisingly, Paul has received countless letters of appreciation from members of the public thanking him for going above and beyond what is expected of the NSW Police Force. I am sure there are many more people who have not written letters who will always remember their interaction with Sergeant Batista. I am told by his colleagues that Paul has a knowledge of policing history that is second to none, and he is often called upon for advice on policing history from the distant past to today. Paul retired from the NSW Police Force this year in March. I am extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve together. Paul was instrumental in securing the new police station at Queanbeyan, which is now regarded as the biggest and most modern police station in the State.

We all know how important it is that our men and women in blue have the resources they need to protect our communities now and in the future. The new Queanbeyan police station boasts a modern, open-plan design with cutting-edge technology and fixtures and the extra space needed to support the growing number of police allocated to the region. Most importantly, turning up to work in a modern, new facility with abundant resources gives them a sense of worth and will allow our police force in the Monaro district to continue to serve their growing community. We are the largest inland local government community, and it is growing at a rate previously unseen. A lot of Canberrans are crossing the border as a result of the New South Wales First Home Owner Grant and developments like that in the Googong area, where we envisage 20,000 people will locate over the next two decades. So it is fitting that the \$31 million investment from the New South Wales Government to build a new police station is not only for today but also for the future.

I thank Paul Batista. Over the time that I have been the local member, he engaged and met with me in a very respectful way. With his passion for police history and heritage, he can tell stories dating back from some of the first interactions of police in our regions, spanning over 150-plus years. But most importantly is Paul's passion to look after his colleagues. Now that he is retired, I hope he spends time with his family and friends and continues to look after his community in his very special way. As I said on the day, Paul Batista's ferocious advocacy and

unrelenting work and effort delivered a \$31 million police station on behalf of the people of not only New South Wales but also Queanbeyan.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:38):** I acknowledge the Deputy Premier's contribution about the Queanbeyan police, in particular the forceful way in which he lobbied the police commissioner to ensure that Queanbeyan got exactly what it needed for policing. It is refreshing to see local MPs who know their police, which I have noticed occurs a lot on this side of the House. That close relationship is apparent when I visit regional police stations. I am delighted that Queanbeyan has its brand-new facility, which will be well used. I am hoping that any of the 1,500 new police officers who go to Queanbeyan appreciate exactly what they have, because, unfortunately, previous governments have not always been as generous as our Government with police resourcing.

#### **KOGARAH ELECTORATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:39):** On behalf of the parents in my electorate, I speak about the state of our primary schools. My electorate has the most amazing principals, superb teachers and wonderful school support staff. We also have dedicated parents and vibrant, active school communities. Throughout my electorate education is the top priority for working families. Yet the work of our school communities has been hampered by the poor decisions of this Government, which have forced thousands of people into established suburbs without building any new schools to meet the growing demand. Ten years into this Government's planning policies we have seen an additional 10,000 people move into just four suburbs: Allawah, Carlton, Hurstville and Kogarah. That is the same as the population of a large regional town like Mudgee being squeezed into just four suburbs without a single new school or classroom built to accommodate the increase. We need a new primary school built in Kogarah as a priority to alleviate the chronic overcrowding in classrooms caused by the chronic overcrowding in some of our suburbs.

Between 2012 and 2021 the population of Hurstville increased by 19 per cent to 34,000, and it is projected to rise an additional 19 per cent by 2036 to more than 40,000 people. In Allawah the population increased by 11 per cent to 6,200, and by 2036 is projected to hit 7,000. In Carlton the population has increased 13 per cent since 2012 to 7,500 and is expected to rise by another 14 per cent to 8,500 by 2036. The suburb of Kogarah alone has seen a 57 per cent population increase since this Government was elected. The current population of 8,100 residents is set to explode by another 34 per cent to nearly 11,000 residents in 2036. That increase in population has generated millions of dollars of windfall revenue for the Government but the Government has failed to build the additional educational infrastructure our community needs to support its growing population.

Currently every primary school in the suburbs of Kogarah, Carlton, Allawah and Hurstville has enrolments that exceed the caps set by the Government. Kogarah Public School is 45 per cent over its enrolment cap; Carlton South Public School is 27 per cent over its enrolment cap; Hurstville Public School's enrolments are 14 per cent over its cap, and it is considered the third or fourth largest primary school in the State; and Carlton Public School is at capacity. The only way to alleviate the chronic overcrowding in classrooms is to build a brand-new primary school in the electorate of Kogarah—potentially even in the suburb of Kogarah—as a priority. I praise the work of Jude McCarthy, president of Kogarah P&C, and Anna Harding, its secretary, for their relentless advocacy on behalf of teachers, students and parents of Kogarah Public School. I urge the Government to take on this initiative in the current budget cycle because our community cannot wait.

#### **CLARENCE ELECTORATE MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:43):** It is a pleasure to update the House on some terrific mental health measures that are taking place in the Clarence electorate through Our Healthy Clarence plan, which was developed and devised in the Clarence by the community. This terrific grassroots initiative is a benchmark for our communities on how to deal with mental health issues. Last week I was pleased to be joined in my electorate by the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, when she launched the \$350,000 funding grant for new youth hubs in the Clarence Valley, which was made possible through round three of the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

These youth hubs will be run by the New School of Arts Neighbourhood House Inc. and they will give young people in the Clarence Valley access to professional youth workers and volunteers who can help them access social, health and wellbeing services. The New School of Arts is run by a terrific CEO, Skye Sear, and she is very well supported by a terrific board, the chair being Avery Brown. Some wonderful young people are involved in its youth services program—Jeremy, Zack and Hannah, to name but a few, but they know who they are. They are terrific young people who are doing fantastic work with young people in the Clarence Valley.

These pop-up hubs were initially delivered by the Deputy Premier when he saw that there was a need for them in the Clarence Valley, and of course these sorts of hubs should be rolled out right across the State. These

new accessible hubs will be located in five areas around the Clarence Valley—South Grafton, Grafton, Maclean, Yamba, Iluka and Coutts Crossing—with mobile outreach to other locations across the valley. Youth hubs are operated by community service professionals and trained volunteers. These youth spaces will provide a soft entry point for social workers to promote social inclusion, support young people and assist them with referrals to health and wellbeing information and support.

Some of the programs that are being run are not just for youth; they are for other people who feel that they need support within our community. One of the programs is Connected Women Dreaming, which is run by Helen Brown, Trish Smith and Robyn Dwyer. Connected Women Dreaming is an over-50s social group for off-country Aboriginal women who are socially isolated in the Clarence Valley. The group plans to come together fortnightly to be involved with craft activities and to share life stories and experiences. The group's primary goals are social connectedness and to form long-lasting friendships. Another program is called Education to Lifeskills, run by Steven Kelly. It is an intergenerational collaboration between Nungera and the Clarence River U3A Men's Shed to bring Aboriginal youth and men aged 13 to 25 together in a safe place to be educated in maintenance, handiwork, cooking, culture and other skills to build their sense of worth, purpose, confidence and knowledge to help themselves and others in the community.

Another program is called Cultural Connection, run by Bianca Monaghan. This culturally sensitive program will work closely with our Elders on country at Barnook Baryutgil Community Centre to re-engage with youth to establish yarning circles and to pass on knowledge. The program will build capability and meaningful partnerships with the local mob to facilitate aspects of the program based on the knowledge and skills that they bring to the group, such as hunting, painting, weaving, toolmaking, language, storytelling, and knowledge of how to evaluate and read country. Another group is called Mad Paddlers, run by Gavin Rayward. This is an initiative that aims to provide men aged between 30 and 69 with a series of opportunities to connect socially with other men, whilst also being physically active and enjoying the outdoors together. The men work in teams of two to complete a series of scenic, but challenging, paddles in the local area.

A number of other organisations have also been formed. Our Men Healing is run by Dean Loadman and Darren Kershaw. It is a partnership project between the Aboriginal Men's Group in Grafton and the Waanji Yaegl Aboriginal Men's Group. The aim of Our Men Healing is to provide a culturally safe support network for Clarence Valley Aboriginal men, sustainability through social enterprise, regular weekly yarning circles, cultural activities, workshops and combined meetings. I am running out of time, but a number of other initiatives are being run as a consequence of Our Healthy Clarence. I commend the work that they are doing and I encourage other communities to do the same.

#### FALL OF SAIGON ANNIVERSARY

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:48):** I bring to the attention of the House the forty-sixth anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, commemorated on 30 April 2021. This day is known by many Vietnamese-Australians as National Resentment Day. This solemn event marks the day in 1975 when Saigon was overrun by North Vietnamese soldiers and guerrilla forces. Despite the ongoing struggles and the sacrifices made by South Vietnamese soldiers, their war for freedom and democracy was sadly lost on that day. For those in South Vietnam the Fall of Saigon marked the loss of their nation and their homeland. To honour this day, the Vietnamese Community in Australia [VCA] NSW Chapter held a commemorative service at the Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg in south-west Sydney. The service allowed the community to come together to pay their respects to the many lives that were lost.

I was proud to make a video alongside VCA NSW President Paul Nguyen that expressed my sympathies and deepest regard to the Vietnamese-Australian community. I also pay my deepest respects in this House today to all of those who were honoured on that day. I extend my deepest condolences to the South Vietnamese armed forces, who bravely fought to protect not only their own liberties but also the democratic freedoms and the traditions of their friends, family and countrymen. Many of these soldiers arrived into Australia post-1975. I also acknowledge the many South Vietnamese civilians who died during this war and, of course, the Australian soldiers who fought along with them.

We must also remember the anniversary of the Fall of Saigon as an opportunity to continue to raise awareness of the many victims of the Communist regime that came to power. The forced introduction of one-party Communist rule meant the loss of South Vietnam's democratic institutions and the protections for human rights that they included. This is also a day that marks the beginning of the journey to Australia for hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees. Immediately following the loss of Saigon, 120,000 South Vietnamese people had to flee in dangerous and chaotic conditions. They were forced to leave behind the lives that they had made for themselves in order to find safety and to avoid the oppression of the incoming Communist regime.

In the decade following, more than two million people fled Vietnam, seeking safety on shores abroad. These journeys were extremely dangerous and difficult. While we celebrate the lives and the contributions made by those who successfully arrived into Australia, we must also remember those who were not so fortunate. Hundreds of thousands of refugees died at sea while seeking a safe home in the years following the loss and fall of Saigon. Many of these Vietnamese refugees who survived this journey arrived in Australia and today there are more than 200,000 residents in Australia and 84,000 residents in New South Wales who were born in Vietnam, and more who are of Vietnamese heritage. The Bankstown area in particular is fortunate to have a vibrant and active Vietnamese community that continues to advance our community socially, economically, and culturally.

While the horrors and the tragedies that forced Vietnamese people from their homes are unforgivable, the contributions made by Vietnamese-Australians have undoubtedly enriched our society, and for that I am incredibly grateful. While I was the mayor of Bankstown I renamed Bankstown Plaza as Saigon Place. The establishment of Saigon Place was both in memory of the lives tragically lost and of the undeniable role that the Vietnamese community plays in the rich cultural vibrancy of the Bankstown area. The plaza still stands today as a much-loved area by both the Vietnamese and the broader community. I am also proud to have supported the erection of the Vietnamese Boat People Monument in Saigon Place, which stands as a permanent reminder of the many lives lost during these treacherous boat journeys, and the Saigon Place Welcoming Artwork Monument.

I extend my thanks to the VCA NSW Chapter for its work in providing welfare services to those who are in need and for hosting many community cultural events. I acknowledge the current executive, President Paul Huy Nguyen, and his team, and also the many past presidents and executive members who for many years have supported the Vietnamese-Australian community and do so in a voluntary capacity. I extend my thanks to the Vietnamese-Australian community and I stand with them in supporting and honouring this particular day, the Fall of Saigon.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:53):** My hearty congratulations to the member for Bankstown on her contribution. She articulated brilliantly the oppression that was suffered by the South Vietnamese and the reasons it was very important for Australian soldiers to serve over there during the Vietnam War. I acknowledge that the member for Bankstown has also paid tribute to the war veterans, who can never be forgotten. Having grown up in her electorate in the seventies I remember vividly the refugees who came and settled in our neighbourhood and the way that they appreciated the Australian soldiers serving in Vietnam. We should never, ever turn our back on oppression.

#### **SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:54):** As we know, Anzac Day marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. Anzac Day commemorations and events take place throughout Australia and provide an incredibly special occasion for us to come together and pay our respects. The bravery on display during the Gallipoli campaign is now the stuff of legends and demonstrated the proud service of our nation, along with our allies. Last year the coronavirus pandemic took away our ability to come together and pay our respects at the usual Anzac Day services in our communities. Instead, the wonderful Light Up The Dawn initiative encouraged and inspired us all to unite and honour our nation's veterans, while maintaining a safe distance from each other. Right across the nation, families stood at the end of their driveways with a candle or torch to light up the dawn and show their respect to the brave men and women who have served this country, many paying the ultimate sacrifice.

We must be grateful that while we see the pandemic continuing to decimate countries around the world, Australia was able to come together for Anzac ceremonies this year. We must be grateful for the hard work of our health professionals and the leadership of this Government, which has allowed us to reopen our State safely. This year I had the opportunity to once again join my South Coast community at the Huskisson Anzac Day service, which drew crowds of more than 4,000. The Huskisson RSL Sub Branch organised the march along the main street as usual, followed by a moving ceremony in Voyager Park, giving locals the opportunity to come together to pay our respects. I thank all members of our community who supported it so strongly and members of the Huskisson Sub Branch who organised the event, in particular, president Alexander Paton, vice presidents Geoffrey Ellison and Nickolas Skow, secretary Helen Walker and treasurer Robert Roach.

I was pleased to also be represented at services across the South Coast and thank Denis Williams who attended the Coastal Waters service on my behalf. Graham Williams attended the Sussex Inlet service on my behalf and I give special mention to trustee James Smith, vice president and secretary Lynn Webber and treasurer Stanley Berriman, along with all members of the Sussex Inlet RSL Sub Branch for their efforts in organising the event for the local community. Roy Burgess attended the Culburra Beach service in my place and I thank him, along with the Culburra Beach Orient Point RSL Sub Branch members, including the sub-branch executive president Philip Larkam, vice president Lawrence Nash, secretary Robert Colligan and treasurer Linda Colligan. I also give special mention to Jan Gregory, who attended the Ulladulla service which was organised by the

Milton-Ulladulla RSL Sub Branch members led by president Sean Hendry, vice-president Christopher Coffey and treasurer Simon Law.

I was ably represented by Luke Sikora at the Nowra and Greenwell Point services and I thank the local RSL sub-branch which put together the moving dawn services, notably president Robert Grant, vice-presidents Barry Tait and Frederick Dawson, secretary Debra Rayner and treasurer Craig Shannon. Finally, John Carney attended the Bomaderry service. I thank the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch for organising the service and specially mention president Robert O'Grady, vice-president Robert Madden, secretary William Huntriss and treasurer Michael Quinn.

Many of us have large electorates and we are fortunate to have so many local services and ceremonies for the community, but it is always disappointing that I am unable to attend them all and I am grateful to those who represented me at those special events. Above all, I thank the community who supported the events so strongly. I am proud to be part of a government that supports our veterans so strongly. Earlier this week New South Wales veterans Minister Dr Geoff Lee, MP, informed me that the Government would be investing in the Nowra Soldiers Memorial. Memorial sites mean so much to locals, to me, to those who have served, their families and the wider community.

Earlier this year I was pleased to announce that the South Coast also shared in \$50,000 for projects which promote military understanding or enhance veteran wellbeing. Vincentia High School and Nowra Legacy Group both successfully acquired funds for their respective projects Living Commemorative Garden and establishment of a Garden of Reflection and Memorial. Respecting the service and sacrifice of our veterans is a vital part of our Australian way of life. Projects like this help to acknowledge their efforts and, importantly, enrich our local community. May we continue to honour those who serve our country. Lest we forget.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:58):** I offer my hearty thanks to the member for South Coast whose love of the veterans community is not unnoticed in her electorate. The daughter of a World War II veteran, the member for South Coast has again beautifully articulated the importance of remembering our veterans. As the last two speakers have acknowledged, we should never underestimate the service and sacrifice that is offered. I acknowledge that the member recognised the work being done in the veterans space by this Government. I cannot think of a State government that has done more for veterans, whether it be the Invictus Games, the veterans employment strategy or upgrading war memorials. Remember it was this Government that was the first State Government to call for the royal commission into veteran suicide. I do not think there is a matter of public policy that should not be further in the forefront of our minds.

**Business interrupted.**

#### *Petitions*

### **CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL RATES**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before we commence debate on the petition, I acknowledge a number of members in the Cooper Gallery. I understand others will be coming to the Northern Gallery. I welcome Susan Green, Phil Hall, Sheryl Ellis, Andrew Kelso, Alison Day, Aurora Walker, Tom Colosimo, Rob Manca, Maureen Boys, Terry O'Brien, Marianne Hamilton, Philip Mason, Nicole Faulkenor, Glen Brewster, Anne Krestensen and Eric Manklow.

For the benefit of the public, I take this opportunity to explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to directly bring their concerns to the attention of the House. The intent of this procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from the member, which in most cases will be the member who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, followed by the Minister in response and, to conclude the debate, the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members have spoken, the House will vote on the question that the House take note of this petition. This question will, in most cases, be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if this is challenged by a member, it may proceed to a division, where the bells are rung and members vote on the motion to take note of the petition by sitting on the appropriate side of the House. I remind those guests in the gallery that it is disorderly to applaud or make any noises from the gallery. I ask that you listen to the debate in silence.

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

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:01):** I begin by acknowledging those people who have made the trip to Sydney today in quite inclement weather. I hear there was an accident on the M1 as well, which is not good. I congratulate and thank all the people who signed the petition and recognise Susan Green and Marianne Hamilton for having the wherewithal to get this petition going. When the petition closed, 21,422 people had signed it. I know

that if it had been open for longer that number would have been higher. The hurt and anger of Central Coast ratepayers has been pronounced. Our community is being inflicted with higher rates proposed of 10 to 15 per cent and that is on top of rate harmonisation. For some communities that will be up to 43 per cent. There is also the reducing services, staff cuts, sale of public land and assets to consider, and the sting in the tail is having no new infrastructure for up to 10 years—let me stress that: no new infrastructure for up to 10 years. That means that even if the State or Federal governments give the council a grant, that money would have to be returned. That is absolutely incredible.

Not surprisingly, residents want to know how this came about. How did this happen? They see this as a failure of the governing body but they also know that the system of governance at every level has failed them. That is why they wanted a judicial or special commission of inquiry. They wanted the investigation to be free of government and politics. They wanted it to be independent. They required people to be compelled to give evidence, if necessary, including current and former staff, but especially the chief financial officers. They wanted terms of reference that examine all facets of this mess, including the Fit for the Future process; the role of the transition administrator, Ian Reynolds; councillors and staff; the former CEO; the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee [ARIC]; the internal and external auditors; the Office of Local Government; and the real cost of the merger process. Everything should be on the table and nothing should be left out.

We must remember that the petition is in two parts. The second part was a request that the Minister for Local Government delay any application by the council to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] for a special rate variation of 10 per cent or 15 per cent, and any decision on the sale of council assets, until residents can consider the findings of the judicial inquiries and its recommendations. Let us be clear that there are two parts to this. Those in the Central Coast community feel they have been forced to bear the brunt of this disaster. They feel ignored, frustrated and persecuted, and they are rightly angry. They are being asked to pay more for less and they never even had a say in the merger process. There was never a ballot. The submissions were, in the main, ignored and now people are being asked to pay in so many ways.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge that the Minister for Local Government is restrained by the Local Government Act and that she has been working through the processes available to her, including the most recent decision to hold a public inquiry. I appreciate that the Minister has been prepared to discuss issues with me, as has the administrator, Mr Dick Persson. I appreciate that our discussions have always been frank and honest. We do not always agree, but I have been able to put my case and I thank them for that. Sadly the one person with the power to intervene and recommend a special commission of inquiry, Premier Gladys Berejiklian, has been missing in action. Good leadership is about recognising that some issues have to be elevated, not just to find answers for one community but also to avail learnings for the whole State.

There are multiple factors that led to this—factors which other local government areas are also facing—but the Premier has failed to demonstrate the required leadership and, in doing so, has failed the people of the Central Coast. It is not too late for the Premier to stand up and do the right thing. We have a public inquiry. We have the terms of reference, which seem to be focused on the governing body. Can the Minister provide the Central Coast community with some strong assurances by committing that the third term of reference is considered broadly to include the issues I raised earlier? Those issues are: the role of executives and senior managers; the regulatory regimes and the oversight responsibilities of the Office of Local Government and IPART; the Audit Office processes; ARIC; amalgamation processes, including Fit for the Future; development of council structure; and internal restructuring and contracts.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:06):** I thank those who have made the trip from the Central Coast in inclement conditions and welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. I start my contribution on this very important issue by saying:

As public officials we have a responsibility to ensure that when we are dealing with these sorts of things, particularly when there is a high level of community concern, we stick to the facts, that we do not create hysteria ...

Those are not just my words; they are also the words of the member for Wyong, who said exactly that in this place on 18 February 2021. Central Coast Council is in an incredibly serious financial situation. Let us not forget that seven months ago today, on 6 October 2020, Central Coast Council announced it was experiencing "a serious financial situation" and "faces an immediate liquidity issue". There was no prior notice of that. It was terrible news dumped on a very shocked community and government. Then on 20 October 2020 the council announced it could not even pay its own staff for that week. I thank the local government Minister, who is present in the Chamber, for immediately advancing a \$6.2 million payment so that staff could receive their weekly wages.

Then on 30 October 2020 the councillors were suspended and an administrator was appointed to get to the bottom of the \$565 million debt. Labor has spent every day since trying to blame everyone but itself for this financial situation. But let me ask: Did the New South Wales Government authorise the council to illegally spend

restricted funds? Did the New South Wales Government employ hundreds of extra staff after the amalgamation, when the exact opposite should have happened? Did the New South Wales Government spend thousands if not millions of dollars fighting development applications in the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales? Did the New South Wales Government spend over \$50 million on a new IT system, give the mayor and councillors a pay rise in the middle of the pandemic, or tell the Labor and independent councillors to vote time and again to conceal the financial situation? Did the amalgamation cause the council's financial situation? On 18 February 2021 the member for Wyong said in this place:

The amalgamation did not contribute to the disaster.

The council's administrator said:

... there is absolutely no evidence that the financial collapse of the CCC was caused by the merger ...

I am a ratepayer and I join with the hundreds of thousands of ratepayers across the Central Coast in expressing my anger at the council's financial situation. What we are witnessing is the largest financial disaster of any council in Australian history. I welcome the opportunity to speak on this petition because it allows me to correct a few of the non-factual claims that Labor has repeatedly been making. There is some very important information that the people who signed the judicial inquiry petition have never been told. Under the Local Government Act, the only option the Minister has to prevent the councillors returning is to establish a public inquiry, which she has done. It would have been reckless to allow those councillors who presided over the financial situation to return and wreak even more havoc.

If a judicial inquiry was held, the councillors would have been allowed to return. As part of a public inquiry, under subsection 438U (2) of the Local Government Act, the independent commissioner has the same powers, authorities, protections and immunities as that of a royal commission. That includes the power to summon witnesses to attend and give evidence on oath or by affirmation, the power to require the production of documents from the council or others, the power to deal with contempt and the power to restrict public access to evidence that is regarded as confidential in nature.

Any evidence collected by the independent commissioner at a public inquiry can be used later in court or at the Independent Commission Against Corruption, but if a judicial inquiry was held, any evidence collected would be inadmissible in court or at the ICAC. For Labor members to claim that a public inquiry is a toothless tiger is utter rubbish. Two weeks ago, the member for The Entrance was incredibly deceitful to the Central Coast community when he said publicly that it is a "departmental inquiry". That could not be further from the truth; a public inquiry has the same powers and provisions as a royal commission. As the member for Wyong has said, we have a responsibility to stick to the facts and not create hysteria.

If Labor members continue to oppose the public inquiry, I would ask: What do they have against Roslyn McCulloch? Why would they not trust Roslyn McCulloch, a highly esteemed figure who has over 30 years of legal experience? Commissioner McCulloch has been given immense powers in her role presiding over the public inquiry. Commissioner McCulloch has immense experience in legal practice and local government and has been given terms of reference that are as broad as possible, which will allow her to conduct an open, transparent and detailed public inquiry. Labor members should stop spreading mistruths, like what we saw last week from the member for The Entrance. It is not a departmental inquiry; it is an open and transparent public inquiry, which has the same reach as a royal commission. It could not be any more straightforward. I thank the local government Minister for doing the right thing by the Central Coast Council, calling a public inquiry and suspending the councillors.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:12):** Firstly I thank the Speaker's office for arranging for the people from the Central Coast who are attending today to be in the Chamber. I appreciate the special arrangements that have been made under the current health restrictions and I give my regards to all of the Central Coast people who are viewing proceedings today. I say this to my community: The Premier has let you down. Gladys Berejiklian could have established a judicial inquiry, a special commission of inquiry, established under its own Act and overseen by a judge in the same way as the *Ruby Princess* inquiry was conducted. All costs were borne by the State. The Premier has refused to do so. On 26 February in answer to a question from NBN News she said:

I think the community doesn't necessarily want review on review on review.

They want to see action, they want to see fairness ...

I will get back to fairness in a moment. There has been no inquiry from this Premier. Instead we have a public inquiry established under section 438U of the Local Government Act with a commissioner who is well qualified but has nowhere near the authority of a judge in these matters and terms of reference so narrow that the people of the Central Coast are right to say that they are not getting what they asked for. There is also provision under the Local Government Act to require council to pay for the inquiry, instead of the local government department.

My first question to the Minister is: Will she broaden the terms of reference of the inquiry to include amalgamation policy and all the other things petitioners have asked for? I would also welcome her comments on whether the Central Coast community will have to foot the bill for the inquiry through their council—or will her department pay for the inquiry? The elephant in the room in this matter is amalgamation. It is right for the community to ask about the impact of amalgamation on the Central Coast. When the State Government announced its amalgamation policy in 2016, Premier Mike Baird said there would be huge benefits.

The reality has been very different. Amalgamated councils across the State are now struggling with the consequences of dealing with this policy and the lack of support from the State Government. In dealing with those challenges, councils in the Sydney metropolitan region are proposing rate increases of up to 40 per cent. The Central Coast Council is not alone in seeking a rate increase to deal with the results of the State Government's poorly executed amalgamation policy. Council staff have estimated that the cost of amalgamating Wyong Shire Council and Gosford City Council are of the order of \$100-plus million. But where was the State Government support? The State Government provided only \$10 million in direct support for the amalgamation of councils across the State. No matter what their size, population or capacity to fund the amalgamation of their councils, that is all anybody got.

The State Government also funded a whole bunch of projects under the Stronger Communities Fund. Ninety-two of those projects were funded on the coast. I do not have time to deal with them in detail, but I refer people who are interested to the *Questions and Answers* paper No. 94 and the answer to question No. 4614, which shows where those projects have been funded on the Central Coast. Most of them are in the Terrigal electorate or in the southern part of the Central Coast. This is the Liberal fairness referred to by the Premier: partial funding of the Central Coast favouring Liberal Party electorates. I will say a few words about the elected councillors because they have received a bunch of criticism. However, I say to my community that my electorate has many examples where the actions of the elected councillors ensured that the community's wishes and will prevailed over the desires of bureaucrats.

There is the Ourimbah master plan. Staff wanted four stories across the suburb of Ourimbah. That was stopped by elected councillors voting together. At the Alan Davidson Oval in Wyoming, council staff were willing to approve a mobile phone tower. That was stopped by the elected councillors. The workers' memorial at Ourimbah was recognised and protected by resolution of elected councillors. Where was the Government's representative during all this? The member for Terrigal and his Government spent more time criticising council than they did supporting it. Here is what the administrator had to say about the member for Terrigal:

I am disappointed however, that despite personal briefings on the extent of the financial crisis, you have never offered a single idea or proposal on how to deal with the crisis - other than opposing a rate increase.

I thank those who are in the Chamber today. The Government is not satisfied because it does not control Central Coast Council. It wants to turn it into an arm of the Government.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:17):** There it is: a defence of the Labor-Greens majority by the member for The Entrance. We know he is defending them, because this particular petition has been framed so that a different form of inquiry can be permitted under different auspices. They want a special commission of inquiry rather than the Local Government Act, which establishes quite clearly the provisions for an inquiry. They have done this because if we have a special commission of inquiry rather than the Local Government Act, which would stop councillors from taking their seats, the councillors would be able to take them right up again and continue to spend.

**Mr David Harris:** Not true.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Not true? Well, you better go and have a look at the Local Government Act because you have deliberately—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kiama will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The member for The Entrance he has deliberately misled his constituents. I listened to that verbal diarrhoea that came from across the Chamber. Those members talked about the commission of inquiry and the public inquiry. They said that no-one could raise any other matters. Point three of the terms of reference states, "Any other matters." They have lied to their constituents. They lied about the fact that those people will be back in their council chairs. I am sure if the shadow Attorney General wrote those speeches he would not have allowed this drivel to take place. They are misleading their constituents.

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

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: It has been noted in this place that we do not use unparliamentary language. We know the term that the Minister just used is unparliamentary. I ask you to ask him not to use that term.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I appreciate your explanation. I was actually sitting in the chair yesterday, when a lot of unparliamentary language was used—in fact the same word. I uphold the point of order. The Clerk will restart the clock.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** They are continuing to mislead their constituents because they are making out as if this inquiry is going to somehow expose what is going on in the council while at the same time they are putting the people who are responsible for this mess back in their jobs. I am all for ensuring that we have democratic representation but what they, their representatives and their party's people have done is led this council to a deficit of more than \$500,000 million as a result of their profligate and outrageous spending. When we were throwing money at them grant after grant, this council could not even properly comply.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Interjections are disorderly at all times. The member for Kiama will be heard in silence.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yet they want to return incompetent Labor-Greens councillors back to their seats. When it comes to local government incompetence, we know that this runs like a river through the Labor Party. It does not matter whether it is Wollongong or Shellharbour councils, or even Parliament, it cannot help itself when it comes to local government profligate spending. I noticed that the mistruths continue because I had a flick through the interim report as well as the final report that has been tabled. As much as I often admire the contributions of the member for Wyong, he got it wrong when he said that the mergers have had something to do with this situation. In fact, the first recommendation of the administrator was that that was blatantly not true.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** It is amazing how they want to try to wash their hands of this, these collective Pontius Pilates.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** If they have nothing to do with it, why are they not condemning the behaviour of those councillors? Why do you want to put them back in their jobs? Why do you want those people to continue, which will mean that the people of the Central Coast will have to continue to pay back this irresponsible debt and deficit that you are ladling the people of the Central Coast with.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I have two points of order. One is that the Minister should be addressing his comments through the Chair.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have asked him to do that.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** The other one relates to Standing Order 74. You have the capacity as the Deputy Speaker to intervene when members are being quarrelsome and making statements like that. He is engaging in it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. I uphold the first point of order but not the second point of order. I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair. The Clerk will restart the clock.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Where have all the so-called doyennes of financial responsibility been for the past three years? You knew this was going on. You said nothing about what was going on. You left your communities in the lurch. You let them run up this debt. This is on NSW Labor and your representatives. This is all on you.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: The Minister is quite clearly flouting your ruling.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I believe he was attempting to direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Maitland will resume her seat. I again remind the member for Kiama to direct his comments through the Chair. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** This is all on the Labor Party. This is its legacy to the people of the Central Coast. It is financial mismanagement. Labor members could not even spend the money that we were handing over to them to ensure that their community benefited. When hardworking people like the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast is securing grant after grant and you could not even hand out the money—

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

I would not talk, member for Shellharbour, if I were you, because Labor's majority was sacked because of your behaviour on Shellharbour council. Wollongong was sacked, Shellharbour was sacked.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat. There is no point of order. Interjections are coming from both sides of the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I remind them that calling for this very different form of inquiry would mean that those councillors who are responsible for this mess would go back to their positions. What did the administrator say in his report? He said that there was no attempt to provide any financial restitution for the mess that they were creating. This would have continued to go on. You want these people back in their chairs. The people of the Central Coast deserve a responsible council, one that is going to spend appropriately and do the right thing by their communities. This council is not it.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:24):** This is absolutely outrageous. I thank the people who travelled down from the Central Coast today. I thank the more than 21,000 people who signed the petition to the New South Wales Parliament calling for a judicial inquiry to investigate what the member for Kiama does not realise are very deep-seated problems that lie behind the Wyong Shire Council and Gosford City Council forced merger—the administrative processes and the flaws in the operational systems that have led to the financial debacle that Central Coast people will be living with for the next 10-plus years.

While the Minister for Local Government—and I respect the Minister—was absolutely blindsided by what happened on the Central Coast, despite regular audits by the Auditor-General's office and the likes of PricewaterhouseCoopers, she needs the Premier's support. Today in this House the Premier should step up and call a judicial inquiry and make sure that the terms of reference are broad enough to dig deep into the 20 years of pain that we have been living through. The member for Kiama does not realise, but the member for Terrigal knows quite well, that councils on the Central Coast have a long history, which we need to put on the table and which need to be transparent so we can have trust in the financial situation and investment in our community moving forward.

This is not just for our council—and I note that the shadow Minister for Local Government was in the Chamber earlier. This is for councils across New South Wales that have been forced to merge by this Government and that are now also in dire circumstances. Many of them have applications to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a rate rise, not to pay for the day-to-day costs that they were living with normally but to cover the ongoing costs that they have been paying for the merger, its repercussions for staff and the lack of what they need to make it cheaper for the people of those council areas.

The Premier forced the councils to merge and is now backpedalling, knowing that they are not creating savings. She is currently allowing the public inquiry to move forward with a very limited framework that is not designed to create the long-term solutions we need. I say to the Premier that this is not just for coasties: It is for the future of local government and ratepayers across New South Wales who are now facing a harmonisation rate rise—or should I say a Liberal merger tax. In some places in New South Wales this is a 58 per cent increase. We will be hit hard on the coast, but people in regional and rural councils will be hit even harder. This is also on behalf of councils across regional and rural New South Wales, including ours, that are facing new accounting systems and depreciation that will change their accounting structures. Councillors and people who work in admin are living in fear of what will happen to the future financial situation.

Based on the judgement of three councils the Auditor-General announced that this amalgamation process was working. The Auditor-General has also audited our council three times and none of those problems has appeared. So has PricewaterhouseCoopers. No problems have been flagged. I say to the Premier that the only reason we know that our council was going into the negative and spending those restricted funds—which was left off the financial statement that was given to councillors—was that we were hit by bushfires, by COVID and then by floods. But this has been going on for possibly two decades in the Gosford City Council alone. This is way more than a superficial look at the recent decision-making of the councillors in the recent council.

I remind the member for Kiama and the member for Terrigal that it is not \$560 million worth of debt; it is \$317 million worth of debt that we inherited as coasties from the two councils, which shed staff before the merger. They flogged off a whole bunch of our assets—including our Gosford parking facility—and have dumped this on the administrator, who has then spent \$50 million on a useless administration system. We need the Premier's help. Mr Dick Persson said it is the hardest job he has ever done. He said the backlog was out of control and the amalgamation is far from over. Mr Farmer, who is in the gallery, has to buckle down inside a broken organisation and try to patch it together. We have 10 years of no development moving forward and no asset investment in our

community, and we do not have the Premier in the Chamber. We ask again for \$70 million to cover the cost of the mergers for our community. The threat to us is the massive sell-off of public land. I have been on the phone with concerned community members from across the coast. This needs more than whatever inquiry they are offering; it needs a deep, hard look.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (16:29):** We all need to settle down about this issue and express our concern for the communities of the Central Coast, which have been severely hurt by what has been happening there. I particularly thank the member for Wyong, who has had some intelligent conversations with me and has expressed concern about what has been going on for some time. Unlike his Labor colleagues, he has talked to me with interest. I particularly thank the member for Terrigal, who has been expressing concern about the Central Coast Council for quite some time. He has taken an interest in his community and I thank the community members who signed this petition. It is absolutely necessary that we get the message, even though we got the message very loud and clear last year when Central Coast Council came to me two days before the wages were due and said it could not pay its workers. We had to bail out the council.

There are some serious issues that we know need addressing. After two periods of administration, the administrator made a recommendation for a public inquiry. Unfortunately there is a misunderstanding on both sides. A public inquiry will have all the powers of a royal commission—the power to compel witnesses and to discover documents within council. It will involve the public. You can make submissions to the public inquiry. Unfortunately I think the terminology of a judicial inquiry is somewhat misleading. A judicial inquiry is not really a thing. It is a kind of inquiry; I suppose those opposite meant a special commission of inquiry, but that is presided over by a judge. This is presided over by a very eminent barrister, Roslyn McCulloch. I think those opposite have undermined her in the debate and in their comments to the media during the lead-up—especially the member for The Entrance—by saying this was just a departmental inquiry. It is not that at all.

**Mr David Mehan:** I didn't say that.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** You said that, and this is not that at all. This commissioner is about to undertake a very far-reaching inquiry into what happened. We all need the answers. Those opposite need the answers and we need the answers, and most importantly the community needs the answers as to why decisions were made to continue with profligate and unfettered spending on the Central Coast, secret and confidential meetings when they did not need to be and shutting out the community from its decisions. Why did it continue not to take advantage of the opportunities made available to it by the amalgamation process? Why did it continue to increase its staff numbers? There were so many serious challenges this council faced, but chose not to face up to, so now we are faced with a public inquiry, which all of the community will have the opportunity to have input into. I again thank the member for Wyong, who has been utterly reasonable throughout all of these debates. I thank the member for Terrigal, who has continued to show passionate interest in his community.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:32):** In reply: I am pleased that the Minister has given that indication that it will be wide reaching. When members read the terms of reference we thought it implied that, but now it is on the record. That is very important. I also took solace from the comments the Minister made in the media where she said the same thing, so I will not have to repeat them. I thank her for that. This is a really serious issue. This will actually hurt people financially; it will hurt the community. We on this side have been focused on that. We have said from the start that everything should be on the table. We have excluded nobody from scrutiny. Some of the comments about "protection rackets" and all that are just utter rubbish. We have said that everything should be on the table. It is very important that every issue is looked at. Unfortunately the member for Kiama brought the whole tone of the place down—not unusual. He insulted our community and I am really angry about that. It was the community—those people in the gallery—who wrote the petition.

It was not a political petition. It was a petition from the community and you have undermined that. Shame on you. This issue is going to affect our community for the next 10 years. We have to make sure that this inquiry not only looks into what happened before but also sets us up for a future so we are not back in another five or 10 years going through the same thing. On the Central Coast we have been through council after council with scandal, corruption and findings against them, and it is not good enough. Our community deserves better than that and that is why they want answers. Hopefully we will get those answers and we will certainly be scrutinising every step of the way.

**Petition noted.**

*Private Members' Statements***SOUTH-EAST SYDNEY BUS SERVICES****Business resumed.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:35):** It was with weary frustration that I learned of the transport Minister's latest changes to the bus network in the south-eastern district, announced this morning. I thought, "Here we go again." It seems like every few months I have to stand up in this place to remind those opposite of how incompetent and short-sighted they are in respect of the management of our transport network. More than 20 bus routes in the south-east will be cut and another two dozen amended, mostly to push more and more passengers onto the Coalition's "light rail fail". The 301, 302, 391 and 400 bus routes will be abolished, and the 303, 304, 307, 309, 320, 348, 392 and 420 routes will be cut. These are just the services that affect my electorate, while others affect the electorates of Maroubra and Coogee.

After 10 long years of the Liberal Government in New South Wales, my residents have put up with cut after cut to our local bus network. Today was no different. We are watching our bus network die a death by a thousand cuts. Once upon a time you could catch a bus all the way from Port Botany to Circular Quay, mirroring the old tram network that once stretched through Sydney. Then the member for Bega came along. These services that once terminated at Circular Quay terminated at Railway Square. Then they terminated at Redfern. Now, even more of them will not go that far, terminating at Kingsford and forcing irate passengers off convenient buses and onto the deeply unpopular light rail. Then he sold off the buses, the depots and the staff to the private operators under the guise that they would make services better, and they got worse.

The Minister has the hide to say that these bus cuts will be made to increase bus services for the Green Square area. This Government told us before the 2019 election that we could "have it all". No doubt those residents will be grateful for the increased services. I would be mad not to welcome new public transport options for the fastest-growing community in the Southern Hemisphere but those services should not come at the expense of other residents who are equally entitled to affordable, reliable and convenient public transport. We expect more and better public transport, not less. You cannot rob Peter to pay Paul. The Minister's comments to the *Herald* today must be seen to be believed. Speaking of Green Square, the Minister said:

To be honest with you, I think it's one of the worst examples in the country's history where we've seen planning get ahead of mass transit solutions. It's terrible to think that we've seen the highest concentration of apartment dwellings with next to no foresight into what we should do for a mass transit solution.

The member for Bega, my old mate, has been the transport Minister for six out of the past 10 years of this Liberal Government, and the Premier held the job before him. Two of the most senior members of this Government have sat on their hands and done nothing about improving Green Square's transport for a decade and now they present these cuts to us as a *fait accompli*. This Government chose to put Waterloo metro station on Botany Road because it wanted to kick out my public housing tenants and hand over public land to property developers. This Government chose to build a metro station in Zetland for the Metro West project and changed its mind because the bean counters in Treasury would not let it spend \$375 million. This Government chose to waste \$3 billion on a light rail that nobody asked for, nobody wanted and nobody uses.

This Government ignored the recommendations of Infrastructure Australia, our peak infrastructure body, to build light rail or bus rapid transport in Zetland for seven years in a row. This Government has known for decades that there was a tidal wave of population growth in Green Square, but did nothing. Even when I pleaded, six and seven years ago, for a moratorium on development, the planning Minister still did not have the spinal fortitude to do what had to be done. Today's bus timetable changes are an admission by the Minister that he is in over his head and he does not even know how to solve the transport and planning mess that his Government created. It is time for the Government to put its cue in the rack.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:40):** It is a bit rough to have the Labor Party come into the Chamber to talk about infrastructure as the member for Heffron did. We are building infrastructure all over New South Wales, in particular, in regional New South Wales. But let us look at Labor's record when it was in government—\$500 million on the Rozelle metro, not an inch laid; and \$100 million on the Tillegra dam, not a sod turned. Its record in infrastructure is shameful and an absolute disaster. Yes Labor members are coming into this Chamber complaining about that when we are building more infrastructure and creating more jobs than Labor ever did in the history of the Labor Party. This Coalition Government will go down in history as being the infrastructure government.

**VALUING THE TEACHING PROFESSION INDEPENDENT INQUIRY**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:41):** I recently had the privilege to sit and meet with a group of local St George teachers representing the NSW Teachers Federation. I thank them profusely for taking the time

to come to brief me on the findings of the independent Gallop inquiry. Teachers are the backbone of our education system. We depend on them every day to teach, to care for and to mentor our young people. It is not an easy job. The incredible local teachers I met with raised a number of issues. They spoke of a significant increase in their workload over the past decade, with no extra support measures or time to plan and prepare, a lack of funding and resources for English as an additional language or dialect programs, and a deeply concerning lack of mental health and counselling provisions within in our schools. The lack of counsellors and mental health support means kids are not able to develop a consistent relationship with a support worker, reducing good outcomes and leading to burnout for staff and teachers, who are stepping up and taking extra roles and work that they are not trained to do. The Rockdale teachers I met with stressed the importance of increased and consistent counselling services in schools, which is highlighted as a key recommendation in the Gallop inquiry.

Schools are at the centre of our communities, and so many families rely on their local school for a broad range of support because they do not have faith in this Government to provide help when they need it. Like teachers everywhere, St George teachers and staff go above and beyond their call of duty, providing additional services that make our public schools so great, and they do so for little or no reward. They use their own time to get kids involved in sport, art or extra study sessions. Our expectations of teachers, and the pressure we place on them, have continued to rise despite providing them with less resources and lower pay. I know that local teachers across the State have contacted many, if not all, members in this place and I find it hard to believe that anyone could hear the stories and pleas and not feel determined to do all they can to support and invest in our teachers and schools.

The Gallop inquiry clearly shows a need for a reset of the chronic underfunding of public education in this State. Six key recommendations have been outlined for immediate action. It is all about providing fair and reasonable working conditions and pay to these invaluable employees of the State. The Premier rightly lauded the work of our teachers throughout 2020, throughout the COVID period, as they battled and adjusted to teaching in a pandemic. But the teachers have been left wondering if that was nothing more than lip service. Local teachers in my electorate of Rockdale believe this Government needs to back up its words and support our teachers by seriously and immediately considering these six recommendations from the Gallop inquiry.

#### AUSTRALIANS IN INDIA

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:45):** As the member for Riverstone I represent a region in which many people were born overseas, with a large proportion from the Indian subcontinent. As could be expected, many of the constituents of Riverstone have strong family links overseas. Over the course of the past 12 months I have received many anguished appeals for assistance from constituents wishing to travel interstate or overseas for pressing personal reasons, whether to be with a dying parent or with a seriously ill sibling or child, or to attend a funeral or wedding, or for another of life's major milestones. It has been possible to help some of these constituents. For others, the restrictions in place due to COVID could not be overcome.

None of these earlier restrictions, though they were certainly tough, ever involved refusing Australian citizens the right to return to Australia if that proved to be logistically possible, and certainly did not involve imposing criminal sanctions on Australians who did return. This week I have written to the Prime Minister of Australia to express dismay on behalf of the people I represent in the electorate of Riverstone at the decision of the Australian Government to deny entry to Australian citizens unfortunate enough to be caught in a country experiencing the worst of the COVID pandemic.

Australians in danger overseas, whether due to war, civil unrest, natural disasters or disease, have every right to expect their Government to do what it can to help them. After all, they are Australians. In the current COVID crisis, the Australian Government, in conjunction with the States and Territories through the National Cabinet arrangements, has the ability to set up specialised quarantine facilities sufficient to house Australian citizens at risk overseas to allow them to return. That is what can be done, so that is what should be done. I have been shocked and embarrassed as an Australian to know that our Government is threatening its own citizens with criminal penalties simply for returning to their home. There is a fundamental difference between closing the borders to citizens of other countries and refusing entry to our own citizens. In my view this is an unconscionable abdication of the Government's primary responsibility to protect its own citizens. In effect the Commonwealth has torn up the contract which citizenship entails.

In my letter I wrote of my conviction that this country should have developed custom-designed quarantine facilities during 2020 as the need for them became obvious. This would necessarily have involved cooperation between Commonwealth and State and Territory governments. I am not apportioning blame or trying to pretend it is one government's responsibility or another's. While this should have happened earlier, I believe that it is not too late to start doing so now as the need still exists and is likely to remain for a good while yet. Using hotels for quarantine was a big improvement on the honour system of self-quarantine at home which it replaced. But hotel quarantine was still only a stopgap solution.

Proper infection control requires purpose-designed facilities. Much of what Australia has done in response to the COVID pandemic has been sensible, rational and reasonable. Some mistakes have been made, but reasonable people will accept that mistakes were inevitable in such circumstances. However, in my view this recent decision represents fear-driven irrationality combined with a puzzling unwillingness to take the prudent course of action that is clearly required to make it possible to receive returning Australian citizens without risking the outbreak of COVID in Australia.

If Australian citizenship is to have any meaning, it surely must mean that all Australians deserve the protection of their Government, not just most. In my letter I urged the Prime Minister to immediately revoke the ban on Australian citizens returning from India and to make immediate preparations involving both Commonwealth and State governments to develop specialised, purpose-designed quarantine facilities on a scale sufficient to ensure that all Australian citizens can be assisted should they need to return home. It is right that Australia sets careful, proportionate restrictions on movement and insists on strict quarantine for all international arrivals to keep our citizens safe. But it is not right to treat some of our citizens as less deserving of our protection than others.

### **FORSTER-TUNCURRY BRIDGE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:49):** I update the House on the Forster-Tuncurry bridge. There are a number of issues with the bridge because it is a two-lane bridge, when a four-lane bridge is required. The two lanes mean that, if there is congestion, it is often impossible for first responders to get across the bridge or onto the bridge. Normally to get to Taree where the hospital is takes five minutes across the bridge and 30 minutes for the whole trip. But if the bridge is blocked, which it is at times, first responders have to go down to Bulahdelah and back up again to Taree, which takes about 90 minutes—and time can mean life. So we are taking the next step in the fight by launching a petition being driven by the community, telling the Government that we need more lanes across the water.

The history of this is that a Department of Main Roads report in 1987 forecast that we would need more lanes or a duplication of the bridge by 2005, and that report proved to be correct. Extra lanes certainly are needed. With the influx of tourists—and with COVID that has been exacerbated—it can sometimes take up to 40 minutes to get from Tuncurry over to Forster and vice versa, and that is just not good enough. Time is money for business, so that has an impact on business and freight. It also has an impact on tourists who are frustrated by not being able to get from one side to the other. That leaves an impression on them as to whether or not to go back to a town where it takes 40 minutes to get across a bridge. The community and I have been calling for this. Before the 2019 election, the Government announced that there would be a traffic flow study of the route between Forster and Tuncurry with a view to considering further lanes across the water. That review was completed and I am looking forward to the release of that report.

What I am calling for now is funding for planning for more lanes across the water. I say "more lanes across the water" because there are a number of options that the Government and Transport for NSW can consider. It could be to duplicate the bridge. If the engineering allows, it could be a four-lane deck sitting on top of the existing bridge. It could be a new bridge to the west of the existing bridge, across islands rather than using the same road. To be able to deliver what the community wants and needs, funding is required to look at the options to do the planning on what kind of structure it is going to be. As that report in 1987 said, ultimately we need more lanes across the water for the reasons I have mentioned.

I touched on the emergency response. This call for more lanes across the water is totally supported by all first responders. That is very important with the number of times ambulances and police vehicles have been caught in traffic and not been able to get across the bridge. Recently—and this was not the catalyst for it—there was a very tragic accident at the Tuncurry end of the bridge, which was closed for about 11 hours while the accident was investigated. That was heartbreaking for the families involved. It was tragic and I feel sorry for them. We need more lanes so that first responders are not caught on one side of the bridge and unable to get to the other side, and for the free flow of traffic. No other area would put up with the delays and problems we have with that bridge. Therefore, I call now on people to support the petition and for the Government to provide funding in preparation of delivering more lanes across the water.

### **GREEN VALLEY PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:54):** I speak today about a complex of public housing within the electorate I represent. It is located between Firth Avenue and Green Valley Road at Green Valley and has frontages on both streets. In 2015 I was approached by residents of the complex. Two of those residents, Ezio Passalacqua and Allan Lamb, told me that the complex was meant to be reserved for tenants 55 years of age and over but that there were many tenants considerably younger living in the complex, which created unnecessary tensions and conflicts in the block and made it a less pleasant place in which to live. Moreover, these constituents told me that

they believed that when the land was obtained by the department, which they thought to have been about 24 years earlier, a covenant was placed on the land restricting tenants to 55 years and over and that the predecessor organisation to Communities and Justice had agreed to this covenant.

Subsequently, on 21 October 2015 I made written representations to the then Minister for Family and Community Services stating these facts and asking whether they were correct. I received a letter dated 18 December 2015 from a Parliamentary Secretary in response. The letter said, in part, "I am advised there is no covenant registered on the title of 22 Firth Avenue, Green Valley, restricting the occupation of the property to residents 55 years and over." The letter quite dismissively rejected any suggestion that this complex was intended as aged persons' accommodation. In light of what subsequently emerged, this letter can at best be described as disingenuous. However, I advised my constituents of this response and there the matter rested for some time.

The issue was raised again with me in February this year. A constituent of mine, Marianna Siciliano, saw me and said that there were many people under 55 years of age living in the complex. She lives next door to the complex, so is in a position to have a good idea of who lives there. She also asserted that when Liverpool City Council approved the development of the complex it was on the condition that it accommodate only those aged 55 years and over. The then applicant, the Department of Housing, was said specifically to have agreed to this. Ms Siciliano is in a position to know something about this as well. She is the daughter of the landowner from whom the land for the complex was acquired. It was a contentious process and is well remembered by my constituent.

Accordingly, I sought clarification from Liverpool City Council about conditions they may have imposed on the development. I was then provided with a copy of various documents from council, including a copy of the notice, dated 22 March 1989, advising of a conditional consent to the development application for what was termed "housing for aged and disabled persons". I was also provided with a copy of the report of the city planner to council and a copy of the council's decision. The city planner recommended approval of the "aged and disabled" housing development—that is what it was called—subject to various conditions. The council's development committee, which inspected the site, made this recommendation to the full council: "the city planner's recommendation be adopted on the strict understanding that aged and disabled persons only be permitted to occupy the development and the development be so conditioned". That committee's recommendation was adopted by council on 21 February 1989. I should add by way of full disclosure that I was an alderman of Liverpool City Council at that stage.

The development committee's report is also interesting in other ways. The submission by the Department of Housing to council supporting the application is quoted in part in the committee's report. The department explicitly refers to this as "a pensioner housing project". That is what the department called it. The city planner refers to the development as "aged person accommodation" and "residential development for aged persons". It is explicitly clear that everyone, including the Department of Housing, thought that the approved proposal was for aged persons' housing. The behaviour of the department once the complex was completed is consistent with this and indeed confirms this understanding. The only tenants in the complex were aged 55 years and over and this continued for some time. I have known over the years a number of people who lived in that complex and they were all aged 55 years and over.

At some point in time this changed, in defiance of the development conditions and the department's commitment, and younger tenants were housed there. Ms Siciliano complained to Housing but none of the people to whom she spoke had any knowledge of the decision to reserve the complex as aged persons' housing. That is likely to be a function of multiple restructurings and redesigns. Corporate memory is lost. I raised the issue of the 1989 approval and the surrounding circumstances by way of letter to relevant ministers on 8 March this year. I also pointed out that I considered the 2016 response I received to be disingenuous. I have not received a reply to my most recent letter. I ask the Minister to intervene and ensure that the complex is tenanted on the basis of the original conditions and understanding of his department. That is the position of tenants to whom I have spoken and of neighbours such as Ms Siciliano. They are entitled to have the original decision implemented.

### **BLACKWATTLE BAY DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:59):** I wish to address critical planning issues across Sydney but also in the electorate of Balmain. Many members here will know that when it comes to planning there are two sets of rules in New South Wales. There is one set of rules for regular people to follow when they are renovating their homes or putting in a dormer window or a garage. But when it comes to the rich and powerful, it seems the rule book is thrown out. We saw that with the Barangaroo development.

When James Packer wanted to build his super casino at Barangaroo, he did not go through the normal process. He sat down with then Premier Barry O'Farrell at broadcaster Alan Jones' house in February 2012 and pitched his vision for a \$1 billion-plus hotel, casino and entertainment complex on public land. In August

Mr O'Farrell and Mr Packer had another meeting and O'Farrell advised him of a new three-stage framework for infrastructure development that had been dreamt up. A week later the rules for unsolicited proposals changed. Crown submitted its plan and Cabinet signed off on stage one. The former general secretary of the New South Wales Labor Party was employed to pull Labor into line. And now we have Packer's palace adorning our harbourside, despite Crown being ruled unfit to hold a casino licence in New South Wales. It is very disappointing indeed.

Sydney's other casino, which was short-changed by the issuing of a licence, then said, "If they are getting one, why can't we have one too?" It proposed a 237-metre tower with 220 hotel rooms and 204 apartments to create a \$500 million so-called global waterfront precinct on the opposite shore of Darling Harbour to Crown's One Barangaroo. The planning department blocked the development, saying it was not in the public interest, and cited unacceptable visual impacts due to its scale. It said:

The [plan] would introduce a new tower form that is inconsistent with its immediate context and would result in unacceptable visual impacts due to its scale, isolation and visual dominance of the existing Pyrmont character and fails to promote good design and amenity of the built environment.

It was against the rules. But wait, the rules can be changed. Corporations like Star do not have to play by the same rules as you and me. When Star did not get the result, the Premier ordered a review of the planning controls of the area, to be conducted by the Greater Sydney Commission. This review is supposed to be independent but there was, of course, an outcome in mind, in particular around Blackwattle Bay and the current site of the Sydney Fish Market, which will become vacant when the markets are relocated. The obvious thing to do, given everything we have learnt about livability and wellbeing over the past period, would be to replicate the success of the four Glebe foreshore parks—Jubilee, Federal, Blackwattle Bay and Bicentennial. Unfortunately, the Government seems to want to make sure that these pieces of waterfront land are sold for more high-rise towers of residential investment properties.

What was proposed for Blackwattle Bay is a massive residential and shopping development that will monster the foreshore and limit public access to Blackwattle Bay forever. At 45 storeys, the residential towers would dwarf even the pylons of the Anzac Bridge. They are more suited in the centre of Sydney, rather than commensurate with the existing architecture and density in Glebe and Pyrmont. Up to 1,700 apartments would be built, without any plans for new schools, critically needed social housing or basic infrastructure. The waterfront will be transformed into a glorified shopping precinct with private restaurants and businesses given prime foreshore positioning at the expense of public access. This is publicly owned waterfront and should be redeveloped so that everyone can enjoy it, not sold off to millionaires with a small bit of public park under the overpass. The Government was aware that it was a bad proposal. We know that because internal documents about how to spin overdevelopment were accidentally uploaded. The ABC reported that the media pitch said:

The challenge is to clearly communicate that NSW's (Infrastructure New South Wales) scenarios for Blackwattle Bay were developed separately and not in parallel to DPIE's [Department of Primary Industry and the Environment] Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy. The challenge is to separate the proposals. As we know, the fish market, which is a glorified shopping centre with no additional fish to be sold, had to be paid for. Its massive over-budget blowout, from \$200-odd million to over \$800 million, means there is now an enormous development proposed for that site. What happens? This Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy initiated by the Premier magically recommended we turn the area into an enormous so-called economic and jobs hub and endorsed both plans. There was some reduction in the height of the Star proposal but everything demanded by Infrastructure NSW and Star Casino was delivered, which is a very disappointing result. We see through the strategy, we see that the tail is wagging the dog and we see that there is one rule for the rich end of town and their developers and there is another rule for the rest of us. We will work very hard to ensure that an appropriate development takes place at Blackwattle Bay, not what has been put to the community as it stands.

### SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:04):** I will update the House on the Anzac Day commemorations in my local Seven Hills community. All members in this place would recall how different Anzac Day was in 2020. There were no dawn services, there were no marches and there were no gatherings at our local RSL clubs. We were confined to our driveways and living rooms to watch the services that were broadcast far from home. But we stuck together and we paid our respects. We never forgot the sacrifice of our Australian and New Zealand service men and women who landed on the shores of Gallipoli 103 years ago. This year's Anzac Day was very different from last year's. Although many popular local services were cancelled, the dawn service at Martin Place and the march through the city took place, albeit with limited capacity.

Fortunately the 4.30 a.m. dawn service in my local community went ahead. It was held at Prince Alfred Square on Church Street in Parramatta. Closer to home in Seven Hills, the march was conducted largely as normal. Citizens began from Boomerang Place, which is across the road from my electorate office, and concluded at the Seven Hills RSL. A dawn service was then held, led by the Seven Hills, Toongabbie and Wentworthville RSL Sub-Branch. Student leaders from Toongabbie Public School joined in the ceremony. The students were well turned out in their full school uniform. They carried themselves with great dignity when they laid wreaths on behalf of their school community. They added to the solemn occasion and were a credit to themselves as well as

to their families, teachers, peers and principal Craig Brown. I say well done to the Toongabbie Public School captains of 2021, Tyler and Sahana, as well as to vice-captains, Liam and Mia. On 23 April the school commemorated Anzac Day with a number of formal assemblies. I recognise the other school leaders who were present for those commemorations: Ishika, Nikola, Lexi, Kingston, Corey, Connor and Liam.

Back at Seven Hills, students from service groups including Scouts and Girl Guides were encouraged to wear their service uniform to the special occasion, which added to the ceremony. Following the dawn service, we were joined by members of the sub-branch at the RSL club for breakfast and refreshments, as we have done for many years. It was pleasing to see the ordinary programming for Anzac Day morning resume in my electorate. On the Friday immediately prior to Anzac Day it was my tremendous privilege to visit Toongabbie East Public School for its annual whole-of-school Anzac ceremony. Leading the assembly was Toongabbie East teacher Mr Fisher. He organised all elements of the assembly, including the order of proceedings, the selection of video clips, the choice of music and the design of the wreaths, which were made by students at the school in the week leading up to the assembly. On behalf of the Toongabbie East school community, I thank Mr Fisher for all of his efforts in preparing and delivering an excellent Anzac Day assembly. I look forward to attending one of Mr Fisher's renowned Remembrance Day assemblies later in the year.

We were joined at the Anzac Day assembly by Captain Daniel Teys of the Victoria Barracks in Paddington. Captain Teys remarked on the importance of Anzac Day to him and his family, and also on why he decided to serve our nation in the Australian Army. The assembly was hosted by the student leaders of Toongabbie East, each of whom spoke with great confidence and clarity. They were a great credit to the entire school community. The 2021 student leaders at Toongabbie East are Lucy Lescuyer and Teneika Reid. The senior representatives who serve on the school's student representative council for 2021 are Thaliya Hookey and Yar Adiang. The student leaders were joined by representatives from each year group to lay wreaths beneath a large Australian flag, which was raised specifically for the assembly.

Joining me on the stage at the school hall was the excellent principal, Mrs Kristy Haggett, and the wonderful president of the parents and community committee, Sarah Irani. Sarah is supported in her role by vice-president Pauline Brier, secretary Coralie Hulley, treasurer Adam Macic and fundraising committee leader Haley Macic. The Toongabbie East Public School community is a close-knit collective of teachers, parents and neighbours who bring great pride to their work and volunteer efforts. That was most certainly on display at the school's Anzac assembly for 2021. Well done to Toongabbie East Public School. You are a credit to our local community and I thank you for keeping the flame of the Anzac spirit burning.

### **HUNTER REGION HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:09):** I address the deeply concerning housing and homelessness crisis that has engulfed the Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast communities. Recently I met with Nova for Women and Children, a local homelessness service provider. Nova told me that it is being overwhelmed with requests for assistance. Organisations such as Nova are not only being overwhelmed with requests for assistance; they have also found that their budgets have been stretched to the limit. This crisis requires urgent attention from the Government. But let me be very clear: The crisis has not been brought about simply by the financial impacts of COVID. It is a result of the Government's reliance on the private rental market to prop up its underinvestment in social and affordable housing.

In recent months a significantly increasing number of people who face homelessness or who are locked out of the rental market have contacted me. Local homelessness services and tenants' advice and advocacy services have also advised of a significant increase in people reaching out for assistance. Reports of a new cohort of middle-class couples who face homelessness is of particular concern. That is not a result of a lack of financial means but of a lack of housing supply, which is a damning indictment on the Government. Those reports should concern every member in this place. Homelessness services are being stretched to breaking point. Nova for Women and Children has had to establish a waiting list for emergency accommodation for the first time in its history. It is shameful that the rate of homelessness has been allowed to reach this level.

Nova is not the only organisation that has reported record requests for assistance. The Hunter Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service has also reported its highest level of demand in 20 years of service. In 2021 alone that service has assisted almost 500 tenants who face eviction. The housing crisis can be seen not only through the increased demand on services, but also through recent research published by Everybody's Home. That research found that, in the 12 months to June 2021, homelessness was projected to increase by 37.4 per cent in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. The same research found that housing stress would increase by a staggering 78 per cent. Many service providers, along with the emerging homeless community, have become so desperate that they recently held a tent city demonstration to bring attention to that very important issue, which members of the House have an obligation to address.

We have already seen the impacts of the expiration of the eviction moratorium. Local tenants' advocacy services have reported a doubling in calls from tenants who face no-grounds evictions. As a result of record low vacancy rates across the Hunter, a no-grounds eviction can leave a family facing homelessness. The Hunter Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service reports a 36 per cent increase in calls received compared to the same period in 2020. During the pandemic a number of those services received one-off funding boosts, but that funding is running out just as the housing crisis deepens. In fact, Nova for Women and Children has reported that the emergency funding that was provided as part of the COVID stimulus has run out. Particular concerns have been raised about the temporary accommodation budget reverting to pre-COVID levels despite the rise in homelessness.

Services such as Nova for Women and Children now find themselves supporting more clients than they are contracted to support by the Government. I was shocked when I discovered that the Government had informed some homelessness services that any of the stimulus support that was provided during COVID and that had not been spent by June must be returned. That is a disgraceful demand in the midst of a housing crisis. I call on the Berejiklian Government to take urgent action to tackle the housing crisis. In the short term, that means providing additional temporary accommodation and rental relief. In the medium term, that means investment in more social and affordable housing. Facilitating more residential land releases must be a priority. As a Parliament we must act to end the housing crisis that is engulfing communities right across New South Wales.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:14):** The member for Swansea will be pleased to know that the Government has just released its 2041 housing policy strategy. We are determined to do something about housing. Our 2021-22 action plan includes a 20-year commitment to achieving the supply of diverse, affordable and resilient housing. Actions for the first two years will establish a strong foundation to improve housing outcomes and choice for the people of New South Wales. Some initiatives include establishing a cross-sector expert housing advisory panel; maximising the impact of government-owned land and information to develop new housing types, tenures and delivery models; strengthening relationships with local governments, the community housing sector and private sector; and innovative housing solutions, including partnering to trial ways of facilitating temporary housing options, among others.

#### **CITY OF SYDNEY GREENING SYDNEY PLAN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:15):** I welcome the City of Sydney's new initiative to green the inner city, which is helping to build resilience against climate change and protect the health and wellbeing of residents. Open space, parks, trees, gardens and plants are not what come to mind when most people think of global city centres but they are essential to a city's ability to function. Green coverage in most cities across the world has been rapidly eroding, but under the leadership of Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Sydney's inner city has been getting greener. Over 15,000 trees were planted in the past 15 years and over 800,000 plants have been planted since 2009. Canopy cover has increased by 23 per cent, and parks and green spaces have expanded by 13 per cent in the past 10 years. Native bushland has increased by 180 per cent and 23 community and verge gardens have been established across the city. But more needs to be done.

Climate change is set to increase both average and maximum temperatures by three degrees by 2050, and heatwaves will be longer, hotter and more frequent. Cities are vulnerable to the heat island effect, with built structures and hard surfaces re-emitting absorbed heat to make temperatures even hotter. Natural landscapes and canopy cover have the opposite effect and can reduce ground temperature by up to 10 degrees. A greener city environment also has health and wellbeing benefits. Trees absorb pollution from traffic and clean the air. There is extensive evidence that greenery has a calming effect on one's emotional and mental state and can relieve depression and anxiety. The City of Sydney is rising to the challenge and has set an ambitious plan to cover 40 per cent of the inner city in vegetation by 2050, which will produce immense benefits. Targets include 23 per cent canopy cover by 2030, increasing to 27 per cent by 2050, and the city has committed to planting 700 trees each year. But it is not just streets and parks that will get greener, with a strategy to green laneways, roofs, walls, and private property.

Planning controls will promote green roofs in new developments and encourage retrofits where possible. The green factor score, a planning tool that quantifies urban greening in development projects, will be incorporated in planning controls and the development control plan with a mandatory minimum score. The council will only remove trees as a last resort and, when it does, it will compensate through a Greening Sydney Fund that will provide grants to green private land like installing green roofs, walls and facades. The city will work with local Aboriginal communities to establish new ways to design culturally sensitive green spaces and help people integrate with nature. Wider community participation will be encouraged through education programs, community gardens, city farms, bushcare and Landcare groups, and footpath gardening projects. The city will analyse sites across the local government area to ensure all residents and workers benefit from the plan. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of the public domain for health, wellbeing and community.

Lockdowns and work from home orders forced people to rely on public open space for exercise and downtime, and the streets and parks provided safe spaces to socialise. The Sydney electorate has diminishing opportunities to expand green space and the State Government should make use of available options. Land on William Street, Woolloomooloo, above the Eastern Distributor has long been neglected and remains in a state of disrepair. The inability to excavate the site limits its development potential, making it prime land for open space. Roads and Maritime Services owns the land and should give it to the city to manage for public recreation. The former Paddington Bowling Club is Crown land dedicated for recreation but it has been passed from commercial operator to commercial operator for decades, all seeking to squeeze as much profit from the land as possible. The site is located in a densely populated area with very low levels of open space, yet has remained unused for six years with management recently transferred again.

The Government should give it to Woollahra council to manage for community benefit in line with its intended purpose. Moore Park provides significant public open space and is in increasing demand from expanding surrounding populations, yet it is often alienated from public use. Car parking on the greens continues during events, despite light rail services. The Entertainment Quarter, which could become a hub for community sport and recreation has been earmarked for development through a lucrative unsolicited proposal. Those are wasted opportunities. Cities need open space, green canopy, plants and vegetation. I welcome the City of Sydney draft strategy to green the inner city. The strategy is currently on exhibition and I encourage all city residents, workers and visitors to provide input.

### VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:20):** Anzac Day is an important and solemn time for my local community, as I know it is for many others. The Vaucluse electorate is an area rich with military history and those important ties are felt strongly on 25 April each year. Like many in the community, I am grateful that we were able to come together this year to pay tribute to our service men and women who paid the ultimate price to protect our freedoms. Our Anzac Day events began early this year on Sunday 18 April with a wreath laying ceremony at the Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch. The sub-branch usually hosts a march along New South Head Road in Rose Bay with the Scots College pipes and drums, but due to COVID-19 there was no march last year or this year. Nevertheless, it was a solemn and beautiful service. We were joined at the service by HMAS *Watson* personnel based in the nearby Watsons Bay facility as well as one of my favourite local citizens, 96-year-old local resident and World War II veteran John Ryrle and his wonderful wife, Jan.

John recited the Ode as he has done in previous years. I thank honorary secretary Rosemary Stockley, OAM, for her efforts in arranging the event, as she has done for many years together with her husband, Lee. I also welcome recently appointed executive members president Charles Gallagher and vice-president Roy Cotton. The following Saturday night on 24 April I attended an inaugural Anzac Day eve event at the Royal Sydney Golf Club in Rose Bay. It was the first time it had hosted an Anzac-related commemoration. Together with the club membership, I was joined by John and Jan Ryrle, president Chris Chapman, local Federal MP Dave Sharma, Woollahra Mayor Susan Wynne and special guest speaker, retired Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AC, who served as the Chief of Army from 2008 to 2011. I particularly draw on the words delivered by retired Lieutenant General Gillespie in his address to the gathering, which I believe sum up the Anzac spirit:

The legacy of our ANZACS, and of our modern diggers, is that their achievements and traits, forged through battle have flowed into our communities and our population at large.

These traits (idealism, hanging in there, a fair go for all, compassion, courage and mateship) have been evident in every facet of Australian life since we picked ourselves up and confronted the terrible damage to our population and communities at the end of the Great War and again at the end of the Second World War, and we rallied and capitalised on the sacrifices made by our citizens. I thank president Chris Chapman and the club for hosting me. I hope they host a second commemoration of Anzac next year. On Anzac Day we had a full set of events, starting with the North Bondi RSL Club dawn service at Bondi Beach. The event is usually held outdoors looking onto the rising sun of Bondi Beach, drawing tens of thousands of people. This year it was held in the club auditorium and live streamed to everybody who turned up. Sizable crowds were still on the beach that chilly morning to pay their respects. I thank North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch president Rob de Graaf, who does an excellent job in hosting this event, along with president Martyn Bell and sub-branch treasurer Dave Sims.

Then it was on to the Waverley Cenotaph for an event hosted by Waverley Council and the Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Sub-Branch. We were joined this year by Christos Karras, the Consul General for Greece, who presented the commemoration address, and Waverley councillors Sally Betts, Will Nemesh and Leon Goltsman. John Duncan, our local area police command superintendent, and Semyon Pinchuk, a leader in our local Russian-Jewish community, also joined us for the commemoration ceremony. Finally, there was the Double Bay War Memorial ceremony, hosted by Woollahra Council. HMAS *Watson* commanding officer Captain Heath Robertson attended the service as well as Dave Sharma, Senator Andrew Bragg, councillors and Woollahra mayor Susan Wynne. Anzac Day and the days before it are complex. There are so many commemorative events. There should be. With that, I thank my local community for again making it a very memorable Anzac commemoration. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

## RACISM

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:25):** We need to #StopAsianHate and we need to stop the warmongering. There has been a rise in anti-Chinese and anti-Asian racism directly fuelled by politicians from across the political spectrum, media commentators and so-called experts whose hawkish positions are becoming increasingly hysterical and divisive. It has been over a year since the most recent anti-Chinese rhetoric started with COVID, but this was certainly not the beginning.

The year 1901 saw the White Australia Policy enacted—in part a response to the resentment held by white miners to the success of Chinese miners on the goldfields—further entrenching systemic racism on top of colonial invasion and genocide inflicted on First Nations people. Jump forward to the rise of One Nation and Pauline Hanson warning of fears of the "Asian invasion" and John Howard's "tough on borders" claims that "we decide who comes to this country". How proud they both must be today of Morrison and Dutton's skilful implementation of racist border policies under the guise of a global pandemic which initially saw those from China being sent to Christmas Island. Now our borders are shut to those wishing to return home from India.

We must focus locally and globally on rebuilding our commitment to international solidarity and restrengthening our efforts towards an activist-led peace movement. Many of us have continued to suffer through an increase in anti-Asian racism and distrust. There are real consequences of this. A member of the New South Wales Parliament had their house raided by ASIO. New South Wales councillors with Chinese heritage have received letters and death threats. There are reports documenting discrimination in the media, barriers for people working in the public service, increases in racist attacks, citizens having their loyalties questioned at Senate committees, universities being subjected to foreign interference laws, and the Australian Human Rights Commission being criticised for its "Racism. It Stops with me" campaign.

Then there is the endless tirade of racist crap and so-called jokes hurled at public figures. This is not okay. The message from many at the #StopAsianHate vigil that I joined recently outside Customs House in Sydney was clear: We will no longer be silent. We will not be your model migrants. You will not stereotype us as geeks. You will not objectify us as the subject of your exotic fantasies. And we will not shy away from speaking proudly about our cultural heritage for fear that you will brand us as apologists for the Chinese Communist Party.

On top of this racism, but absolutely connected to it, we are seeing the emergence of an alarmist, warmongering narrative, in some cases being driven by those who will directly profit from shifts to a war footing. The Greens are proudly a party that has at its core a respect for principles of peace and nonviolence. My first time volunteering for The Greens was at a State election back in 2003, about a month after the massive No War protests in Sydney. I wore my "No War" T-shirt. To this day a postcard of our Greens senators calling for an end to the war in Iraq when the United States President addressed the Australian Parliament sits in my office as a reminder of our principles and our commitment to both peace and nonviolence.

We abhor the militaristic pronouncements by the likes of the Home Affairs Secretary with his appalling "drums of war" rhetoric, or the not-so-confidential briefing to Australia's special forces soldiers last year. This cold war rhetoric and anti-China posturing is dangerous. It serves political aims and fans racism at the expense of well-considered diplomacy in this country and around the globe. We on the left have an important role to play in cutting through the propaganda and the anti-Chinese sentiment. We need to be pushing for an independent foreign policy that enables us to advocate for a realistic approach to China-Australia relations. We must remind people that while Australia has long hitched a ride on the US's coat-tails, when it comes to foreign policy it means we have shamefully followed the US into every war for decades.

At our core, we must be anti-racist in our approach to all that we do. That includes how we talk and what we do when it comes to international relations and to China. It is not easy and there are many complexities to negotiate. But if we vacate this space and leave it open to be filled by hawks and those posing as doves who claim to care about human rights but when you scratch below the surface you find a disturbing mix of white saviour complexes and entrenched fear of yellow peril, then we will have lost. Let us be inspired by the peace activists and the anti-racism campaigners here and around the globe, past and present. Let us remember the actions of those who have inspired us and continue to take a strong commitment to international solidarity, peace and nonviolence in our local communities and around the globe.

## MEMBER FOR HORNSBY

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:30):** I recently marked the tenth anniversary of my election as the member for Hornsby. Hornsby is not just lines on a map to me. It is the place where I grew up and the place where I am raising my own family. It is a proud stronghold of the Liberal Party. I thank all the dedicated party members who have worked side by side with me over the past decade. I was elected to fight for the services and infrastructure that our community needs. The Hornsby hospital was in dire

straits. Nurses and doctors had to put out buckets and towels to collect water every time it rained and possums ran through the operating theatres. I vowed to fight every day to turn Hornsby hospital into a world-class health centre, and I am so proud of what we have achieved. Since I was elected the Government has invested \$400 million in rebuilding our hospital. It now has first-class facilities, including a new intensive care unit, emergency department, a paediatrics unit and an inpatient mental health facility, all filled with state-of-the-art medical technology, including the first robotic pharmacy in New South Wales. Hornsby hospital is now a possum-free zone, delivering the quality health care that our community needs.

Back in 2011 traffic on Pennant Hills Road was a daily battle. I campaigned hard for NorthConnex, which is now open and taking 5,000 cars a day off Pennant Hills Road, returning local roads to local residents and delivering faster, safer travel for everyone. In the greatest win-win, we are using the spoil from the tunnel to turn the ugly, old Hornsby Quarry into the Centennial Parklands of the north—a place for our community to enjoy for generations to come. Again, I identified the opportunity and was able to deliver this remarkable piece of public open space for everyone to enjoy. We have fixed accident black spots, like the one at Sebastian Drive, and we are making sure our train and bus stations are accessible for all. If I can borrow Gough Whitlam's phrase, when I first came into Parliament I found Galston and Cowan unsewered and now they are fully flushed, connected to sewerage years ahead of the original schedule.

For the volunteer groups that are the heart of Hornsby, I have dedicated over \$3 million into community facilities, including a new long-jump track at Northern District Little Athletics club, upgrades to Warrina Street Oval and new premises for the Berowra Rural Fire Service. I am focused on making our local schools even greater with facilities like the new classrooms at Asquith Boys High, which were built with a grant of over \$100,000. I thank the Premier for her trust in placing me in her ministry as the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and in her Cabinet as the Minister for Energy and Environment. As the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation I always fought for the little guy, delivering a fairer deal for retirement village residents, smashing the dodgy business models of the ticket scalpers, extending expiry dates on gift cards to three years and promoting the job-creating innovation that would secure our State's future.

In energy and environment, this State is now leading the nation in responding to climate change, making sure New South Wales reaps the benefits of the shift to a low-carbon economy while delivering cheap, green and reliable energy to everyone in our State. The energy road map ended the climate and energy wars and settled them with multi-party and multi-partisan support to ensure we delivered a comprehensive and nation-leading set of reforms to modernise our electricity system and drive billions of dollars of investment into the State, to create thousands of jobs and to deliver some of the cheapest, cleanest and most reliable energy anywhere on the planet. We have delivered record expansions to our national park estate with an additional 200,000 hectares of land including the largest ever parcel of private land, the Narriearra Caryapundy Swamp National Park—actions that will ensure we leave our planet to our kids better than we found it. Ten years ago I said that it will always remain my first priority to do all that I can to serve the community that has provided the enormous honour of electing me as their member of Parliament. I renew that pledge today.

### VAPING IN SCHOOLS

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:34):** I speak about the growing concern of vaping and the use of e-cigarettes in our schools. I am growing deeply concerned about the ease of access to e-cigarettes in the electorate of Prospect and the use of them in our schools is rapidly increasing. I have been approached by parents, teachers and principals concerned about vaping. It is clear that this issue is becoming prominent across western Sydney. We cannot be naive about the fact that this will have serious health implications for an entire generation of young people across New South Wales.

The story from our school halls and playgrounds is one of real concern. I have heard firsthand accounts of vaping occurring across school grounds, including within the classroom. The small, discreet nature of the e-cigarette is easily concealable and students have made it a challenge to smoke in class—literally behind their teachers' backs. The limitation on teachers' searching powers has meant that students can and will avoid being caught with e-cigarettes on their person. Our teachers have enough challenges on their hands without having to also focus on whether or not their students are attempting to vape. It is creating a culture of distraction, which ultimately impacts on and damages all of our children's learning within the classroom. Outside of our teachers' direct supervision, we know students are feeling emboldened to take their vaping habits further and further. One student told of the fact that at his school the material exhaled from an e-cigarette was so prominent in the student bathrooms that it became impossible to enter without experiencing a coughing fit. The child in question is asthmatic.

The selling of e-cigarettes within our schools is, in effect, a form of drug dealing. Individual students take it upon themselves to secure e-cigarettes and then onsell them for a mark-up to other students at school. With each new student taking up vaping, we simply create a bigger hill for our community to climb to fight this epidemic

within our community. The health impacts are of concern to our educational leaders and our parents and should be of great concern to members of this House. E-cigarettes are highly addictive to teenagers, with even some that are labelled "nicotine free" actually containing that dangerous chemical. They are just as harmful to our kids as regular cigarettes. The product is still so new by comparison that we do not know the true damage to long-term health as scientists continue working to understand the effects. Nicotine exposure during the teenage years can harm brain development, which continues until about the age of 25.

Over 200,000 Australians have taken up the practice of vaping. Whilst we have to be respectful of consenting adults using e-cigarettes, more must be done by the New South Wales Government to protect the health of our students and give the support that our school leaders desperately need. The University of Southern Queensland is currently investigating the regular use of e-cigarettes in young and otherwise healthy adults, and how it can reduce respiratory function and exercise capacity. The New South Wales Government must watch the outcome of this study carefully. I suspect it will reveal what many experts around the world already suspect: that vaping is doing untold damage to the lungs of our students.

The New South Wales Government is asleep at the wheel when it comes to vaping. The Government's inaction has created an issue of epidemic proportions in our schools. We will have a mountain to climb in order to bring this issue under control unless we act now. I know that my NSW Labor colleagues are fielding calls from constituents who are desperate to see considered action from the Government. Our principals are crying out for statewide support. Our teachers want to know that they can teach their students without worrying about their health in their classrooms. Our parents want to make sure their kids are attending safe school environments without worrying about their health.

Frankly, this epidemic has gone too far. I call on the New South Wales Government to take considered, statewide action to directly target vaping in our schools. We need a considered, coordinated approach between NSW Health, the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Police Force. We need to not only cut off the supply of e-cigarettes among students but also provide the support that our frontline teachers need to end the practice on school grounds. Further to that, we must educate our student bodies about the damage of e-cigarettes to their health—just like we did a generation ago with regular cigarettes. NSW Labor will continue to fight for our principals and teachers, who continue to inspire in their efforts to protect our children's health.

#### **ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:40):** In my electorate of Pittwater people are installing solar panels on their houses and charging stations in their homes. As electric vehicle prices come down we will see more and more on our streets. Bloomberg New Energy Finance estimated five years ago that by 2040 about 32 per cent of global car sales would be electric vehicles [EVs]. It is clear that there is a revolution underway. Northern Beaches Council has been progressively introducing charging stations at council car parks and is actively working towards transitioning its fleet of council vehicles to electric. I thank my colleagues the environment Minister, the transport Minister and the Treasurer for sparking the recent debate on electric vehicles.

I too support efforts to transition toward electric vehicles. They can improve our air quality, which is especially important in the Sydney Basin. They are also cheaper to run, helping with families' cost of living, and they will play a critical role in helping the Government achieve its commitment to net zero by 2050. They can be powered by locally generated renewable sources and not imported petroleum, increasing our energy security. We recognise that globally around 23 per cent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are from transport sources, so this is clearly an important part of global efforts toward combating anthropocentric global warming.

However, a bigger question remains. We cannot ignore the fact that EVs too create environmental externalities. They are really heavy and really torque-y. They create huge pressure on roadways, increasing wear and tear. They still contribute to congestion. They still generate particulates, with fine particulates from brakes and tyres. Because EVs are so heavy, those particulates from brakes and tyres can actually be more significant than from existing petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles. The fundamental challenge is that, although EVs are powered by more efficient and sustainable power sources, they are still cars. Painting them green does not change that reality. They still perpetuate physical inactivity and propagate sedentary lifestyles. Of course private vehicles are wonderful servants, but they make terrible masters. That is why just changing from a polluting master to a more efficient master does not alter our growing dependence on—some might say enslavement to—private motor vehicles.

We can all play a part in reducing reliance on private transport by being mindful of active and public transport alternatives. But it is important, particularly for those living in cities, to reflect on how our individual consumption of resources can impact on the environment more broadly. How can we be more conscious about the trips we choose to take by car, and is it possible to make them differently? Is it a short trip that could be walked

or a long trip that cannot? As policymakers we have a responsibility to deliver infrastructure and public amenity that enables active transport. We have seen, through the pandemic, how important local high streets and shops are to servicing our everyday needs.

Urban design has a big part to play. We are investing some \$30 million to improve the experience of local shops and to encourage people to walk there through programs such as Streets as Shared Spaces and Your High Street. More fundamentally, the Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy will be focused on ensuring that new suburbs, subdivisions and sites are designed to reduce car dependence—no matter how cars are powered. Walking, cycling and public transport are cheaper, healthier and more accessible to a greater number of people and are a big element in creating just cities and towns. The biggest single influencer to a person's decision to drive in a metropolitan area is the availability of car parking. Our human behaviour is to take the easiest route, and that is why people will use active and public transport when they are incentivised to do so. That is why reducing car dependence is just as important as improving the way in which cars are powered.

One of the challenges for us is how we can be more conscious about the trips that we choose to take by car and whether it is possible to take them differently. Essentially we all have a role to play in consumption and the choices we make. EVs should certainly be encouraged and have expansive benefits, but we should not get complacent on our vehicle usage. We should continue to look for ways as government and as community to deliver infrastructure that supports active transport, and as individuals to make lower consumption choices when we can. I began by mentioning the renewables revolution that is underway in my community of Pittwater, but there is another more profound and more subversive revolution underway: People are reducing their energy demand by walking and cycling, which has been influenced by the pandemic. Shared cycleways and pedestrian pathways are generating huge levels of activity in many communities such as Mona Vale, Palm Beach, Church Point and Narrabeen Lagoon. It is exciting to see families out enjoying these incredible facilities. While electric vehicles are certainly more efficient than existing vehicles, using vehicles less is even better.

#### **NORAH HEAD COMMUNITY HALL**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:45):** I raise an issue that has been brought to my attention. It is a direct response to the decision by Central Coast Council to announce tranche three of its asset sales, which were described to the community as sites that were surplus to needs. On closer scrutiny, many of those sites are cherished by the local community. I will talk about one: the Norah Head Community Hall. Norah Head is one of the most picturesque areas in the State and home to the Norah Head Lighthouse. The population is around 4,259 people, but the community swells at holiday times. It has caravan parks and rental accommodation and it is certainly one of the prime suburbs on the Central Coast. The Norah Head Community Hall was built and funded by locals. The community has had a longstanding ownership and an emotional attachment to it. Those who participated in its construction describe it as being the heart of Norah Head.

The president and secretary of the Norah Head Residents, Ratepayers and Coastcare Association, Gary Dean, contacted me on behalf of his organisation and asked me to pose some questions. The council has expended considerable funds in recent years to refurbish this much-loved community asset, but the community is now being told that the centre is unsafe for public use and has reached the end of its life. He asks, "Is council exaggerating the building condition to bring it on the agenda for sale?" We have been told that the hall has severe termite damage. After the sale was announced, the council suddenly closed the hall and said that it was unfit for use. Some groups, including Playgroup NSW in Norah Head, have been using the hall for 43 years. It also wrote a letter asking the council why it had just laid brand-new flooring, installed air conditioning, put in place a wonderful new fully fenced playground—not to mention the work that had been completed for the Norah Head village master plan—to then suddenly say that it was unfit for use and shut it down not long after it declared that it was for sale. These are important questions.

This is a community that bands together and tries to fix things, so they have put to the council that they do not agree that the hall is in imminent danger of collapsing nor of anyone being injured. They believe the hall is a valuable community asset that should not be sold. The community is strong enough to repair the asset, so they are offering to fundraise and get local tradies to fix it. That is the offer they are making to Central Coast Council. They are also asking the council to delay its plans to sell the hall and give the community time to look at ways that they can revive the hall and make it viable in the future. That is a pretty good response from the community, and the council should be listening carefully to what they are putting forward.

As I said, many groups use the hall. Playgroup NSW has been using it for 43 years. The alternative is a place called Halekulani Community Hall, which is not close. It is on a main road and it has no fencing or playground, so it is clearly not appropriate. The community hall is the only one that exists in Norah Head; it serves the whole suburb. The council has to take it off the sale list. The council must listen to the community and back them in. I know that my Federal colleague Emma McBride has written to the new CEO, David Farmer, and put

forward the concerns of the community. I will certainly be making a submission to support keeping this important community asset.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:50):** I acknowledge the member for Wyong and his concerns in regard to Norah Head. I echo those concerns. It is right and proper that the community has a transparent view of what is happening. The council needs to look long and hard at its asset base. At the same time, it needs to listen to the community's concerns, especially when they are prepared to put forward funding to help restore a council asset. Often across the Central Coast either State Government or community funding has been put into a council asset base, whether it be a surf lifesaving club or other infrastructure, only for the council to then try to charge commercial rates for some of the facilities. The council needs to look long and hard at how it positively engages with the community. I have total confidence that the new CEO, David Farmer, is a fair and reasonable man and I am sure that he will do this. I am happy to take up any concerns that the member for Wyong has on this issue.

#### **RYDE ELECTORATE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (17:51):** Ryde, and New South Wales as a whole, continues to reap the rewards of unprecedented investment in our schools and future. This new wave of infrastructure comes with not only greater capacity for future growth but also a renewed faith in higher standards and a willingness to provide the very best opportunity to every child. This is epitomised in our recent school openings in Ryde, from the brand new Smalls Road Public School to expansions and new builds and our beloved local West Ryde Public School and Denistone East Primary School. Kent Road Public School joined the ranks as the newest school unveiled. It has been virtually replaced with an entirely new school for the modern age that has earned it the nickname of Kent Road University. It is an apt title, as the school now boasts 34 new and permanent flexible learning spaces, two special program spaces and new administration and staff facilities as well as an extended hall, new library, new canteen and a play area with more functional outdoor areas and multipurpose sports courts. These works will undoubtedly contribute to the ever-changing history of our area and the future of our next generation.

Investment in school infrastructure is critical, but these investments carry with them a great deal of work. This rings true for the locals and neighbours of Kent Road, who put up with disruption in daily life in recognition of the need for a better future for our children. That extends to the families and students who form the school community. While we await the icing on the cake of the completed works, such as the upcoming kiss-and-ride area to help with pick up and drop off, the whole project has brought my local community together. I thank Mel Marcellino, former P&C president of Kent Road, who has invested a generous portion of her time to the project. Mel is an absolute powerhouse. She gets so much done for our community and I will be indebted to her forever. She has attended meetings to oversee the progress of the build and has advocated for parents and the school at every opportunity. We owe her a great deal of gratitude. Ryde is lucky to have members of our community as passionate as her.

The staff and teachers of Kent Road under Principal Denise Minifie also deserve enormous praise for ensuring that any disruption was minimised and that the whole school ran smoothly, while always prioritising the needs of students. Furthermore, Principal Minifie herself spearheaded works undertaken and worked with the department branches of School Infrastructure NSW to guide her school through this build. She is an honest, kind and hardworking individual. Again, we owe her a great deal of gratitude for going way beyond the standard role of a principal. It has been noted to me that the contributing architects and interior designers collaborating on this build went out of their way to deliver a desired end product for the community. Despite the challenges, details and difficulties of planning a school, it is fitting that collaboration and communication between the parties involved has resulted in a modern school with flexible classrooms where students can learn those very values. The design espouses the character of the land and nature around it with colours reminiscent of the native blue gums inhabiting the campus.

I was able to join Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning the Hon. Sarah Mitchell at the official opening of the school earlier this year. My amazing mum and members of the community were also in attendance. This is a reflection of the important work that we are doing across the State and offers an insight of so much more to come as the Government continues to place the needs of the community first. Kent Road has a special place in my heart because it is on a parcel of land almost adjacent to where my grandfather had a market garden about 80 years ago. So it was a nostalgic and proud moment for me to open up the new school. It is just so amazing. Again, I congratulate all involved. I could not be happier with the Ryde of the future that we are building. We all look forward to seeing how Kent Road itself and its students shape the future of Ryde and beyond. In many ways, Kent Road Primary School—or Kent Road University, as it has been nicknamed—is so critical to the Ryde renaissance that is underway.

### LAURIETON MEN'S SHED

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:56):** Members will have seen, read and heard about the devastating floods that severely impacted the mid North Coast in late March this year. The rainfall and subsequent flooding was extraordinary and had to be seen to be believed. Some locations around Port Macquarie received almost 900 millimetres of rain in six days. It was not just the broken rainfall records that made these floods so exceptional, it was also the vast area that was affected by them and the persistence of the heavy rain over five days. In the ABC News article "NSW floods unmatched in scale and rainfall, but history shows there have been worse", Associate Professor Fiona Johnson, a hydrologist from the Water Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, was quoted as saying:

Rainfall of 200mm in one day is rare. It might occur once every 10 or 20 years, but when you look at the five-day total, that's unprecedented.

What was also extraordinary, both during and following the floods that devastated the Port Macquarie electorate, was the community. The acts of bravery, the deeds of kindness and the collaboration and friendship on display time and again were something I have never seen before. I will be highlighting many of these remarkable efforts in this Parliament in the weeks ahead.

However, today I acknowledge and applaud the efforts of the members of the Laurieton Men's Shed and local Andy McCoubrie who, soon after the flood waters began to subside, established the tool rescue centre. This group of innovative and hardworking men attempted to repair around 430 pieces of equipment. They achieved an impressive 90 per cent success rate. It is estimated that the efforts of those involved saved around \$150,000 worth of equipment, including one high-pressure spray unit valued at \$15,000. Andy described the response from the flood victims as "heart melting". Some of the tools were specialist tools of trade, some were needed immediately for the flood response such as high-pressure sprayers and generators, and a number of pieces had sentimental value. So many people who were impacted by the floods had much of their belongings destroyed, so every item that was saved was money that they could spend on other items of need. The efforts of the members of the Laurieton Men's Shed—all of them volunteers—was incredible. Without funding, no place to operate and no equipment, they managed to effectively establish a large-scale tool and garden equipment repair centre in three days, with 25 willing and able workers ready to lend their well-refined skills to help others.

I acknowledge the president of the Laurieton Men's Shed, Brian Wood, who was so eager to get his members involved in this initiative. Every day for five weeks, including over the Easter holidays and most weekends, they worked tirelessly. They put their vast and specialised skills and experience to work and disassembled every tool and piece of equipment that needed rescuing. There were always at least 10 Men's Shed members beavering away with determination and passion. As a community, we should be so incredibly proud of their efforts. Paul and Leanne Eames of Camden Haven Panel Works are also deserving of acknowledgement and praise. They loaned their industrial shed for the men to use as a logistical centre for all the equipment and tools. I know that their generous contribution was very much appreciated. I commend Andy McCoubrie for his leadership, his kindness and his support of this wonderful group of local men who have made a real difference to the lives of so many people impacted by the floods.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### KU-RING-GAI AND HORNSBY MEALS ON WHEELS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:00):** Last year I had the opportunity to meet the amazing volunteers at our local Meals on Wheels. Since 1961, Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Meals on Wheels has been serving the most vulnerable members of our community. Providing high-quality and nutritious dishes produced locally in their Turrumurra kitchen, this group of dedicated staff deliver over 1,400 meals each week. The service this not-for-profit organisation provides is relied upon by many in my local community and 2020 was a particularly challenging year. Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Meals on Wheels rapidly changed its processes to ensure it could continue to deliver meals whilst keeping its staff and volunteers safe from the spread of COVID-19. I commend the team for their nimble response. On behalf of the Ku-ring-gai electorate, I thank all our local volunteers who continue to support our seniors and other vulnerable community members. These volunteers provide more than just a meal; they provide the ability for our community members to retain dignity through independence.

### DANN KING

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:01):** Wyong emergency department registered nurse Dann King is trading in his scrubs for riding gear as he takes on more than 1,300 kilometres across 10 days to raise funds for cancer research, support and prevention. Dann will be riding in two Tour de Cure Australia events, taking on the three-day 356-kilometre Westpac Ride for a Cure from Forster to Sydney via the Central Coast from 14 March 2021 and the seven-day 952-kilometre Signature Tour from Newcastle to Coffs Harbour from 26 March 2021.

The cancer day unit at Wyong Hospital was chosen to be one of the recipients of funds raised through the Tour de Cure. It will receive \$10,000 towards the purchase of a chemotherapy treatment chair and a computer on wheels that will enable staff to update a patient's record while they receive treatment. Dann has a history of cancer-related illness in his family and taking on these rides will challenge him physically and mentally. But Dann is all about supporting his local community, knowing the funds raised will go a long way towards supporting local people and their families during their cancer journeys.

### **RICHMOND STRAIGHT TRACK**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:02):** I provide an update to the House on my attendance with the Hon. Kevin Anderson, Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and Tony Mestrov, CEO of Greyhound Racing NSW, on 13 April 2021 at the Richmond Race Club to officially open the State's first straight racing track. The 324-metre turf track includes the use of IsoLynx microchip technology, which provides greyhound health and welfare benefits through monitoring dogs' heart and stress levels. The data collected assists Greyhound Racing NSW and the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission to improve greyhound welfare. This is a significant milestone in the Government's ongoing commitment to improving greyhound welfare standards and is a huge win for our local trainers, owners and the many greyhounds that benefit from increased safety at the track. I commend Mr Mestrov at Greyhound Racing NSW, the President of Richmond Race Club, Peter Rodgers, and their teams for their work in advancing the greyhound industry in the Hawkesbury area and for their strong commitment to greyhound welfare.

### **INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:03):** On 4 May 2021 we celebrated St Florian's Day, also known as International Firefighters Day, when we are asked to remember, recognise and honour the sacrifices that firefighters have made to protect our communities and the environment. It is important that we thank current and past firefighters for their dedication and that we honour and remember those who have sacrificed their lives whilst protecting our community. We have seen repeatedly the bravery of firefighters who run towards the flames in the service of others and it is that selflessness that is a hallmark of the profession. It was pleasing to witness some of our firefighters be publicly acknowledged at the NSW Rural Fire Service St Florian's Day Awards ceremony for their true acts of courage and bravery. I also acknowledge and remember my firefighter friends who no longer walk amongst us. May they rest in peace. The 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires were devastating and further reiterated the selfless work of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The New South Wales community extends its gratitude to all firefighters throughout our State for their dedication to protecting our community.

### **HAYLEY KITCHING AND JACK SHEEHAN**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:04):** In the athletics arena, Coffs Harbour junior athletes Hayley Kitching and Jack Sheehan have conquered all before them to be the best juniors in Australia. These Coffs Harbour track and field members are national junior champions after winning their respective events at the Australian Track and Field Championships in Sydney. Hayley Kitching triumphed in the under-18s women's 800 metre event, while Jack Sheehan was crowned national junior champion in the under-18s 110 metre hurdles event. Jack was the number one seed heading into the final after winning his heat in a time of 14.34 seconds. He won the national title with a time of 14.20 seconds. Hayley claimed gold in the under-18s 800 metres, sitting with the lead pack going through the first lap before taking the lead down the back straight and holding on to win in a new personal best of 2.07.16 seconds. It was a national title a long time coming for the new 800 metre champion. On behalf of the electorate of Coffs Harbour, I congratulate Hayley and Jack on their athletic achievements.

### **MAITLAND PICKERS RUGBY CLUB**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:05):** I acknowledge tonight the Maitland Pickers Rugby League Club. The Pickers were founded in 1942, and have been a stalwart of our local community ever since. Despite COVID-19 bringing turbulence to many rugby league clubs across the State, the Maitland Pickers salvaged a season of success. The first grade men's side picked up the President's Cup in 2020, defeating the Glebe-Burwood Wolves 17-16 in a knife-edge grand final at Bank West Stadium. The men's under-19 side also managed a stellar result, reaching the play-offs in their competition. The women's side made it all the way to the grand final against Souths Newcastle, but unfortunately did not get the trophy at the end. But I thank very much the first grade men's coach, Matt Lantry, for his hard work and wish the best of luck to him and all the players and coaches for this year's finals. I take this opportunity to acknowledge club president Frank Lawler for his endless dedication in ensuring that the great standard of rugby league continues in Maitland.

### FORRESTERS BEACH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:06):** On 10 April I was delighted to attend the opening of the new Seventh-day Adventist Church at Forrester's Beach. The church opening celebrates the amalgamation of Erina and The Entrance Seventh-day Adventist churches in a location that reflects the members of the two congregations. The new site, originally purchased in 2013, was a much-needed upgrade for the former Erina Seventh-day Adventist Church, which had remained on the same site since 1919, until briefly moving to Terrigal Uniting Church in 2018 and finally to Forrester's Beach. I congratulate the speakers at the opening: Pastor Adrian Raethel, President of the North New South Wales Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; Pastor Russel Stanley, Building Committee Chairman; and Scott Allen, director of Plum Group Constructions on their hard work in building and opening this brand-new church building. The new site is a fantastic addition to members of the church's congregation and the wider community and I was delighted to be in attendance at its opening.

### WOLLONGONG MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:07):** Ever since I was one-year-old I have attended May Day. It is a great tradition within my family. Last Friday night I attended the May Day Toast, held at the Wollongong City Diggers. I pay my absolute respect and give my thanks to the May Day committee. Saturday was the day of the march in Wollongong and it is a day that I look forward to every year. In attendance were the Maritime Union of Australia, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, the Health Services Union, the United Services Union, the Australian Services Union, and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. It is always a fabulous day. The songs of solidarity ring as true today as they did 100 years ago and I am very proud to be a unionist in this place, and I know that the member for Swansea is too. I encourage everyone to join in May Day. It is a celebration of workers in New South Wales and we are the party for the worker in New South Wales.

### LESELLE HERMAN

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:08):** I congratulate Mudgee midwife Leselle Herman, who has just been named Midwife of the Year for the Western NSW Local Health District, as we celebrate International Day of the Midwife. Leselle is definitely a great asset to the Mudgee Health Service. She has been described as a very hardworking member of the team who shows great initiative and innovation towards clinical education and the mentoring of new staff. This award is based on a demonstration and commitment to the Living Well Together values in the midwifery profession itself, as well as a demonstration of leadership. Leselle not only demonstrates all of those required qualities; she is also a fantastic role model to not only other midwives but also staff across the hospital. Over the past 12 months she has been working to improve patient outcomes by educating staff and contributing to the Mudgee Maternity Clinical Review. Well done, Leselle.

### INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:09):** Tonight I acknowledge the importance of International Workers Memorial Day, which took place on Wednesday 28 April 2021. Nobody should have to worry that their partner, parent or child will go to work one day and never return home. On International Workers Memorial Day, we stop to remember all those who have lost their lives at work or because of a work-related illness, so that we keep in our minds the importance of ensuring that it never happens again. This year we also remembered all those health workers internationally who have lost their lives due to COVID-19. I had the privilege of attending memorial services in Newcastle and on the Central Coast, in which family members and union delegates spoke of the pain of losing a loved one or a co-worker in a work-related death. My thoughts are with the friends and family of all those workers who have lost their lives at work or as a result of their work.

### CHIPPING NORTON SAILING CLUB

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:10):** Today I acknowledge Chipping Norton Sailing Club for its achievements in the Liverpool Cup. The club participated in the Liverpool Cup in March and saw 14 boats compete on the day. What a huge effort! The Liverpool Cup has a perpetual trophy for both handicap and yardstick winners. Racing on the day was close and was challenging with variable conditions and wind, but that did not stop the club's members. They had a great turnout and I congratulate everyone who participated. The club was established in 1995 and has been an integral part of promoting community-based water activities in the Holsworthy electorate. I have been pleased to provide them with funding through the Community Building Partnership program because I know they put it to good use. Once again I congratulate Chipping Norton Sailing Club on its achievements in the Liverpool Cup and commend the club for being an important part of the local community.

### CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:11):** The Cerebral Palsy Alliance designed a program to support the developmental needs of children aged up to two years who have, or are at risk of, cerebral palsy or whose movement skills are delayed. Cerebral palsy is a common physical disability in childhood that affects movement and posture. A team of physiotherapists from Tuggerah will help the early diagnoses of cerebral palsy in babies by conducting a Baby Movers program for families across regional New South Wales. The program is viewed online via telehealth, with the group providing an interactive and social environment involving songs and play, motivating young children to learn to move. The telehealth program was established last year, allowing the Cerebral Palsy Alliance to continue running the programs throughout the COVID lockdown period, and now it continues to support families in regions such as the South Coast, the mid North Coast, New England and Central West. The Greater Charitable Foundation has been supporting the Cerebral Palsy Alliance for 10 years and is amazed by the wonderful work it conducts with those families in great need.

### HANNAH ROSS

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:12):** Tonight I acknowledge the wonderful Hannah Ross, in the electorate of Manly, who is the school captain at Manly West Public School. Hannah has the wonderful opportunity of being selected to participate in the inaugural Department of Student Voices in Education and Schools [DOVES] council. The council is the peak body for students to interact with New South Wales public school students, the NSW Department of Education and the New South Wales Minister for Education. Hannah presented via a Zoom interview and put in a wonderful application to be successful. She is one of 27 students who will represent all students in New South Wales as part of the DOVES program. Hannah will be attending Parliament House and meeting with the Minister for Education in the coming months and I wish to share how proud I am of her efforts in representing Manly.

### FRONTLINE HEALTH WORKERS

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:13):** On Monday 26 March 2021 I joined my NSW Labor colleagues Guy Zangari, MP, and Nick Lalich, MP, at Fairfield Hospital with the team from the Health Services Union [HSU] to discuss issues impacting our frontline health workers. Our frontline health workers have been heavily impacted during the COVID-19 health crisis. These extraordinary people have put themselves at risk day in and day out to ensure the health and safety of our community. Frontline health workers have had to adapt and innovate due to the challenges of the global health pandemic, and they have done a remarkable job in continuing to serve our community. I thank all of the dedicated healthcare workers at Fairfield Hospital, especially the HSU members, for their continual efforts in keeping our community safe and healthy. I also thank the HSU for listening to and voicing the concerns of our essential frontline workers. The HSU has repeatedly ensured that the needs of frontline health workers are supported and met. The HSU has always stood beside frontline health workers in the trying times of COVID-19 and continues to do a wonderful job as new health challenges arise.

### GREG LAIRD, OAM

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:14):** I recognise a stalwart of the Port Macquarie RSL Sub Branch, President Greg Laird, OAM, who has announced his retirement after 19 years of service at the helm. President Laird joined the Port Macquarie RSL Sub Branch in 2003 and led the Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorations for a period of 19 years before declaring he would step aside, after nearly two decades supporting our returned veterans and their families. Described by his peers as a true embodiment of the spirit of Anzac, President Laird has built a legacy to be proud of since taking over the reins. Today the organisation is recognised as one of the largest RSL sub branches in regional New South Wales, with 350 registered members, including 22 of the region's remaining World War II veterans. President Laird descends from a long line of honourable servicemen, with his father and both grandparents undertaking military service for their country. In 1969 President Laird was called to service in the Vietnam War, where he valiantly served the Commonwealth and the people of Australia. War is not to be glorified, he says, but the sacrifice, the mateship, the camaraderie and the resilience that defines the Anzac spirit is deeply embedded in our shared story as a nation and who we are as Australians.

### FRIENDS OF GROSSMANN HOUSE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:15):** I speak today to celebrate the Friends of Grossmann House, a dedicated community group in Maitland who are currently undertaking a fundraising drive to aid the maintenance of one of my town's most important historical assets. Grossmann House was built between 1870 and 1871 by Isaac Beckett as a mirror image to the adjoining property, Brough House, which was built by Beckett's business partner, Samuel Owens. The two English-born merchants came to our shores in 1838, quickly establishing themselves with a variety of businesses on Maitland's High Street in the following years. At that time

Maitland was a commercial hub in the Hunter Valley and Australia's largest inland town. The site housed the Maitland Girls' High School, one of the State's oldest public schools, between 1892 and 1962. The site has since passed into the hands of the National Trust, which has restored the property and opened it to the public. Grossmann House's extensive collection of nineteenth century costumes and textiles helps tell the story of local life and industry in Victorian-era Maitland. I wholeheartedly support and celebrate the group's passion for the history of Maitland and I thank them for their tireless volunteering to showcase our history.

#### **PEAKHURST SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:16):** From Pancake Day to Father's Day breakfasts, the new outdoor kitchen and sheltered barbecue area at Peakhurst South Public School will be a place for all to enjoy. Recently I visited the school to announce to their P&C president, Alison Burns, and principal, Neralie Chappell, that they will be receiving \$20,000, thanks to the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership Grant. This is one of 10 schools and educational precincts in the local community that have received funding through the program, which showcases that our Government is committed to improving educational facilities for all students. This investment in local schools will provide improved facilities, including playground upgrades, electronic signage and revamped amenities. I thank the P&C, Alison, Neralie and the entire team at Peakhurst South Public School for outlining the importance of this project for students and how it will benefit them into the future. Congratulations again on this outstanding achievement. I look forward to seeing the project completed and lending a hand in the outdoor barbecue area at the school.

#### **BARB AND WARREN PENGELLY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:17):** For Barb and Warren Pengelly, it is time to enjoy life once again as a retired couple. I say "once again" because 15 years ago Barb would have told you that she was happily retired, having spent most her life working in the pharmaceutical industry, and Warren was easing into a different pace of life, having just retired from his career as a sheetmetal worker. That was until the pair took a drive to Bolwarra, stopped for a coffee and became owners of the iconic Bolwarra Cafe—all in the same day! The transition back into working life was both impromptu and quick. From the outset Barb said it was only for three years. I guess like many small business owners, time flies when you are having fun. I congratulate them on embracing and taking on new life challenges, despite having no experience in cafe ownership. They have certainly got it now! The value they have both added to our community over the years through the Bolwarra Cafe has been felt by many. You never know what life has in store for you, although I hope for Barb and Warren's sake that from here on it is an enjoyable retirement together.

#### **AMY COLEMAN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:18):** Today I recognise the efforts of Cremorne Point resident Amy Coleman in establishing the Lower North Shore Ladies Club. Amy is a local community member whose new group provides a safe and inviting place for women to socialise and support one another. The number of members has grown rapidly over the past couple of months and has attracted women from a range of professions, including small business owners, young professionals, mums, those seeking work and others. The club recently hosted its third Fabulous Fridays event, inviting members and guests to come together with a glass of bubbles in hand. I thank Amy for her commitment in starting this local community initiative. It fosters such a vital and powerful support network for local women, from business opportunities to social activities. I am excited to watch the club grow and continue to celebrate our local women's achievements. Thank you Amy for your passion, your hard work and your advocacy in support of women. Congratulations on what you have achieved for women in this community and what you will achieve more broadly as time goes on and for women across our region.

#### **SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS GRANTS**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:19):** I commend and congratulate Windsor High School, Kurrajong North Public School, Kurmond Public School and Pitt Town Public School for being successful with their grant applications under the New South Wales Government's \$10 million Sustainable Schools Grants. Windsor High School has been granted \$15,000 towards aquaponics awareness, Kurrajong North Public School \$15,000 towards wellbeing through connection and sustainability, Kurmond Public School \$14,395 towards Kurmond's war on waste and Pitt Town Public School \$8,570 towards a space within the school dedicated to developing sustainable practice and raising environmental awareness. I am pleased that local Hawkesbury students will have the resources they need to be educated about sustainable practices and improving the environment. I look forward to seeing the projects come to life in the coming months. I thank the staff for the time and effort they invested in submitting their applications and I wish the students all the very best in all aspects of their education.

### JUNE HOPKINSON

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:20):** I congratulate June Hopkinson, who recently completed her 10 years service at Wyong Neighbourhood Centre, on being the longest running free will volunteer. In 2011 June began to volunteer her time three days a week at the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre and she loved helping others and being involved with her local community. Over the years June supported the community by being involved with emergency relief support, as a programs assistant volunteer and an op shop assistant, and in the community garden. June is currently in her seventies and is volunteering one day a week now at Because We Care Boutique. Volunteers play a significant role in communities and they should be recognised every single day.

### KERRYANN STANLEY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:21):** Kerryann Stanley is a proud Wiradjuri woman who works with Dubbo Regional Council as an Aboriginal liaison officer. Her role sees her active in the Dubbo and Wellington communities, working with local Indigenous groups and providing a voice for them within the council. She is an absolute cracker who gives her all to help others, and that was recognised recently when Kerryann was awarded a prestigious Pat Dixon Scholarship. That scholarship was named after a truly remarkable person, who was the first Aboriginal woman elected to local government in Australia. Kerryann plans on using the scholarship to undertake a Diploma of Aboriginal Studies through TAFE NSW and then work towards her goal of designing and implementing workshops to help appreciate Aboriginal culture across the region. Congratulations Kerryann and good luck with your future ambitions.

### MAITLAND SAMARITANS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:22):** Since 2014 Samaritans Youth Accommodation in Maitland has provided short-term housing for 12- to 15-year-olds in my community who are experiencing homelessness. The centre is a temporary home for around 40 vulnerable youths and the organisation aims to restore familial relationships so children can return home safely. The 2016 census found that 17.6 per cent of the total homeless population in New South Wales, approximately 6,640 people, were under the age of 18. In October 2020 the Samaritans received a grant of \$4,000 from Maitland City Council as part of its community development scheme to add Aboriginal murals to the site, which were completed in March. I note council has been funding a lot of these initiatives lately. I thank Samaritans caseworker Jayme-Lee Woodhams for spearheading the initiative, as well as all of the staff at the Maitland site for helping make Aboriginal people feel more comfortable in their homes while they are going through difficult experiences. I welcome the Samaritans' program of makeovers to ensure its Maitland base is a culturally safe space for vulnerable Australian youth from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island backgrounds.

### ROBERT "BOB" SALT

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:23):** Today I acknowledge the passing of an environmental warrior and respected member of the Hornsby community, Robert Salt. Known to everyone as Bob, he was the loving husband of Annette, father of Catriona, Carl and Melissa, and father-in-law of Suellen and Paul. He was also a loving grandfather to Lachlan, Liam, Alistair, Annie, Beau, Brooke and Tyson and great-grandfather to Jensen and Fiore. I first met Bob when he successfully campaigned to have 3,800 hectares of the Berowra Valley recognised as national park. He was determined to see this beautiful piece of my electorate protected and enjoyed by many generations to come. He was also successful in the campaign to establish Marramarra National Park. Bob received an Order of Australia Medal in 2011 for nearly 50 years of service to conservation. He was a life member of the Hornsby Conservation Society and long-term chairman and member of the Friends of Berowra Valley. Our community and our State is a better place because of Bob's work. I am thankful there are people like him willing to fight to protect our natural environment for our children and their children.

### KOGARAH COUGARS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:24):** I acknowledge the Kogarah Cougars, who have been successful in receiving \$5,000 from the New South Wales Government to get more women involved within the local rugby league community. Kogarah Cougars president, my good friend Koda Ghassa, is an outstanding advocate for boosting female participation. I personally thank him and his entire team for their commitment to supporting our local women when it comes to local sport, in particular rugby league. It was a pleasure to head over to Todd Park in Blakehurst to meet the inspiring women and girls who are benefitting from the funding, while discussing the importance of increasing female participation. Women's rugby league has seen an increase in registration numbers over recent years, with more women becoming interested in the sport. That is fantastic to see. That significant increase is thanks to individuals like Koda Ghassa who continue to encourage greater female participation. I also

thank Georges River councillors Sam Elmir and Nancy Liu for joining me at Todd Park. I welcome the funding for local sport in our local community.

### **AUSTRALIAN AGE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:25):** Poolside, a trio of talented Coffs Harbour swimmers has shone on the biggest stage of Australian swimming: the national Australian Age Championships on the Gold Coast. Millie Bradshaw qualified for nine individual events and was selected in a further two relays. She swam exceptionally well over the six days of competition, earning her place in two finals where she excelled, finishing sixth in the 13-year girls 100-metre butterfly and seventh in the 13-year girls 200-metre butterfly. Sylas Phillips also had an outstanding meet, qualifying for two individual events, and was also selected in a relay. He finished seventh in the 14-year boys 200-metre backstroke event. His growth into competitive swimming over the past 10 or so months has been incredible. Since the start of this season, he has dropped 38 seconds off his 200-metre backstroke. That improvement has seen him not only qualify to compete at the national age championships in both the 100-metre and 200-metre backstroke but also qualify for a final. Bella Teale qualified for her first national age championships in her main event, the 100-metre breaststroke. Lilly Geddes was selected in a relay and with her teammates earned a tenth placing in the girls 15 to 16 years four-by-50-metre freestyle relay. I congratulate them all.

### **COAST SHELTER**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:26):** Not-for-profit accommodation and support service Coast Shelter has recently appointed two new board members, Claire Braund and Troy Marchant. Claire, who was named as the Terrigal electorate's 2021 Woman of the Year, will be a fantastic addition to the board of Coast Shelter. Claire is the co-founder of Women on Boards in Australia and the UK and currently serves on the boards of global and Australian Women on Boards entities and the board of the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music. Her extensive experience includes research into gender balance on boards, for which she became a Churchill Fellow. She is a graduate of the Benevolent Society's Sydney Leadership program, which led her to maintain a strong interest in affordable housing and subsequent social issues, especially those impacting women and children. Claire's compassion and conviction as well as her drive to find new ideas and opportunities will be highly beneficial to Coast Shelter and its mission. I could not think of a better advocate for Coast Shelter and issues relating to homelessness and domestic and family violence on the Central Coast. Congratulations to both Claire and Troy on their appointments. I wish them the best of luck in their new positions with Coast Shelter.

### **LIVERPOOL LIONS CLUB**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:27):** I recognise the Liverpool Lions Club for yet another successful food drive collection. The Liverpool Lions Club holds its food collection at Casula Mall, and it always has a great response from the local community. In March, thanks to the generosity of local residents, the club was able to put together 41 boxes of non-perishable food items. The boxes were given to vulnerable members of our community who need support and assistance. The items will go a long way in helping someone who is doing it tough. I am always in awe when it comes to its work and the difference the Liverpool Lions Club makes to our local area. The continual success of its food drive is testament to its dedication. I would also like to make special mention of Wayne and Mary, who manned the food drive collection stall at Casula Mall all day. Once again I commend Liverpool Lions Club for its commitment to helping those in our community who need support. Its hard work does not go unnoticed.

### **ROBE 2 RECOVERY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:28):** I commend the Robe 2 Recovery initiative aimed at supporting the mental health of our Australian Defence Force veterans and their families. The Robe 2 Recovery project was developed in the small seaside town of Robe in South Australia by the tourism association, offering subsidised accommodation, vouchers, free activities, local gifts and thank you messages to our returned veterans and their families. It is hoped that the initiative will go some way to improve their mental health and wellbeing and to show that the community values their important contribution. Recognising the tremendous benefits this respite program provides is retired civil marriage celebrant Norma French, who is seeking to deliver a similar model for Port Macquarie to show our appreciation of our returned servicemen for their service and sacrifice for our nation. Norma is already receiving an excellent response to the idea from people willing to show their support to our veteran community. She is now calling on local businesses and residents to lend a hand to ensure the outstanding initiative gathers momentum. I applaud Norma's passion and commitment to improving mental health outcomes for our veterans and their families. I wish her all the success with the program.

### **BOBBY WOODS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:29):** I was delighted to surprise a great community member in Gulgong recently. After setting up a pretend meeting at the showground, I presented Bobby Woods with an NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award for his decades of service to his community. Bobby is a devoted father of eight, grandfather of 16 and great-grandfather of four. He is a life member of the Gulgong Show and the Gulgong rugby league club the Terriers. He was inducted into the Gulgong Sports Council hall of fame in 2009 and has volunteered for many other community groups. Put simply, Bobby is a legend. He is incredibly well regarded and it was great to be able to surprise him and recognise him for his efforts. Well done, Bobby!

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

### **HOPEPOINT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ANZAC SERVICE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I was proud to attend the HopePoint Christian School ANZAC Commemorative Service on Friday, April 23rd. It was an honour to have the opportunity to speak at this service and acknowledge the significance of ANZAC Day and pay respects to the servicemen and women who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the freedoms that we have today. ANZAC Day is an opportunity for us all to unite and reflect upon the sacrifices made and the hardship endured by our brave soldiers. I would like to thank the School Principal, Ms Linda Spence for her invitation as well as all those in attendance: Pastor Warren Mortomore, the Senior Lead Pastor from HopePoint Church, Mr Geoff Allen and Mrs Kate Theodore, members of the HopePoint school board; Ian Kennedy, committee member of the Chester Hill RSL Sub-Branch; John Edwards, Warrant Officer Class Two; Mr Dennis Williams, a former bombardier and his wife Lorraine. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

### **BANKSTOWN/SOUTH WEST DIVISION LEGACY BBQ**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**I would like to congratulate Bankstown/South West Division Legacy on their successful fundraising barbecue on Sunday April 18th. This Division hosted a barbecue at Airport Bunnings to fundraise for their community services. Impressively, those present on the day raised a total of \$2,251.35. These funds can now be used to help provide much-needed services to the families of our many brave servicemen and women. For almost a century Bankstown Legacy has tirelessly worked to support those who have made great sacrifices for our country. Their crucial work is made possible by the generosity of their dedicated volunteers (legatees), who are worthy of great commendation. Congratulations and thank you to Alan Rawlinson, Chairman of the Bankstown/ South West Division for his outstanding efforts in support of Legacy and in coordinating the fundraiser. Thank you to the Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch for donating the sausages and bread rolls, allowing the fundraising event to proceed. Thank you as well to the Legatees who were there on the day; Chris Kingstong, Chris Curtis, Darrell Buckman, Lucy Clarke, Geoff Steen, Julie McKay, as well as volunteers Margaret Reidy and Lyn Greentree.

### **LAWRENCE AREA OVER FIFTIES GROUP**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—**I offer my congratulations to eight founding members of the Lawrence Area Over Fifties Group who were presented with Life Membership Certificates and copies of the 30-year history book of the Group at their recent meeting. If we all do our maths correctly, this makes these eight locals, over 80 years old and they are still very active within the Group. This is a group which do so much to support the local area in which they live. The recipients were Glad Grabham, Jean McLennan, Vois Bancroft, Betty Walkerden, Shirley Greenland, Grace French, Esther Smith and Dick Grabham – absent on the day was Kath Tozer. I congratulate you all not only on your initiative to start up this Group but for your continued support to your community. It's a lesson we can all take on board.

### **GETTING TO THE ROOT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—**I wish to congratulate Kyogle hairdresser Sue Chaplin of Chaplin Hairdressing Salon for her involvement in the Kyogle Anti-Violence Networks Cut It Out workshop on Tuesday workshop which occurred on April 20. The workshop was a pilot that brought together hair dressers, barbers, beauty therapists, masseurs, physiotherapists and tattoo artists to acknowledge the role people in these professions play in identifying and reporting domestic violence. I also acknowledge Kyogle Together Manager Sharyn Marshall who aims to build on the pilot and turn Cut It Out into a long term program in Kyogle. It is true that often people, particularly women confide in their hairdresser as an easy and trustworthy person to talk to. This makes them crucial in the fight against domestic violence and it is so important they know the signs. The aims of the workshop were to raise awareness and recognise signs that someone might be in a controlling, abusive or violent relationship. I like Sue's attitude of 'every little bit helps' in tackling domestic violence. We all have a role to play to make our communities safe from domestic violence. I look forward to this program being a great success.

### THANK YOU NIMBIN POOL VOLUNTEERS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate volunteers from the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre and Friends of the Nimbin Pool for training a team of volunteers that have kept the Nimbin Pool going through the COVID 19 pandemic. From November 2020 through to April 2021 these volunteers ensured the Nimbin Pool could be open to the community whilst remaining COVID safe. The team of dedicated volunteers were on site collecting contact tracing records, making sure there was sanitiser and social distancing at the pool, executing the Nimbin Pools COVID Safe Plan and responding to the changing nature of the virus and COVID-19 Public Health Orders from NSW Health. I particularly commend the commitment of the volunteers to keeping the Nimbin Pool a free, accessible and community focused pool that can be enjoyed by everyone in the community regardless of background. The selfless efforts of the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre and Friends of the Nimbin Pool volunteers ensured that Lismore City Council did not have to introduce charges for pool patronage. Meaning everyone could use it during the hot summer months. These volunteers are the definition of community and I again thank them for their service.

### CAROLYN DAVIS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Kurnell resident Carolyn Davis, who was a finalist in the 2021 Cronulla Local Senior of the Year Awards. Carolyn Davis is a true champion for Kurnell. In her retirement, Carolyn took up photography and now uses her newfound skills to promote this spectacular part of Sydney. In 2012, Carolyn set up the "I love Kurnell" social media channel and, through photography and story-telling, captures and shares the beauty and wonder of Kurnell with more than 2,000 followers on Facebook and over 1,200 followers on Instagram. As someone who has grown up in the area, Carolyn is always happy to share her knowledge of her suburb and share her photos. Carolyn has used her hobby to bring people together, and inspire pride in Kurnell's history and natural environment.

### RINA MANDARANO

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Rina Mandarano, who was a finalist in the 2021 Cronulla Local Senior of the Year Awards. Rina was nominated by the staff in the Leisure and Lifestyle Department at the Stella Maris Aged Care Facility in Cronulla. Rina is part of the auxiliary team that runs the kiosk, where she volunteers three days a week. Rina also home bakes cakes and biscuits for the residents. She is an asset to the leisure and lifestyle team and, as part of their cultural activities program, hosts cooking demonstrations for the residents. Rina has also been involved in fundraising for Stella Maris for a number of years as a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. Volunteers like Rina play a vital role in helping people in aged care to feel connected and fulfilled, by sharing their passions, interests and skills. Carol Sundstrom from Stella Maris says that above all, Rina brings "love, support and compassion" to the residents.

### ANZAC SERVICE AT ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I rise today to congratulate St Anthony's Primary School Clovelly for their wonderful and fitting ANZAC Service, held on Monday, 26th of April. In place of a wreath, I lay a book down on the shrine in remembrance. The book, entitled ANZAC girl, tells the true story of Alice Ross-King, an Australian nurse who sailed to war in December 1914 and became the most decorated woman in Australia. Using extracts from Alice's actual diaries kept in the Australian War Memorial, this true story captures the danger, the heartache and the history of the young nurse who would one day become the most decorated woman in Australia. I hope that this book will become a well-loved resource for St Anthony's students both now and into the future, telling one of the many untold stories of women and war. The reverence shown by the young students was simply inspiring and their ceremony was a fitting way to pay their respects to all those who served our country. Lest we forget.

### WAVERLEY COUNCIL HARMONY CONCERT

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On April 1, I had the pleasure of helping open Waverley Council's Harmony Day Concert, teaming up with the Sydney Improvised Music Association. Harmony day is a celebration of Australia's cultural diversity. It is about celebrating inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of belonging. There is always more work to do to ensure equality is not just a goal we strive towards, but a reality, but we still have so much to be proud of. Aboriginal Australians are the oldest continuing culture in the world and have cared for the land on which we live for tens of thousands of years, a custodianship which continues to this day. Today, our eastern Suburbs community is home to people from so many different backgrounds and cultures, and we are home to some of the largest Jewish and Irish communities in Australia. I would like to extend a big thank you to Yulugi,

the Eishan Ensemble, and Moussa Diakite for their wonderful performances, and Waverley Council for putting on such a fantastic event.

### **BLACKTOWN AND MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITALS' CARE PROGRAMS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I take the time to acknowledge Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals' staff for the implementation of their new CARE program. Many workers from the Hospitals and across the Western Sydney Local Health District are locals of the Seven Hills Electorate. The Hospitals primarily assist locals from my electorate in Blacktown, Kings Langley, Lalor Park and Seven Hills. Over the last year, New South Wales has relied on our fantastic healthcare professionals for support through the COVID-19 pandemic. It became a top priority for Blacktown Hospital's General Manager, Ned Katrib, to recognise dedication, talent and commitment. The CARE program, standing for Core values, Accomplishment, Research and Enhancement, seeks to fulfil Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals' cultural transformation project. Staff across both facilities were encouraged to recommend their colleagues for the award. In total, 18 staff members were nominated. Out of the finalists, Mount Druitt Hospital gardener, Vince Barilla, won the General Manager's award. Congratulations to Mr Barilla and the 17 other nominees that have taken part in this process. You are what makes the Western Sydney Local Health District and the Seven Hills Electorate truly special.

### **BERT OLDFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL 2021 LEADERS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I want to acknowledge the students leaders and P&C committee members of Bert Oldfield Public School in Seven Hills. Congratulations to the 2021 students leaders on being chosen the lead their pupils at Bert Oldfield. Well done to school captains Vera Boaf and Isabella Piedrahita-Ruiz. I also acknowledge to school's vice captains Gnana Challa Santosh and Ehan Wickramaratne. I know Bert Oldfield Public School Parents and Citizens Association do a great job in supporting the school, students and the wider Seven Hills community. I want to thank the work of the newly elected P&C committee, including the president, Funda Basaran, vice president, Shelly Wilson, secretary, Julie Darlington, treasurer, Alicia Giudice, canteen manager, Heather Mackey, and uniform shop manager, Payal Malavia. Bert Oldfield Public School is a terrific school with great history to its name. Again, I thank the student and P&C for their dedication and efforts in supporting the school community.

### **MENTOR SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Each year, the Mentor Support Network provides educational scholarships of up to \$3,000 to eligible students to help them reach their full potential in terms of their individual educational and career goals. The scholarships are granted to students who demonstrate the drive and determination to achieve educational goals, despite experiencing financial need. The program has been in operation since 2002 and since then, 290 scholarships, totalling more than \$550,000 have been awarded to students right across the Hunter. A total of 37 Hunter students were honoured recently at the annual Mentor Support Network scholarship presentation at the Newcastle Harness Racing Club. A number of students across the Wallsend electorate received scholarships including: Ruby Young, Roze Kara Yousef, Rand Kara Yousef and Arman Zolfaghari from Callaghan Campus Jesmond. Daniel Carr, Cameron Gould, Rory Hughes and Aleks Kostyra from Callaghan Campus Wallsend. Coumba Ba, Wilona Curk, Yenework Demelash, Toryalai Mohammad and Helene Fungulo Regine from Callaghan College Waratah. Thank you to Mentor Support Network Chair, Shayne Connell and former Chair Jon Chin for their dedication to our community by assisting young people achieve their education and career goals.

### **GRAFFITI REMOVAL DAY**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—This year, Graffiti Removal Day was held on 28 March. The aim of the day is to highlight the problem of graffiti across the state and encourage people to volunteer their time to remove and prevent graffiti. Graffiti vandalism costs NSW more than \$300 million every year. The Rotary Club of Wallsend-Maryland has participated in Graffiti Removal Day for many years. Each year a dedicated team gather on the day to volunteer their time to remove graffiti. This year's team cleaned up around the Wallsend CBD and included Philip Gorton, Alyn Miranda, Thomas Wilson, Jim and Wilma Simmons, Sarah Hill and Safiyah Faleako. The Club not only remove graffiti on Graffiti Removal Day, they also assist in its removal throughout the year. Some of these jobs have included the suburbs of Shortland, Maryland, Jesmond, Minmi, Wallsend and Lambton. Inspirations Paint and Dulux Australia very kindly donate products to assist in the clean-up. I hope to be able to join the team again in future years. Thank you to the Club for their ongoing dedication and proactive approach to preventing and removing graffiti from our suburbs.

### **MILTON ULLADULLA VIEW CLUB**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—VIEW is a national women's organisation formed in 1960 by The Smith Family as a service to women and the community. VIEW

stands for the Voice, Interests and Education of Women, and the organisation seeks to empower women to achieve new skills and confidence. The group also supports the Smith Family's Learning for Life program, providing financial assistance to help disadvantaged families afford the cost of their child's education. This program has supported many young people on the South Coast and provides genuine on-the-ground support to kids in need. Given how much they do for our community it was my pleasure to join the Milton Ulladulla VIEW Club at the Ulladulla Civic Centre for the celebration of the Club's 30th birthday. I thank them for the ongoing leadership and support they show in our community, and would like to acknowledge foundation member, Denise Mooney, who was awarded her 30 years of service badge. Service badges were also awarded to Jean Southin for her 20 years of service and Robyn Evans for 10 years' service.

#### **ISLAMIC CHARITY PROJECT ASSOCIATION RAMADAN DINNER 2021**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—The Islamic Charity Project Association [known as the ICPA] held its annual Ramadan Dinner on Friday 16 April. It was held in the Grand Hall of Al Amanah College, which is located in Liverpool. It was the ICPA's Twenty Seventh Annual Ramadan Dinner and I was delighted to be able to attend. Guests were welcomed to the event by ICPA President Mohammed Mehio. Also present were distinguished sheikhs including Salim Alwan Al-Husayniy, Ibrahim Chafei and Bilal Homaysi. The emcee for the evening was Ola Nafeh. There was a significant representation of the consular corps at the event and a wide range of other organisations present, from other Islamic groups through to the Scouts. Because of the pandemic, Ramadan dinners, also known as Iftars, were not able to be held in 2020. There was a sense of relief and joy within the community that such dinners were able to be held this year.

#### **APPIN MASSACRE COMMEMORATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—On 18 April this year a commemoration was held at Cataract Dam of the Appin Massacre that occurred in 1816. The Massacre resulted from a military reprisal raid ordered by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and led by Captain James Wallis. At least 18 Aboriginal people were killed. An annual commemoration for this Massacre has been held for a number of years at the Cataract Dam. This year the Master of Ceremonies was Uncle Ivan Wellington and there were traditional performances by Glen and Matthew Doyle and dances by the Wiritjiribin Dance Group. A Welcome to Country was delivered by Dharawal descendent Glenda Chalker and Daniel Chalker gave disturbing news about a proposal for urban development to occur on the Massacre site. I should also acknowledge the important roles of Sister Kerry and Ann Madsen and Peter Jones of the Winga Myanly Reconciliation Group. This event is important for truth-telling in Australia's history and I'm happy to support it.

#### **ROGER LYNCH**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I commemorate and celebrate the life of Roger Lynch who suddenly and sadly passed on the 21st of April. He was an incredible businessman who made invaluable contributions to Forster and the surrounding community over his 76 years. Roger was a proud advocate in the fight to improve our regions healthcare and made great steps towards this in his role as the Cape Hawke Community Hospital and Health Association Board Chair. Forster Public Hospital paid tribute to his leadership on their Facebook saying they wouldn't be the hospital they are today without the guidance Roger provided. He's also being remembered for his great sense of humour, love of golf, incredible kindness and most of all his love for his family. Even in his untimely passing Roger is continuing to give back to the local community with well-wishers encouraged to donate to Great Lakes Palliative Care in lieu of flowers.

#### **FELICITY GEORGE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise Felicity George, for her tireless efforts at the Taree Evacuation centre during the recent floods. Felicity's conduct was professional and compassionate in the face of the devastation. My office has received written correspondence commending her incredible work ethic, one of the evacuees describing Felicity as an amazing woman whose service to the community is extremely admirable. Felicity was at the centre from the crack of dawn to late in the evening every single day providing updated information to the evacuees and tackling complex and challenging issues as they arose. I again applaud Felicity for being a guiding light in the Manning as our community again faced disaster head on and thank her for being there to support our community in a time of great need.

#### **WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2021**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Clean Up Australia Day 2021, a group of enthusiastic students from Westfield Sports High School in the Fairfield Electorate gathered together to do their bit for the local community. These students formed the Environment Team in collaboration with the Student Representative Council teachers and students. They walked around the perimeter of the school and the surrounding streets picking up litter, which collectively added up to ten large bags of rubbish. I would like to take this opportunity to commend

the students involved: Aaliyah Milford; Nicklaus Rakasi; Hong An Leah Nguyen; Addison Ing; Chloe Pamaka; Catherine Dong; Steven Phu Tran; Joycinta Ung and Raymond Zamani. Their efforts are an inspiration to all young people and I congratulate them on possessing the community spirit which induced them to join the Environment Team and help clean up part of our local area. A special thanks also goes out to Ms Vanessa Richards and the SRC teachers who inspired and motivated their students to be community-minded and feel a sense of responsibility for the environment.

#### **AUSTRALIAN RUSSIAN-CHINESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION EASTER PARTY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—The Australian Russian-Chinese Friendship Association celebrated Orthodox Easter at the Golden Palace Seafood Restaurant in Cabramatta with members of its community and I was delighted to join them for these celebrations. The evening was a celebration of the Risen Christ with Bible Scripture readings, traditional Russian-Chinese cakes, song, dance and of course, outstanding colourful costumes. The Australian Russian-Chinese Friendship group was established to unite the Russian-Chinese migrants in the Fairfield Local Government Area and now has a membership of five hundred people of Chinese and Russian ancestry who regularly meet to socialise. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to President Mrs Agathia Yin Lan Ge and her committee for organising the Easter gathering.

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE MARINE RESCUE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I thank the volunteers of Lake Macquarie Marine Rescue for the fantastic work they do in keeping our waterways safe and protecting our community. Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie has already attended more than 110 incidents this year, an increase of around 10 to 15 per cent compared to a typical year. Just last week, a crew assisted a man who was knocked off a yacht at Wangi Point in 25-knot winds. Sadly, the man couldn't be revived. Also last week, a crew went to the aid of two fisherman whose boat sank after being struck by a freak wave near Moon Island, just off Swansea Heads. The two fishermen onboard were very lucky to be rescued by a member of the public and their vessel was retrieved by Marine Rescue. Responding to such incidents can be stressful and traumatic. Yet Marine Rescue volunteers selflessly put the boating community first. I thank the Marine Rescue volunteers in Lake Macquarie and throughout NSW for giving up their ongoing commitment to community service.

#### **LYN AXFORD**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I congratulate Lynn Axford on winning the Community Service and Activity category of the Central Coast Australia Day Awards. For the past thirty-three years, Lynn has been a member of the Chain Valley Bay Progress Association and 355 Hall Committee. She has often served as both the Chairperson and Secretary of these committees. Lynn has organised activities and services within local halls, such as playgroups and events that raise money for local volunteer bush fire brigade relief. In recent years, Lynn was instrumental in arranging new playground equipment suitable for people with a disability. She also secured shelters over tables and barbecue areas to promote sun-safe social activity in local parks in the Chain Valley Bay community. Under COVID-19 restrictions, Lynn organised Jazz in the Park to raise people's spirits and keep the community connected. I congratulate Lynn, as well as the other eight winners and three highly commended recipients for being recognised in this year's Central Coast Australia Day Awards. I thank them all for their generous and invaluable contributions.

#### **NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge Nepean Food Services located in Regentville in my electorate of Mulgoa. General Manager, Ditte Kozak and her team of staff and volunteers continues to serve the local community by providing quality, healthy meals to the growing population of seniors in the Western Sydney area. Through this service, many seniors are able to remain independently living in their own home for longer, enhancing their quality of life. I wish to congratulate Nepean Food Services on their recent success in the 2020 Community Building Partnership program where they received \$14,430 in funding to erect a carport and awnings outside their freezer room and offices, enhancing their work space and making it safer to use, especially during harsh weather conditions. On average, the staff and volunteers at Nepean Food Services devote approximately 8000 hours a year to support seniors. They are making a positive difference in the mental health and wellbeing of seniors and I am delighted to acknowledge them here today. Congratulations to Ditte and the whole team at Nepean Food Services. Thank you for everything that you do for seniors in the Mulgoa electorate!

#### **MULGOA METRO RENEWAL PROGRAM**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to James Erskine Public School and Regentville Public School in my electorate of Mulgoa who were recently provided with much needed funding through the NSW Government's Metro Renewal Program, designed to improve school facilities. James Erskine Public school located in Erskine Park have received an incredible \$300,000 that will allow them to fully rebuild their school

canteen, which is over 30 years old and beginning to deteriorate. Regentville Public School have received \$150,000 in funding to build a covered outdoor learning area [COLA] and walkways creating a safer and more enjoyable space for students to play. I am thrilled for these local schools and the staff and students who will benefit from these great upgrades. I look forward to seeing the projects upon completion and congratulate both James Erskine Public School and Regentville Public School on receiving this outstanding funding! Congratulations!

#### **DAYS FOR GIRLS ALSTONVILLE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise Days for Girls Alstonville, a group of 19 volunteers who make up and deliver feminine hygiene kits for girls and women in countries that neighbour Australia. Members work from home, cutting and sewing components for the kits, and preparing them for distribution. The team is made up of working and retired volunteers, with the fabrics for shields and liners and other kit components (face washers, soaps and underwear) being funded through donations and occasional grants. The kits ensure the women—most recently those in Laos and Papua New Guinea—are able to not miss valuable days from their education or employment. The organization also advocates and partners with NGOs and agencies to teach women and communities to create their own sanitary material, and works to raise awareness and provide education on AIDS and other preventable diseases, health and safety. Their programs ensure dignity and a better quality of life. The Alstonville women have sewn and packed well over 500 kits since they began in 2014 after being shown how by local midwives. They are supported by men cutting perspex templates and pressing the snaps for the shields.

#### **JAN HULBERT**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I pay tribute to Jan Hulbert, a pillar of the Bangalow community who recently passed away. A fifth-generation Bangalow resident, Jan was born in the Bangalow Hospital in February 1938. She was a member of a farming family and was milking cows up until she died aged 82. Many Bangalow community causes benefited from that indomitable energy, including the local football club, the cemetery and Possum Creek School. Jan attended the Bangalow Show as a child and it became her passion. She was made a Life Member of the Show Society for her commitment and contribution. She was a member of the Parks Trust for more than two decades and its president for 18 years as well as a Life Member of both the Bangalow School P&C Association and the Sports Association. During the 1980s she ran the Deb balls, raising money to build Bangalow's sports fields. At every Sunday market she sold tea and scones to raise funds for the Show. Jan won several awards, including the Byron Shire Citizen of the Year, and in 2000, an Australian ANZAC award for her "exceptional service to the Australian community, demonstrating compassion, endurance and dedication".

#### **EASTS WATER POLO CLUB**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Based out of Charlestown Swim Centre, Easts Water Polo Club is working hard to make water polo accessible to the local community. The club caters for all skill levels and all ages, with teams from under twelves through to seniors. Easts has been working tirelessly to build a local water polo community, and successfully secured a 2021 Local Sport Grant to supply equipment to support a Flippaball Program and Under 12's Water Polo Competitions—which will go a long way to building skills amongst the next generation of players. Despite the setbacks suffered during 2020 thanks to COVID-19, Easts celebrated with an End of Season function at Kahibah Sports Club. U14s team coach Sam Bloomfield was awarded the Shane Arnold Trophy for successful contribution to Easts, having completed his accreditation to referee and always being around to help out. My thanks to the club committee, including president Matthew Bartlett, vice president Mark Davy, child protection officer Michaela Campbell, secretary Kay Dunford, treasurer Amanda Bubb and committee member Luke Dunford for their work. I wish Easts all the best with the 2021 season!

#### **CHLOE BAYLISS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Former Eleebana local Chloe Bayliss has been making a name for herself as an outstanding actress on the Channel Nine drama Doctor Doctor, but Chloe is also making a difference by sharing her experience with the chronic autoimmune illness lupus. Chloe was 14 when she moved from Port Macquarie to Lambton with her grandmother to study full-time at the National College of Dance in Newcastle, and her family joined her a year later in Eleebana—but the next year, she became seriously ill. She had just been accepted into an American dance company. Eventually, doctors discovered that she had lupus. While she was in and out of hospital for years, she eventually graduated with a Diploma of Dance and Performance, replacing her dancing dreams with choreography, teaching dance, and acting. Chloe's autobiography *En Pointe* tells that story, but Chloe refuses to be defined by her illness, and is going from height to height in her career as an artist. Chloe's story shows that, with proper support, those suffering from chronic illnesses can achieve their dreams. She has recently been working to inform women about fertility issues. I salute Chloe and can't wait to see what she does next.

### THE HILLS TREFOILD GUILD

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the fantastic work that The Hills Trefoild Guild carries out. Last month it was my pleasure to attend and address the Guild's AGM, in order to thank them personally for their efforts. The Trefoild's are the adult wing of the Girl Guides, and seeks to unite those who were guides, parents of guides, and those who are new to guiding. The guild engages in a wide variety of fundraising activities, organising such things as movie nights, but their most important work is their knitting. The guild has previously knitted bags filled with essentials for homeless women and maternity wards, orphan possum bags for WIRES, care bears for local hospitals, memory rugs for dementia sufferers and many squares for the 'Wrapped with Love' project. The guild specialises in the delicious food they provide for their meetings, and the sense of community they create for their members. I would like to thank all members for their charity and for their warm welcome at the AGM, especially President Evelyn Caulfield, who has been a stalwart at the Guild for many years.

### ST GEORGE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I recognise a fantastic community organisation that has been so important for our community, not just in recent times given the COVID-19 pandemic but over a number of years. St George Community Transport is an organisation run by local people that supports the elderly and the less mobile across our region. They truly are an amazing organisation and I am proud to recognise them here today. Last year, I was able to recognise the entire team with a Group Achievement Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards acknowledge some of the many hard working men and women from across our community who go above and beyond each and every day to make our region even better. I was also able to make a special mention of Vivienne Morrison and CEO Carol Strachan who have helped build the organisation and make it the fantastic organisation it is today. Well done to everyone at St George Community Transport.

### ZONTA CLUB OF BOTANY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Zonta Club of Botany who had an outstanding year in 2020. The organisation does a tremendous job at empowering women through service and advocacy throughout the St George area and I believe this is truly important. I would firstly like to recognise the incoming executive led by President, Ann Salle who I know will continue the great legacy of Robyn Fague in years to come. The team includes:

Vice-President, Thana Akkari  
Treasurer/Public Officer, Sue Smith  
Secretary, Marilyn Lowder  
Board members, Judy Bendl, Pam Davidson, Sue Lowe and Bronlyn Schoer.

I also honour retiring board members, Robyn Fague, Amanda Gibson and Elaine Brus and thank them for all of their hard work over a number of years and for their efforts in helping grow the organisation. Despite being unable to hold many service and fundraiser activities last year, I know the committee has big plans for 2021 and I wish them all the best for the year ahead.

### ENGADINE UNITING CHURCH

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—On 14 April NSW Attorney General the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, members of the community and I were hosted by Engadine Uniting Church for a community justice and drug law reform information evening. The Attorney General was very generous with his time discussing a range of important topics including sentencing, drug law reform and the criminal age of responsibility. It was great to be part of the positive and robust engagement that took place discussing these very significant matters. I thank Engadine Uniting Church for hosting the night and in particular Community Engagement Officer Mr Michael Bleasdale who was instrumental in organising this wonderful community event. Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank Engadine Civic Kitchen and Catering as they provided a delicious supper for attendees. I highly recommend them for catering at your next event!

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—In the wake of recent rainfall and flash flooding, I am yet again grateful for the tireless effort of emergency services within my electorate of Davidson, and across NSW. While regional NSW suffered the most severe impact, suburbs across the Northern Beaches, including parts of my electorate, were also affected. One of the wettest months on record, March saw thousands of dollars in damage to homes. Emergency services such as the SES and RFS responded to hundreds of calls for help, including floods, trees that had fallen on homes, and rescues. Many homes and lives were consequently saved because of their

actions. I commend the emergency services from my electorate of Davidson, as well as across the state, for their significant assistance to my local and the broader community.

#### **ANZAC DAY 2021**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**—Following a year severely impacted by COVID-19, it was even more moving than usual to be able to once again commemorate ANZAC Day alongside the Epping community. Various events across the electorate were held to pay tribute to those who served and continue to serve in the defence of our nation and our way of life. On Sunday 18 April, I attended an ANZAC commemorative service organised by the Epping RSL Sub-Branch and held at the Epping Club. The service was followed by a military parade leading down to the cenotaph at Boronia Park where wreaths were laid by community representatives. On ANZAC Day itself, the Epping RSL Sub-Branch hosted a Dawn Service held at Forest Park in Epping, followed by a breakfast back at the Epping Club. Special thanks is due as ever to John Curdie OAM, President of the Epping RSL Sub-Branch, and to Peter Saez, CEO of the Epping Club, for their tireless work in helping to organise these two occasions. Later that afternoon, I was privileged to attend the Beecroft Community ANZAC Day ceremony held at the Beecroft cenotaph. My thanks to John Simpson for organising that event. Lest We Forget.

#### **EMMA WALL**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—I would like to congratulate Emma Wall who has received her Queens Scout Award, the highest honour a Venturer can receive. Emma showed her leadership when she established the 1st Hornsby Heights Venturer Unit. She has a passion for the environment and attended a camp on Lizard Island, which was a highlight of the work she completed for the award. She also developed skills in rock climbing and attended many new and different activities on her own, taking her out of her comfort zone. I would like to congratulate Emma on this impressive award and wish her all the best as she continues on her scouting journey.

#### **THE CHELTENHAM RECREATION CLUB**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**—The Cheltenham Recreation Club has served the local community for over a century, beginning in 1912 when William Harris offered to donate two acres from his garden to establish "a bowling green for the Dads, a croquet lawn for the Mums and tennis courts for the children". The land was transferred to the newly incorporated club on 28 June 1913 which, since that day, has preserved a large area of green open space to provide leisure activities for the local community. The club still offers tennis courts, lawn bowls and croquet as well as social functions. These facilities are also often made use of by local schools. I was pleased to drop by recently and catch up with club chairman Colin Reid, as well as Paul Taylor and Robert Bain. They were kind enough to take me on a tour of the premises, explaining their plans for the future of the club to renovate and improve the café area, hall and kitchen facilities. I also met some delightful club members who gave me a crash-course in playing croquet. My thanks again to Colin, Paul and Robert for your hospitality, and best of luck for the future.

#### **NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The NSW Seniors Festival provides an opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful contribution in my electorate of Davison made by community members who volunteer both their time and expertise through organisations such as the Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre and Easy Care Gardening. I particularly wish to acknowledge and commend a number of special volunteers, who have been nominated to receive Local Achievement Awards by the organisations they volunteer their time with. Robyn Kerr, Sue Carr, Pamela Aboud, Glinda Mullen, Vini Mehta, Mary Hird, Rosemary Layman and Brian Robinson have been nominated by Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre and Frank Windeyer who has been nominated by Easy Care Gardening, and Diane Drinkwater has been nominated by H2H Lifeline.

#### **OGGS 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I offer my congratulations to Clodagh and Dennis Ogg who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last month. Honesty, support, communication, humour and mutual love are what they believe are the building blocks to a successful marriage. The Ogg's were married on February 11, 1961 at St Mary's Church, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. The Ogg's managed a sheep farm in Winton, Queensland for more than 30 years until later moving to their home in Mittagong before coming to Carrington where they became well known for their humour and wisdom. Again, I congratulate the Ogg's on a successful marriage and to their three children, Judy, Susan and Alexander, and five grandchildren, I also wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

### CAMDEN SOUTH SWIMMING CHAMPIONS

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I congratulate the Junior Girls and Senior Boys Relay Team at Camden South Public School who have both qualified for the NSW PSSA Swimming Championships. I congratulate Charlie L who will be heading to State Championships to compete in the 50m Breaststroke in the relay. I acknowledge the hard, dedicated team work these students have put into swimming. Despite the year that we have had, students in the Camden Electorate still continue to impress me. Well done to all of these future swimmers and the best of luck in the State Championships. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours too.

### CAMPBELLTOWN WESTERNERS CRICKET CLUB

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—One of the most successful sporting club in Campbelltown has to the Campbelltown Westerners Cricket Club. For almost 40 years the club has been a force to be reckoned with in the local cricket competitions. The number of premierships won speaks volumes for how successful that club has been. Its first junior premiership was secured by the under 10s side in the 1986/87 season. In the following years the club claimed 19 more junior premierships – with 12 of those occurring between 1986/87 and 1998/99. Of course, it hasn't just been the younger players that have put the club on the map. The seniors have also secured 20 premierships of their own, with the first being in the 1885/86 season. Second grade teams were the most successful with four premierships, while third grade claimed three. Of course a sporting club's success is not only determined by results of games. The Westerners have also done a tremendous job in promoting qualities such as leadership, team work and resilience among the player, coaches and supporters. I'm sure there will be plenty more success for the club in the next few decades as well.

### ROBERT FRENCH

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—The Campbelltown community is famous for its pride, ambition and determination. We are also known for our sporting prowess – producing a long line of talented sports people including Matilda Alanna Kennedy, NRL players James Tedesco and Chris Lawrence, and former Olympian Jim Piper, to name a few. It's mix pride and talent that makes Campbelltown sporting clubs a force to be reckoned with. One of those clubs lost one its greatest players recently. Robert French, played for the Campbelltown Kangaroos Football Club in in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His move to Campbelltown from the Riverina was particularly fruitful with the prop being part of the 1969 and 1970 first grade premiership winning teams. He was also a part of the 1975 reserve grade premiership winning side and post playing days, made a name for himself as a top referee in the Group 6 competition. Despite moving to Urunga, Robert still maintained a strong connection with the club as was often seen at games and events. I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to Robert's family and friends and the Campbelltown Kangaroos Football Club. Vale Robert French.

### CAMERON HOSE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Cameron Hose who has received his Queens Scout Award, the highest award you can receive in the Venturer section. Cameron started in 2008 in the 1st Hornsby Heights Joey Mob. He gained his Promise Challenge Award in 2009 and was successful in obtaining both his Grey Wolfe Award and Australian Scout Medallion. He joined the 1st Hornsby Heights/Normanhurst Venturer Unit where he held the position of Unit Chairman. When the group was split due to size he was appointed the Secretary of the 1st Hornsby Heights Venturer Unit. He has gone on to take positions of Unit Chair, Scout Liaison Officer and Assistant Chairman. He has also taken roles on the Sydney North Region Venturer and State Youth Councils. In order to complete is Queens Scout Award he found himself out of his comfort zone on many occasions. He assisted and ran the McHappy Day fundraiser for two years and also assisted lead the "Koala" Cub Scout Pack. He also built a backyard vegetable garden bed. He is a quiet achiever and should be congratulated on receiving his Queens Scout Medallion a well-deserved honour.

### DEMOCRATIC KURDISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 24 April 2021 I was delighted to attend the official opening of the newly renovated Democratic Kurdish Community Centre at Kings Park. The opening was accompanied by traditional Kurdish music, food and dance performances. The centre has been operating for 41 years, in various locations, but the current premises in Kings Park have been extensively renovated over the last year by the community. The centre was opened by the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Federal Leader of the Opposition with Ms Michelle Rowland MP, Federal Member for Greenway. Kurds from the four areas of Kurdistan: south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, north-western Iran and northern Syria call Australia home and the local community brought their skills such as carpentry, painting, plumbing and electrical work along with raising the funds needed. I also would like to thank the co-chairs Ms Gulder Olan and Mr Brusk Aeiveri for their invitation to attend, congratulate them for their successful event and to wish them well in their new facilities.

### **THE ASSOCIATION OF ZGHARTA (YOUSSEF BEY KARAM BATAL LEBNAN) AUSTRALIA INC ANZAC DAY 2021 COMMEMORATION**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I joined the Zgharta Association for their ANZAC Day commemoration at Saydet Zgharta Community Precinct in Parramatta. As the daughter of a serviceman who served in the Royal Australian Air Force in World War II, ANZAC Day is incredibly important to me. Participants saw a presentation about the ANZACs who served in Ehden and Zgharta. In 1916, ANZAC troops entered Lebanon travelling to the ancestral home of many of the Association's members, Ehden in Lebanon with Australian Light Horsemen. Australian and other Allied soldiers occupied Lebanon from 15 July 1941 as they fought against the German Vichy French. Some Australian regiments were headquartered at the Mar Antonious (St Anthony the Great) Monastery at Jdaideh, near Zgharta, another ancestral hometown of many of the Association's members. 2021 is important as the centenary of the RAAF's establishment. We commemorate the service of the ANZACs and Australian service personnel who—in demonstrating honour, valour, conviction—followed the values shared by the association. Just as Lebanese independence leader, Youssef Bey Karam is remembered for his efforts for freedom and peace, we remember and commemorate the ANZACs. Lest we forget.

### **MAITLAND YOUTH EXPRESS LINKS TO LEARNING**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Engaging young people who are disengaged or at risk of leaving school early is challenging. Maitland's Youth Express, which has supported vulnerable young people in the Hunter since 1993, has successfully engaged 60 students from Francis Greenway, Rutherford Technology, Maitland Grossmann, Kurri Kurri and Dungog High School through the Links to Learning program. The Links to Learning program is designed to assist young people to develop stronger and more positive ties to their local community. The students in the program were tasked with creating 'youth homeless packs', filled with items that vulnerable teens require on a daily basis, such as hygiene products, school supplies, and home goods, which they then donated to the Samaritans to distribute. While the aim of the program was for the students to provide practical help to other struggling young people, such activities also gave them the opportunity to empathise with others, discuss issues of homelessness and other challenges and become empowered through their community service. I congratulate Youth Express and the 60 students on their contribution, acknowledge the students' certificates of service, and thank all for their service to our community.

### **THORNTON PUBLIC SCHOOL WRAPPED IN LOVE PROJECT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I acknowledge the commitment to community citizenship demonstrated by the students, staff, parents and community of Thornton Public School. In March of this year the school's citizenship program, 'Wrapped with Love Project' saw a number of handmade blankets generously donated to those in need. The blankets are headed to help families impacted by the recent floods and others experiencing homelessness. Each of the blankets are wrapped individually and include a tag that reads: "Wrapped with love from the students, teachers and community of Thornton Public School." The project, organised by the School's Defence Mentor Yvonne Fletcher included Thornton Public school students, staff, parents and community members who knitted and sewed together the rugs over a number of months. This year's donations follow on from last year's donation by the School to domestic violence and homelessness service Carrie's Place. It is heart-warming to see the value of citizenship being instilled in school age children by teachers, parents and members of the community in such a practical and caring way.

### **COWRA PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EFFORTS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I wish to highlight the incredible fundraising efforts by Cowra Public School as part of this year's Worlds Greatest Shave for a Cure in aid of the Leukaemia Foundation. What began as a plan for one member of staff to shave their head to raise \$1000, quickly snowballed to 21 staff and P&C members shaving their heads to collectively fundraise \$36,000. In an added bonus, I read in the Cowra Guardian all hair cut on the day was to be reused, with longer hair to be used for wig making and shorter hair to be added to hair booms, which I understand are designed to suck up oil spills in the ocean. Now that is a fun fact! Can I congratulate CPS teacher Emma Tree for organising this successful event and who was behind so many being recruited to the cause. I also want to thank every single person who gave their locks as part of this fundraising exercise, and all those in the broader Cowra Public School community who supported the effort by making a donation large or small. Congratulations to all involved.

### **MRS BARBARA GUTHRIE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs Barbara Guthrie who was recently recognised with a Seniors Local Achievement Award. For over 40 years Barbara has been an active volunteer in the Junee community. She has been heavily involved in the Trotting Club, Tennis Club, Meals on Wheels and is currently the Treasurer of the Senior Citizens Club. She has been at the forefront of fighting for the

Senior Citizens Club and securing funding to improve their hall, while including Junee's young people in the project. Barbara is someone who goes above and beyond to support others in the community. It is people like her that make our communities and I am so pleased she has been recognised with this award, it is greatly deserved.

#### **LEICHHARDT PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Leichhardt Public School P&C for their wonderful contributions to the local community. Leichhardt Public School is 159 years old this year and there is no doubt that its vibrant school culture is thanks to the many parent and community members who have supported the school over the years. I had the pleasure of attending a P&C meeting on Monday and learned about their fantastic independent P&C-run canteen, the work of their sustainability committee as well as a number of other initiatives. The P&C raises funds to support the schools Art program, additional resources for the support unit, and supports the music program which has 350 students participating. In particular I would like to acknowledge Zoi Flannery, Peter McDonald, Graham Stringer, Matt Rubie, Jenna Holliday, Beck Kinlyside, Fiona Blayney, Lisa Carle, Jo Mayberry, Vickiann Hewitt, Rianti Bieler, Johanna Callan, Tanya Jeney, Trinh Stringer, Vicki Flaherty, Michelle Demirel, and Daniel Muir-Smith, and the P&C members. On behalf of the Balmain Electorate, thank you for making Leichhardt Public School and the broader community a better place.

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE WEEK**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the work of Neighbourhood and Community Centres, who provide vital support and connection in their local areas. Across Australia, neighbourhood centres celebrate their role building community through the annual Neighbourhood Centre Week. This year's event will be held 8-14 May, with the theme 'Loneliness: the solution is community'. One in four Australians are lonely or isolated, and this has significant social, health and economic impacts. This has become more of a concern due to the pandemic, which has increased isolation and kept us apart. Neighbourhood centres provide safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for all sorts of people to meet and link with others, through community programs, courses and groups, and specific projects responding to local community need. I'm proud that neighbourhood centres in the Sydney electorate continue to connect people, provide support, and advocate for changes to benefit their communities. Their peak body the Local Community Services Association is also here, playing a vital support role and a strong voice to government. I thank our neighbourhood centre committee members, volunteers and paid workers for their efforts to build stronger communities.

#### **DYING WITH DIGNITY NSW DR BEVERLEY SYMONS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I commend Dr Beverley Symons of Dying with Dignity NSW for her hard work and dedication to improving end-of-life choices for people who are terminally ill across the state. Dr Symons coordinates the Central Coast Group which has campaigned for voluntary assisted dying laws for over 25 years. The group was established by the late John Doyle in 1996; other commendable coordinators include: Dr Romaine Rutnam, Pippa Preston, Doris Hart and Lyn Casey. The Central Coast Group's volunteers have worked with the wider community to advocate for people who are dying and their families, undertaking educational and social activities with members of parliament, candidates and political parties. For a number of years now, members of the four electorates on the Central Coast have publicly expressed support for law reform. On the group's 25th anniversary, I congratulate Dr Symons and past and present members for its significant achievement.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY ROTARY FUNDRAISING FOR BLACK DOG INSTITUTE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of North Sydney for raising approximately \$2,000 for the Black Dog Institute at their St Patrick's Day luncheon. The afternoon was filled with singing traditional Irish melodies, keeping bellies full with Guinness, and sharing an Irish blessing or two while raising valuable funds to tackle the fight against teenage suicide. I acknowledge Eve Shepherd and Peter Joseph for finding the strength to share their personal stories with other members. Not only is sharing stories like theirs brave, but it is important in better identifying those who may be struggling. The Black Dog Institute has worked since 1985 to improve the lives of young and old Australians by finding new ways to treat and prevent conditions such as depression, while helping to eliminate the stigmas surrounding mental health. Thank you to President Toni Field and the extensive member network who donated their time to the successful operation of the day, and for the generosity of the club in supporting such a worthy cause.

#### **CAPO PIZZA VOTED BEST PIZZA IN NORTH SHORE AND MOSMAN AREA**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—The COVID-19 pandemic has been an extremely challenging time for any business, let alone those who hadn't even welcomed their first customers before being cast into lockdown. But in true Australian spirit, many of these businesses have shown resilience and determination to make it out the other side. One of these businesses in my local area has done just that and more. I would like to

congratulate Capo Pizza in Waverton who was recently awarded the title of Best Pizza in the North Shore and Mosman area thanks to a community vote. Headed by two hospitality gurus, the restaurant opened on March 28, 2020, which happened to be on a weekend during Sydney's lockdown. Now, the shop has become a household name in the local community. As a thriving business, Capo Pizza is also doing its part for the local community by providing local jobs and employing youth from the surrounding area. Congratulations again to Capo Pizza for winning the award and well done on making it through the most difficult times of the pandemic.

#### **YOU CHOOSE YOUTH ROAD SAFETY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I acknowledge Peter and Melissa McGuinness of YOU CHOOSE Youth Road Safety. Peter and Melissa founded the initiative following the death of their 18-year-old son, Jordan, who was killed in a motor vehicle collision, along with four other young people in another car he collided with. Speeding and driving whilst under the influence of alcohol and drugs were factors which led to that fatal collision; choices made before getting behind the wheel. The program was named so because driver's personal choices had the potential for road fatalities. The YOU CHOOSE mission is to inspire a genuine social movement for changed driving behaviours, and their presentations are designed for profound cut-through to teenagers; while School Leader and Scholarship programs uplift young people to protect their families and their communities through collective peer advocacy and personal accountability. Recently, Melissa delivered an information session at Forbes for parents about youth road safety and making the right choices. I attended the information session, and appreciated the benefits this program provided those parents in attendance, and for those that have either participated or will participate in YOU CHOOSE Road Safety programs. Thank you, Peter and Melissa.

#### **FOOD WEEK**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Food of Orange District Orange week, held from 1 to 10 April 2021. This year marked the 30th anniversary of the event, which is now commonly referred to as Orange F.O.O.D Week. The festival was conceived by a small group of passionate local foodies to showcase the Orange region's exceptional produce and to celebrate its producers and vigneron. Orange F.O.O.D Week festival is now Australia's longest running regional food and wine festival. This event is held each year in April to coincide with local autumn harvest and vintage season. This festival showcases the region as one of Australia's most aspirational culinary tourism destinations, and galvanises our cultural reputation which attracts more visitors, each and every week. Orange F.O.O.D Week celebrates the diverse and excellent regional produce from the district covering the three local government areas of Orange, Blayney and Cabonne. I congratulate all who were involved in hosting and supporting the various events of this year's F.O.O.D Week festival. I applaud all of those involved in our regional agriculture, produce, food and wine industries, which have helped built the reputation of this festival, and the Orange district as a premier tourist and lifestyle destination.

#### **CARLA ZAMPATTI AC - CONDOLENCE**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)**—Today, I want to acknowledge the life and extraordinary contribution of Carla Zampatti AC, who was a local Woollahra resident, businesswoman and a trailblazer in the Australian fashion industry. In 1965, Carla launched her eponymous label which expanded to over 30 boutique stores across Australia. The Carla Zampatti style was timeless, colourful and bold, elegant and yet practical. Not only was Carla an immensely successful fashion designer and an astute business person, she held a number of high profile leadership positions including as SBS Corporation Chairman from 1999 to 2009 and on boards including Westfield, McDonalds Australia. The Sydney Dance Company and the MCA Foundation were also the beneficiaries of her creative flair. Carla was generous and forthright. Many, including myself, were beneficiaries of her thoughtful guidance and encouragement. Carla was a loving mother to her surviving three children Alex Schuman and Bianca and Allegra Spender, and grandmother to her nine grandchildren. Carla's impact and legacy will never be forgotten. Rest in Peace.

#### **JO NATHAN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Jo Nathan of Deniliquin. Mrs Nathan wrote and illustrated her first children's book Little Calf, drawing inspiration from letters with her young niece while in lockdown. The pair began corresponding via letters in order to keep up her niece's writing and reading skills while learning from home in Canberra. The stories that Mrs Nathan would write in her letters about the farm animals have been used as inspiration for her book. Given the success of Little Calf, Mrs Nathan is currently writing a second edition and planning a third. I wish Mrs Nathan continued success with her writing.

#### **DR RACHEL JAMES**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Dr Rachel James of Deniliquin. Graduating from Flinders University in 2013, Dr James has dedicated her career to rural health,

including practicing as a GP at the Deniliquin Clinic and completing further training in obstetrics and women's health. Dr James was recognised by GP Synergy as the 2020 GP Synergy Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine Registrar of the Year for her work and dedication to rural health. General practitioners who also gain additional specialised skills within obstetrics and women's health, such as Dr James, play a vital role in meeting the healthcare needs of rural communities. Dr James is to be commended on her award and her continued dedication to rural health.

#### **PETER AND ANNETTE ST CLAIR**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Wagga Wagga's annual Amie St Clair ball was cancelled in 2020. But this popular Wagga Wagga fund-raising event will be back in 2021 and it is celebrating an important milestone. The ball would have celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2020, but instead this important event has been scheduled for June 2021. It will be a particularly important event for Peter and Annette St Clair, who established the Amie St Clair Trust in honour of their daughter, who died in 2009 at the age of just 23, after a three-year battle with melanoma. Amie's courage and determination continue to inspire so many people. More recently, the trust has merged with the Melanoma Institute, which plans to start clinical trials in Wagga Wagga over the coming years. The group have already started slowly resuming their visits to schools, sporting organisations, and rotary clubs, but hope to upscale those events later in the year as restrictions ease. I commend Mr and Mrs St Clair, and their son Tim, for their dedication and determination to share the story of Amie's cancer journey in the hope that it will help other people and continue the fight against this insidious disease.

#### **ANZAC DAY 2021**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—As dawn broke over the Karuah River, and the orange sky backlit the war memorial at this year's Karuah RSL ANZAC Day dawn service, hundreds of people solemnly remembered the sacrifice of service men and women, and gave gratitude to those who currently serve. At Seaham's ANZAC Day service, many in the community reflected at the memorial known locally as "The Knitting Circle" with school students, scouts and pre-schoolers participating in the service. At Raymond Terrace, the story of a local man whose name appears on the local war memorial was shared by his family. Schools students laid wreaths alongside past and current service men and women. I thank all Port Stephens RSL sub-branches for their efforts this year, managing difficult and changing circumstances. For those that were able to bring our community together this ANZAC Day, well done. I particularly wish to recognise: Raymond Terrace RSL Sub-branch, and President Vic Jones, CAPT RANR (retd); Karuah RSL Sub-branch, and President Peter Fidden, Vice President of the RSL Newcastle District Council; And Alan Earle, LCDR RAN (retd), who led the ANZAC Day service at Seaham.

#### **ISLAMIC WOMEN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)**—I acknowledge the work of the Islamic Women's Welfare Association. The IWWA was established in 2000 to provide a multicultural forum for Islamic Women. The organisation began with a small group of women who met once a week. Today the association holds over 30 classes a week in four languages. As well as fulfilling the original purpose of providing a space for Muslim women to discuss their faith, the organisation has expanded to address broader welfare needs. The women have the opportunity to participate in seminars on important topics like public health, respectful relationships and finding employment. The organisation also caters for children and young people, providing playgroup, nursery, pre-kindy, and programs for teenage girls. I also draw attention to the assistance the IWWA provides to the community, through initiatives like Ramadan Bag. I thank the staff and many volunteers of IWWA for their commitment to our community. In particular, I recognise the dedication of Abla Kadous, a founding member of the IWWA, who has been at the helm of the organisation for over a decade.

#### **RAAF 100TH**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It officially began with a modest announcement in the Australian Government Gazette on March 31, 1921, flagging the formation of the Australian Air Force. On August 13 of that year, following receipt of approval from the King, the Governor-General signed an order authorising the addition of the word "Royal" into the organisation's title. On March 31, 2021, I was delighted to be an official guest at RAAF Base Wagga to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the RAAF. Wagga Wagga has a long proud military history. It is home not to the RAAF Base, but also to the Army Recruit Training Centre Kapooka. RAAF Base Wagga has been an integral part of the Wagga Wagga community since 1940. The base has a long proud history of defence training, providing both initial and further training for many young service personnel. RAAF Base Wagga is the last remaining Riverina World War II base. Its heritage centre is the only place to see regional-specific Air Force memorabilia, which show the activities of the region during and after World War II. I commend the RAAF and the many current and former personnel who have given so much in dedicated service.

### CHEMISTWORKS WETHERILL PARK

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On the 21st April 2021, I visited Chemistworks, Wetherill Park, to receive my annual flu shot. I was greeted by the friendly and helpful staff, including the owner, Catherine Bronger, and received my flu shot from one of the knowledgeable pharmacists. Flu season is fast approaching and it is important that the community continues to receive their quadrivalent flu shot as most of us still wait for the COVID-19 vaccine. It is quick and easy to receive your flu shot at your local pharmacy. You do not need a script or an appointment. By getting a flu shot, not only do you significantly reduce your chances of getting sick with the flu this winter, you also protect others in the community. Pregnant women and those over 65 years are among those who are eligible for a free vaccination. I would like to thank the staff at Chemistworks, Wetherill Park for their continual efforts in keeping the community safe and healthy in the midst of global health pandemic. Pharmacy staff have worked tirelessly and put themselves at risk to ensure our health needs are met.

### KARL STEWART

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I acknowledge and thank Karl Stewart, a valued staff member for his commitment to the Prospect community over the past four years. Karl is dedicated to the ALP and the Labor movement. Karl has worked tirelessly to support our community, always going above and beyond to make sure everyone's concerns are heard and addressed. There are many examples of Karl's outstanding work. Karl has helped me fight for better services at Fairfield Hospital, Blacktown Hospital, and Westmead Hospital. For infrastructure in Prospect, petitioning for more commuter parking at train stations and against the M4 toll. Attending multicultural, school and cultural events, and spoken to local families, community leaders and groups in Western Sydney. Advocating on the behalf of constituents. Karl has listened to and diligently acted on concerns facing those living in Western Sydney. Members of our community often tell me how generous and thoughtful he is. Karl is a very selfless individual and cherished staff member of our office. I thank him for his contribution, support and guidance. I am very fortunate to have been able to work with him and I wish him all the best in the next stage of his career.

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BOTANIC GARDENS

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens had their annual Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair on the weekend of April 17 and 18. I understand the Fair attracted a large number of visitors from the Southern Highlands and beyond and that more than \$80,000 was raised. Situated on a 15-hectare site, the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is one of Australia's newest botanic gardens. Local heritage and culture are reflected in the design of the gardens which are inspired by Louisa Atkinson, a nineteenth century Southern Highlands botanist. The Fair showcased plants and seeds from a vast selection of specialised nurseries that are suitable to cool climates such as the Southern Highlands. This success of the weekend would not have been possible without the enormous work of the Garden's Board, in particular Chairman and CEO Charlotte Webb, her staff, and army of dedicated volunteers.

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS OVER 60'S

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I congratulate the Southern Highlands Over 60s cricket side, based in my electorate of Wollondilly, who have taken out the Sydney Masters Over 60s 2020-21 Vintage League title. Although Covid-19 and inclement weather hindered the competition, the Highlands remained undefeated throughout the season securing outright victories against the Sri Lankan Lions, Northern Stars, Hunter and Kuringai. I pay tribute to Rod van Beek, Gary Whitaker, Ian Bradburn, Mark Preddey, Peter Jensen, Michael Rowles, Rod Watling, John Lindsay, Marty Dubler and the rest of the squad. Well done Highlanders on your victory. I look forward to you successfully defending your title in 2021-22 cricket season!

### NEWMAN SENIOR TECHNICAL COLLEGE – NSW TRAINING AWARDS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise the nominees of the NSW Training Awards from Newman Senior Technical College for their outstanding achievements in vocational education and training. The NSW Training Awards are an annual event on the calendar that honour students for their exceptional commitment and success in the vocational education sector through the level of skills and quality of workmanship displayed that ultimately will set them on a pathway to a successful trade career. This year's nominees were selected for their high skills and knowledge in the following categories; Year 12 School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Tamika Vogeale, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Student of the Year Tamazyn Ledden and VET in Schools Student of the Year Bejay Dennis. Tamazyn Ledden and Bejay Dennis were both selected as representatives to attend the North Coast and Mid North Coast as finalists at the NSW Training Awards ceremony to be held on 11 June in Coffs Harbour. I congratulate the three nominees for their marvellous efforts in vocational education and training and I wish them all success at the NSW Training Awards.

**HASTINGS CANCER TRUST & NO ONE FIGHTS CANCER ALONE DONATE FUNDS TO MNCCI**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I acknowledge two extraordinary charities in my electorate who have partnered on a project to provide vital funds for a SOZO device to support Lymphedema therapy through the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute in Port Macquarie. Described as a new innovative way to provide cancer care for Lymphedema patients, the SOZO device is a non-invasive bioimpedance spectroscopy which aids in the assessment of secondary lymphedema through a precise snapshot of fluid status and tissue composition, all undertaken in a matter of seconds. Through a generous donation of \$11,886.98 by the Hastings Cancer Trust and No One Fights Cancer Alone, the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute will now provide this vital service, without the need of invasive procedures. Chairman of the Hastings Cancer Trust, Dr Stephen Begbie and No One Fights Cancer Alone Patricia Knudsen were delighted to offer the SOZO as a means to provide early detection and management of Lymphedema treatment to improve outcomes for patients. I thank the Hastings Cancer Trust and No One Fights Cancer Alone members for raising valuable funds to improve the care of cancer patients in our region.

**GYMEA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Gymea North Public School on their appointment. Gymea North Public School is a tight-knit community who pride themselves on their diverse and caring culture. Established in 1967, the "school among the trees" is home to just over 350 students who work together as they grow both academically and personally. Upholding their motto "service and loyalty", the wonderful school provides various opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom including the gardening club which recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary this year. Whether fostering friendships or pursuing their goals, the beautiful students are at the heart of this outstanding school. The 2021 leadership team are a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Gymea North Public School. I congratulate School Captains Joel Barnes and Tayla Borrill and Vice Captains Chase Atkins and Erin Bourke 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.

**BROOKE GILL**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge local artist Brooke Gill, who was invited to Nina's Chocolates flagship store in Gymea to paint chocolate eggs in the lead up to Easter. Brooke is an outstanding artist, designer and loving mum who began her creative career in animation for Disney Studios. Soon after, Brooke launched herself into small business by selling her beautiful illustrations and handmade clothing at local markets, before establishing her now thriving business 'Foxytrot'. Brooke was able to bring an Australian touch to Easter by painting native botanicals and wildlife from our local area on the chocolate eggs. Gymea Tradies included one egg into their Easter raffle which raised funds for Sutherland Hospital and Community Health Services. It is great to see our community support and embrace our local artists like Brooke. I commend Brooke Gill for her beautiful work in our community and thank Nina's Chocolates for this wonderful initiative.

**THANK TOMMY GAME - NEWTOWN JETS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—The Newtown Jets celebrated the extraordinary life of Tommy Raudonikis, local legend, Australian halfback and captain, at a "Thank Tommy Game" at Henson Park last month. Thousands of passionate Jets fans filled the stands and the hill for the commemorative game between the Newtown Jets and Newcastle Knights. An inner-west legend on and off the field, Tommy's 30-year career saw him captaining the Western Suburbs club from 1971 to 1979 and the Newtown Jets from 1980 to 1982, while also representing Australia in over 40 international games. To farewell Tommy, the number "7" was emblazoned on the grass at the grounds, while his 1981 number 7 Newtown Jets jersey was carried onto the field by former teammates Col Murphy and Johnny Lewis. Sporting tributes were held across Sydney to honour one of rugby league's most beloved characters, with a minute's silence observed at all round five NRL matches. Thank you to Stuart McCarthy, Glen Dwyer, Johnny Lewis and John Trad for organising a wonderful send-off for Tommy and my deepest condolences to Tommy's family and partner, Trish. Vale, Tommy.

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—The 28 April marked International Day of Mourning, a time to reflect on the tragic and avoidable deaths of people at work and acknowledge the ongoing fight by the trade union movement to improve safety in the workplace. This International Day of Mourning, I acknowledge five food delivery workers who died at work in a two month period at the end of last year. Mr Dede Fredy, aged 36, was hit by a car and killed at Sydenham Road in Marrickville in my electorate while delivering food late last year. Tragically, Mr Fredy leaves behind a wife and young son. His classification as an independent contractor denies

his family any compensation. According to the Transport Workers Union, 73 per cent of food delivery workers are worried about being seriously injured or killed at work and SafeWork NSW noted there were 74 "serious notifiable injuries" to food delivery riders working on NSW roads last year. Everyone deserves to come home from work. Thank you to Unions NSW and the trade union movement for your ongoing fight to strengthen our industrial relations laws to ensure that every worker returns home to their family.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:32 until  
Tuesday 11 May 2021 at 12:00.**