



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 11 May 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 May 2021

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 12:00.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

HEAVY VEHICLE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (NATIONAL REGULATOR) BILL 2021

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

Announcements

CHAMBER SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER: As members are probably aware, Chamber seating arrangements during question time today will be the same as they were last Thursday, pursuant to advice from NSW Health experts. Members may notice there is only one lectern on each side of the table, with the exception of the special lectern for the member for Gosford. That prudent health measure has been put in place in accordance with health advice in the current coronavirus circumstances.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT (JOBS PLUS) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 5 May 2021.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (12:17): I lead for the Opposition in this Chamber on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021, which has been examined by my colleague the Hon. Walt Secord in the other place. The Opposition will support the bill, which will exempt businesses creating 30 new jobs, but I foreshadow that the Opposition will move some amendments. Our amendments to the bill will support rural and regional areas by reducing the threshold from 30 to 20 jobs for areas outside the major centres of Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle. The shadow Treasurer and the shadow Cabinet believe this is an opportunity to give towns and major centres in struggling regional and rural New South Wales a real shot in the arm by reducing those 30 jobs, which is currently in the bill, down to 20 jobs. Regional and rural New South Wales have done it very tough, not just during COVID. Prior to that they have experienced fire and drought, and some have also experienced flood. Essentially over the past two years some of those areas have been hit four times by disasters, any one of which would knock over many communities.

We believe this Parliament has an opportunity to amend a bill we support to enhance the assistance available for those businesses looking to set up in rural and regional New South Wales. I would like to think that every member in this place would agree that rural and regional New South Wales has probably had it tougher than most: floods, devastating fires, a pandemic and, of course, a devastating drought that seems like it was a long time ago but was, in fact, only a couple of years back. It has only been in the past 12 months that those areas have really come out of that. Whilst our proposed amendments will reduce the threshold, we will also have an annual reporting and oversight requirement where the Government has to state the name of each employer that entered into a Jobs Plus agreement, the number of jobs the employer created and the amount of payroll tax from which the employer was exempt. That will provide some transparency around the benefit of this program so that the community can understand its importance.

We support the bill's provision for payroll tax exemptions for certain positions under the Jobs Plus Program. The bill currently states that businesses can receive payroll tax relief for up to a four-year period for every new job created where a business has created at least 30 new FTE jobs by June 2024. The Government said it selected the figure of 30 jobs because that is about where payroll tax kicks in. However, following the engagement by the Opposition and shadow Treasurer with business—and regional business in particular—we

understand that those businesses can benefit from this at a lower number. All new workers must live in and be paid in New South Wales.

Payroll tax exemptions would apply for the period agreed in the Jobs Plus agreement, up to a maximum of four years. Obviously the bill is designed to assist with the recovery, which is something we have worked on in a cooperative way with the Government—and we will continue to do so. We think this amendment enhances the existing bill. The exemption may be revoked by the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney in circumstances that will be identified in the agreement, including if the business is not meeting its agreement with the Government. That is an important accountability component that I think all members would agree with.

I turn to the payroll tax exemption for the third and any further retention bonus payments for eligible aged-care workers, funded from a Commonwealth grant program. In late August 2020 the Commonwealth Government announced a third tranche of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program, which was paid in January 2021. The program provides funding for aged-care retention bonus payments for eligible workers providing services in residential and home care settings to incentivise the continuity of this workforce during the pandemic.

In August 2020 the New South Wales Parliament approved an exemption from payroll tax for wages paid to aged-care workers from bonus payments received by employers under the grant program before 1 January 2021. This has the effect of only exempting wages paid under the first two tranches. This bill provides an exemption from payroll tax for wages paid or payable under the third tranche and any future announced tranche of the program, and ensures that eligible employers will not be liable for payroll tax on wages paid under the third tranche and any future tranche. The payment is \$600 to \$800, depending on the number of hours worked and whether they are working in home care or residential aged care.

The financial impact of Jobs Plus is that it is a \$250 million program. At this stage the Government is looking to create or support up to 25,000 jobs until 30 June 2024. The funding will cease on that date. What we know is that we are a long way from being out of the economic crisis. We are doing well in the area of community transmission—we have had a little bump in the past week or so, but we are still doing well there. However, the economic impacts of COVID-19 are still being felt and they will continue to be felt for many months and years. The Parliament has an opportunity to address those impacts through the bill. As such, Labor will engage in a spirit of bipartisanship with the Government. We certainly hope that the Government uses that spirit of bipartisanship to enhance the bill. Labor supports the bill in general but believes it could be improved, particularly for the regional and rural businesses that have done it tough through the drought, the bushfires, the floods and the pandemic. Labor believes the bill could be improved with some small amendments, which will be moved during this debate.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:25): I support the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 and thank New South Wales Treasurer Dominic Perrottet for introducing it to the House. The bill will remove barriers to job creation for the people of New South Wales. One of those major barriers is tax. It is essential that employers and employees get back on their feet in the aftermath of the pandemic. The proposals in the bill aim to achieve that. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on the New South Wales economy. Just over a year ago 270,000 people in New South Wales had lost their jobs. We have not seen a crisis like that since the Great Depression. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the economic recovery is on track and that people get back to work. It is important to note that in a year the unemployment rate in New South Wales has already fallen. During the height of the pandemic it was at 7.2 per cent; it is now down to 5.4 per cent. Further, economic growth is predicted to improve by 2¾ per cent by 2023-24.

That gradual economic recovery was made possible by the Government's emphasis on jobs recovery and by the resilience of the State's health system during the pandemic. We must commit to continue that recovery to a pre-COVID state. The economic recovery and the boost in jobs are two of the New South Wales Government's top priorities. This bill is testament to that. The Government has already taken steps to ensure that jobs are re-established by committing to short-term stimulus and by removing barriers to job creation. The New South Wales Government's budget introduced a payroll tax regime that lifted the tax-free threshold to \$1.2 million and administered the lowest headline metropolitan payroll tax rate across the country. The Government also aims to create new and better opportunities for businesses, as showcased by the Jobs Plus Program, which was introduced last year.

The Jobs Plus Program incentivises and encourages more people to establish businesses in New South Wales. Businesses must meet certain eligibility criteria to qualify for the program and receive support. Eligible businesses must create 30 new full-time jobs in New South Wales. That employment activity must be initiated before 30 June 2022 and completed by 30 June 2024. An employer that would like to access the program must be a revenue-generating business with at least 20 full-time equivalent staff. The program will create and support 25,000 new jobs for the people of New South Wales. For every one of those new jobs that are created, they will be completely exempt from payroll tax for up to four years. The bill makes that possible through proposed

amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 by exempting wages of identified positions under the Jobs Plus Program from payroll tax.

The bill's proposed payroll tax relief is available to employers following the impact of the pandemic. Support will come in the form of exemptions from payroll tax for jobs that have been identified and approved under the Jobs Plus Program. Relief will be available for up to four years for each position, so long as the worker lives in, and is paid in, New South Wales. Businesses must comply with the specified terms of the Jobs Plus Program agreement to receive a payroll tax exemption. It is important to note that if a business does not comply with the agreement, a written notice can be issued and the payroll tax exemption can be revoked. This is to ensure that the program is not exploited. In this case, the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will issue an assessment or reassessment to that business.

The payroll tax exemption is not the only support provided under the Jobs Plus Program. Other incentives and forms of assistance include agreed rebates, subsidised training programs and subsidised government-owned accommodation. This program will not only stimulate economic recovery but also create a lot of opportunities for businesses and create new jobs. This bill goes even further to support some of our vital frontline workers and extends the payroll tax exemption for aged-care workers. This Government recognises the importance of providing quality care for our older citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the increasing needs and vulnerability of older Australians. There has never been a more important time to ensure that providers are able to keep skilled workers and support carer jobs in the aged-care sector.

In March last year the Commonwealth Government introduced two bonus payments to aged-care workers as a means to encourage essential carers working in aged-care homes and provide them with facilities to keep doing amazing work. This was announced at a crucial time in the pandemic, when the vulnerability of older Australians increased as the virus continued to spread. The New South Wales Government passed amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 so that any wages funded under the Commonwealth Government program would be exempt from payroll tax. This was applied to the first two rounds of bonuses paid under the Federal Government's incentive program. In August last year the Federal Government announced a further bonus payment for aged-care workers through the extension of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program. Payroll tax exemptions for the first two rounds of bonus payments for aged-care workers were passed by this House in August 2020.

This bill will propose an extension of the payroll tax exemption so that the third round of bonus payments from the Commonwealth Government do not come into effect. This will encourage aged-care employers to participate in the Commonwealth grant program that is providing money to them so that they can pay retention bonuses to their workforce. Further, the bill will remove the original 1 January 2021 end date for the exemptions so that future bonus payments under the program are also exempt from payroll tax. In the event that some workers may have already received their third round of bonus payments, the amendments in this bill will allow eligible employers to receive a refund or a credit for any payments already made. The payroll tax exemption will help aged-care providers retain valued staff by taking up the Commonwealth grant. These staff are vital in meeting the high standards required for working with our older citizens in both residential and home care settings. It remains the Government's priority to give our older Australians quality care and keep them safe and protected from the virus.

This bill is one of the New South Wales Government's initiatives to recover from the pandemic. Although it is a long road, we are on the front foot and leading States and countries around the world. New South Wales is now one of the most competitive payroll tax jurisdictions in Australia and this bill demonstrates that. It will provide opportunities for new employers and for the people of this State to re-enter the workforce after the pandemic. It will also protect our aged-care workers, who have done so much for our older Australians during this trying time. They deserve to be supported. I express gratitude to the Treasurer and his office for putting this important bill together. It will make a huge difference to our economy and to those who work in New South Wales. I thank the Treasurer, the Premier, the health Minister, and in fact all of our Ministers, for the way they have come together during this pandemic to make a difference. It is truly heartwarming to see. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Before I give the member for Bankstown the call, I welcome the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli to the Chamber, the Speaker of the House from 1988 to 1995. He is back to have a look at his old stomping ground. I hope he enjoys the proceedings.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:34): I speak in debate on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. As stated by the shadow Minister for Health, Ryan Park, the shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Walt Secord, has been vocal in the community raising the issue of the Government's underspend on grants and programs. New South Wales has had a devastating year, but I acknowledge the people in our electorates who we represent for heeding the message. In the past few days I have seen people in my electorate wearing masks

voluntarily—of course it is mandatory on public transport. Everybody is trying to do the right thing. We want to keep this virus out and get people vaccinated. Representing the electorate of Canterbury, I urge my community to get tested, particularly if they have been to any of the places of which we have been notified by the Chief Health Officer.

It is concerning that the CommSec economic data has shown that New South Wales is fifth in economic growth, fifth in equipment investment, sixth in housing finance, seventh in dwelling starts, seventh in population growth, fourth in retail spending and third in construction work. These are not very good indicators. What has happened to New South Wales being number one? Regardless of who is in power New South Wales should always be number one. We are the engine room of the Australian economy. This is where it starts and finishes. We are the engine room of the Southern Hemisphere.

New South Wales is a significant financial economic player in the world. Being fifth, sixth and seventh in some of these economic indicators is not good. I urge the Government to revisit some of its programs and policies with respect to what has happened in the past year. People are yet to receive grant funding. There is a huge underspend, particularly in rural and regional communities and places like the Upper Hunter. The Government must check to see where the underspend is. There is a massive underspend in my electorate, in Greater Sydney and in western Sydney, in particular amongst multicultural communities where the information flow is not getting through.

Many of our small businesses are sole traders. They are multitasking but they do not have a grant writer and they need the Government's support to stay open. There are many "for lease" signs in the shopping strips in our electorates. I caution the Government that we do not want to have the massive economic repercussions of the eighties and nineties where every commercial property displayed a "for lease" sign. I urge the Government to look at areas where there is high unemployment, look at the number of small businesses. There are more than 10,000 small businesses in my electorate. Many are sole traders. The Government must revisit its underspend and look at how it can get that money straight into the pockets of people in small businesses.

The Opposition will move an amendment. I welcome that and hope that the Government supports it. This is vitally important, particularly in rural and regional communities. The amendment allows for an exemption so that businesses outside Sydney, in areas such as Newcastle and Wollongong, can receive the payroll tax relief if they create at least 20 net new jobs, as opposed to 30 for businesses inside the metro areas. It is a sensible policy idea from the Opposition and we hope that the Government supports the amendment.

I also heard comment in respect of the bonus payments to aged-care workers. I acknowledge all of our aged-care workers for the incredible work that they have done. They have always been exemplary, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them in my electorate work extremely hard and they do a phenomenal job. In my electorate there is high rate of casualisation, so in some cases people work several jobs. They do one job in the morning and one in the afternoon, and then on the weekend they have a casual aged-care job. There needs to be a rethink to provide security, better pay and better working conditions. I support the Health Services Union and what it is doing in saying to the Federal Government that this bonus payment should also go to the cleaners and security and other staff in aged care. It is important that it is equal across the board. I urge members to support Labor's amendment. I also urge the Government to consider the underspend and to review it to ensure that funding goes into areas of very high need and disadvantage.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (12:40): The purpose of the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 is to amend the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to achieve better outcomes for businesses by creating more jobs and greater opportunity. This is a crucial step in our continuing recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Under this bill, employers will be exempt from liability to pay payroll tax on wages that are the subject of Jobs Plus agreements. This bill will also provide an exemption from payroll tax in relation to the Commonwealth Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program. Without doubt, COVID-19 has had enormous impacts on our health, our wellbeing and our economy. Last year the Australian economy went into a recession for the first time in 29 years. Whilst no-one could have anticipated a pandemic of this magnitude, I am truly proud of the Liberal-Nationals Government's outstanding response. Recovery has far exceeded expectations.

The New South Wales Government has already announced outstanding payroll tax relief measures as part of its economic stimulus package to help businesses impacted by COVID-19. This includes reducing by 25 per cent the 2019-20 payroll tax liability of customers whose total grouped Australian wages for that financial year was \$10 million or less and deferring payroll tax payments for all customers until October 2020, with generous repayment plans to be made available over the next two years. JobKeeper payments in respect of employees temporarily stood down from work duties will be exempt from payroll tax. In relation to employees who ordinarily earn less than the JobKeeper payment amount, the difference between their regular wage and the JobKeeper payment will be exempt from payroll tax. Under this Government, New South Wales holds a

world-leading position through the strength of our health and economic response. Nevertheless, COVID-19 continues to evolve and still looms as a potential threat to the stability of our economy.

The highest priority for this Government has always been to protect the health of the people of New South Wales, and this includes the wellbeing and livelihoods of our communities. Many thousands of businesses are still under pressure. Some have also been impacted by the devastating droughts, bushfires and floods recently experienced across the State. There is a clear need for this bill in order to continue and accelerate the strong economic recovery we have experienced so far following the impact of COVID-19. By lessening the burden on business owners, this bill will encourage employers to take on more workers and will strengthen financial stability for both businesses and employees alike.

Importantly, the bill will aid in keeping skilled aged-care staff on board to deliver quality care to our older citizens. In order to revitalise our economy we must remove the barriers against job creation and stability, and one of those barriers is onerous tax. During the peak of the pandemic in the June 2020 quarter, over 1.2 million people and 323,000 businesses were on the JobKeeper program. Since then, the number of people on the scheme has fallen by around 72 per cent. The State's initial recovery from the impact of COVID-19 has far exceeded the expectations we held back then. At the beginning of 2021 the economy was on track to recover to pre-COVID levels six months sooner than expected and economic growth was forecast to improve to 2.75 per cent by 2023-24. Since then, jobs have bounced back, with the number of employed people in New South Wales increasing by nearly 15,000 from February to March this year.

New South Wales has now recovered almost all the jobs lost during the peak of the pandemic, but there is still more work to be done. This outstanding recovery will only be strengthened by ongoing support for businesses and jobs. We must position New South Wales to benefit from robust economic conditions in a post-COVID-19 world. The Jobs Plus Program announced by the Government proposes measures that will help support businesses to grow up to 25,000 jobs and drive economic recovery. Under the current program, businesses are eligible to apply for support if they achieve the threshold of increasing their net number of full-time equivalent employees before June 2022 and have at least 30 new full-time equivalent employees by June 2024. The businesses must also be revenue generating and have at least 20 current full-time equivalent employees if they are ABN registered, or 80 full-time equivalent employees for foreign-owned entities. This will encourage investment from top-performing domestic and international businesses looking for a long-term home.

The tax exemptions under the bill would apply to identified positions for the period agreed to in the Jobs Plus agreement up to a maximum of four years, including all wages, such as superannuation, allowances and fringe benefits. The exemption may be revoked by the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney in circumstances that will also be identified in the agreement. By stimulating economic activity and therefore recovery, the program will support businesses who want to enter into or expand their footprint in New South Wales through the creation of jobs. Therefore, under the Jobs Plus Program and with the support of the payroll tax exemptions, the bill will drive job creation in the non-government sector, which is critical to a successful recovery strategy.

The bill also provides payroll tax exemptions for a different purpose, but a purpose that is just as important. The legislative amendments will continue to support the aged-care sector to retain its highly skilled workforces. Only with such staff can we attempt to care for older citizens as they deserve and with the high levels of protection required through the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not know how long the pandemic might last, but we do know how important those staff are to their employers and, most importantly, to the people they care for. In late August 2020 the Commonwealth Government announced a third tranche of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program.

The program provides funding for aged care retention bonus payments for eligible workers providing services in residential and home care settings, to incentivise the continuity of that workforce during the pandemic. That has been vital at a time of increased need and vulnerability for older Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is provided to aged-care employers to pass on to those workers as wages, with the first tranche made available around July 2020 and the second around September 2020. The Commonwealth Government has since provided a third round of funded bonus payments for those staff around January this year. The bonus payments are paid through employers, and so attract New South Wales payroll tax without an exemption.

The exemption from payroll tax was provided for wages paid to aged-care workers from bonus payments received by employers under the grant program before 1 January 2021; however, that therefore only had the effect of exempting payroll tax from wages paid under the first two tranches. This Government will not allow taxes to become a barrier to the quality care of our older citizens and what they deserve. Therefore, this important bill provides that necessary payroll tax exemption to the third tranche of wages to continue to support our aged-care workers as they care for our older citizens. To date, the New South Wales Government remains the only

government in Australia at a State level that has pushed to exempt payroll tax from the bonus wages provided to enable economic recovery during the pandemic.

Once again our Government has demonstrated by its actions that we can deliver where our priorities lie, as seen through our world-leading response to COVID-19. The New South Wales Government will continue to lead our State out of recession and into a future filled with new and better opportunities. We have achieved this so far by supporting the capable and resilient people of New South Wales, and will continue to do so as businesses and workers alike are provided the means to continue to grow and prosper. The bill supports those people who have persevered through the challenges the pandemic has presented. It is our job as a government to continue supporting them as they power our economic recovery. By exempting this tax on crucial bonus wages, the bill removes barriers and creates opportunity for those we value most—the people of New South Wales. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer and his staff on bringing such an important bill before the House, and trust that he does well in his home isolation as he does his best Tom Hanks impersonation with Wilson. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:50): On behalf of The Greens, I speak in debate on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. I acknowledge that the Treasurer is at home self-isolating at the moment, and I wish him the best. The bill will amend the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt employers from liability to pay payroll tax on the basis of an approved Jobs Plus agreement between the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney and the employer, to allow the Minister to revoke this exemption by written notice to the employer on the grounds specified in the exemption agreement.

Considerations for revocation include agreed milestones in the creation of new jobs, and to remove the effective end date of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program on 1 July 2021 to allow wages paid from the third bonus payment and any future bonus payments to be granted an exemption from liability to pay payroll tax. The bill contains several reforms that are supportable and positive, and The Greens will not be opposing this bill today. We do have some issues and a few questions but we think that it is particularly important to support jobs in this COVID environment. We always seek to find opportunities to support jobs, job creation, job retention, and high-quality and high-paid jobs for the people of New South Wales and throughout Australia.

In 2020 the Government introduced the Jobs Plus Program, an incentive program to encourage businesses to establish or relocate their operations in New South Wales. Generally as a matter of principle these types of programs must be approached cautiously. We do not want to see jurisdictions fighting each other—States or Territories fighting to try to have relocations—and ratcheting up the types of incentives that are offered. But this is a relatively modest program with a range of different considerations to minimise any exploitation of the program in particular.

I also note that the Government will use a range of eligibility and assessment criteria. Of course, a cost-benefit analysis undertaken by Treasury is important, but what weight is given to particular elements? I would appreciate it if the Minister outlined some of the considerations that Treasury takes—for example, the indirect benefit for job creation by construction. I understand that is taken into consideration when one considers the number of jobs that are made available, but to what extent are indirect jobs from construction or supply chain taken into account? I would not want to see businesses just providing indirect jobs to make up the 30 jobs that are required. We want to see long-term, well-paid, quality jobs that arise, not short-term jobs that are a function of an indirect spend on another item.

I also note that projects not satisfying the above criteria but aligning with the overall objective can be funded. That is something we are always concerned about. We want these things to be addressed on the assessment criteria. To have a Get out of Jail Free card saying, "Well, if you don't meet the criteria, we can still give it to you" is something we need to approach with great caution, in particular because of the grants pork-barrelling issue we have seen. We want to see these addressed at arm's length from government and at arm's length from Ministers where possible. That is most important when it comes to the numerical objective of 30 jobs because we want those jobs to be not only indirect jobs. We want them to be for the long term, well paid and of good quality. So not only making sure they address the criteria but also assessing the outputs is important.

How will the Government assess the performance of this measure and how transparent will the assessment be because they are heading out several years into the future? We have seen many government-proposed programs that, only one or two years out, are demonstrably unable to deliver the outcomes that the Government has sought—not necessarily because of any problem but because they have not been taken up or the criteria have not been addressed adequately. I ask the Minister to consider explaining to the House the criteria the Government will use and the level of transparency so that we can assess not only the performance of this amendment but also that of the overall program.

It is a credit to the Government that there was a great deal of collaborative work by all members of this Parliament to address the pandemic, focusing on stimulating economic activity, protecting jobs and minimising economic disruptions. The existing incentives in the program include rebates of business infrastructure, subsidised training and subsidised government-owned accommodation. The eligibility criteria have been set out quite clearly. I am sure that members would have referred to the Jobs Plus Program's guidelines from December 2020 and looked at some of the detail contained within that document. I understand that the Opposition will be moving some amendments to reduce the threshold from 30 to 20. I am interested in the Minister's reply to that. Obviously, that might have a financial implication but it seems on the face of it to add a more generous layer of support for those who may not be able to reach the full 30. Again, it goes to that question about what 30 is and how indirect jobs are considered and so on. We want good-quality, long-term well-paid jobs.

The other element I address is the extent of the Minister's discretion. The Minister has a great deal of discretion when approving who is not eligible for this exemption from payroll tax. We know that Ministers like to have control over providing the discretion. Obviously, Ministers also balance that with the fact that they do not want to be the target if they do exercise discretion and someone is very disappointed by not getting access to the Jobs Plus Program or about those who did get access. In our view there should be more detail. I encourage the Minister, who will be under the magnifying glass, to respond because people will ask why they did or did not get it. Our preference is that more details be included in the primary legislation to limit the discretion of the Minister and to increase the transparency of the program. It will be protective of the Minister in case there is any criticism of the program and because, with a good set of criteria, we should be able to have a very clear process that does not have the Minister's discretion being almost exclusive in allowing what can proceed.

With those points aside, it is important that the House considers how we invest taxpayers' precious funds to support business and jobs growth. That is why The Greens have focused on the quality of the jobs produced to make sure that they are not only indirect jobs from construction and, even though I understand the longevity of those jobs is a criterion, to do whatever we can to make sure that they are long-term, good-quality jobs that are not just indirect as the result of a construction program. It is also important to make sure that we maximise transparency with those funds. We do not want hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent in a manner that is not transparent and does not deliver the intent of the bill. I acknowledge the amendment to be moved by the Opposition and The Greens are very open to it. We are discussing the amendment with the Opposition because we think it should be considered. We want to hear the view of the Minister in regard to that reduction from 20 or 30, but The Greens will jump at supporting good quality jobs. We think the amendment should be supported and we commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:00): I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. I thank the Treasurer for bringing this bill before the House and thank the Treasurer's team for their work on the bill, which will support the Jobs Plus Program in assisting emerging and growing industries in New South Wales, including industries such as financial services, aerospace and defence, advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity. This is evident from this morning's announcement by the Premier and the jobs Minister that Baxter Healthcare and biotech company Speedx are the first businesses to be part of the program. Between those two businesses the program will support 280 direct jobs over the next four years. As we know, Baxter is Australia's only local intravenous fluid manufacturer. It seeks to have a major expansion of its western Sydney advanced manufacturing facility. Speedx, which is a biotech company, is looking to New South Wales for its new global headquarters.

The Jobs Plus bill is supporting businesses such as those I have mentioned, and those industries can attract fast-growing companies from interstate and across the globe to New South Wales. As I have mentioned, this Government is already working to support those industries to set up shop by creating the innovation and technology precinct at Central and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. Those industries fall into the services sector, which continues to dominate in New South Wales, accounting for 79.4 per cent of the total gross State product in 2019-20. While most industries experienced sharp declines in 2019-20 due to the impacts of COVID, there were industries that were resilient. The gross value of professional, scientific and technical services grew by a solid 4.2 per cent and financial and insurance services grew by 2.1 per cent. The combination of those industries alone represents more than 20 per cent or 15 per cent of all employed people in New South Wales.

Despite that, we know that some industries are still suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accommodation and food services and the arts and recreation services sector on a gross value-add basis continue to lag in the State amid a year of restrictions. The gross value of the accommodation and food services industry contracted 11.5 per cent in 2019-20 and the size of the arts and recreation services industry contracted 5.8 per cent. Despite the challenges that are faced, as the Treasurer pointed out the New South Wales unemployment rate already has fallen from a pandemic peak of 7.2 per cent—at the peak of the pandemic in Australia—to 5.4 per cent, and the State economy is ahead of estimates for a return to at least pre-COVID levels six months earlier than expected.

We must be mindful that when we look at the *State of the States* New South Wales effectively is a victim of its past success. We should consult reports from agencies other than CommSec, such as ANZ's Stateometer. CommSec does not produce the only report that compares State economies. It is a simplified snapshot of how State economies are performing. Whilst New South Wales may have a lower ranking in part, the ranks are determined by the current indicator's performance relative to the decade average.

As I said, this means that New South Wales effectively is a victim of its past success. The strong performance seen over the past decade means New South Wales is being compared to that higher benchmark. Despite that, even with the CommSec report, the economic growth is up 13 per cent, housing finance is up 67 per cent, retail spending is up 15.3 per cent and construction work is up 8.5 per cent. The latest ANZ Stateometer shows that New South Wales is outperforming other States in the pace of economic recovery. To that end, we look at the ANZ Stateometer measuring the pace of economic activity over the year. It presented its deviations around a State's long-run average rate of year-ended growth and that report shows that New South Wales has the strongest momentum in economic activity. The ANZ report highlighted the improvements in the New South Wales labour market and its strong performance in financial and professional services.

So there are challenges and there are reports, but we know we can do even more. Jobs are our top priority—not mere talk about jobs and job creation, but actually delivering the economy and incentives to stimulate their creation. In my electorate of Albury I am sitting down with business owners and representatives who are searching for the right place to establish or expand their operations in Australia. Some of those businesses operate internationally. It was pleasing to be at an RSM event looking at advanced manufacturing just a few weeks ago in Albury where businesses such as Cool-Off, Chameleon, and data analytic companies are showing the way in regional areas, particularly when it comes to advanced manufacturing. Those businesses come to the regions and they talk to electorate representatives. They talk to me and to others in my electorate office. As part of their due diligence of finding the best location, they ask the fundamental question: Should we be in New South Wales or elsewhere? They tell me that they trust New South Wales to keep the borders open, that New South Wales is best able to manage the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and it provides the strongest economic conditions to support jobs growth.

Central to the Jobs Plus Program is a complete exemption from payroll tax for up to four years for every new job created, provided the business has created at least 30 net new jobs where staff live and are paid in this State. But Jobs Plus is not just about payroll tax. The Jobs Plus Program provides other support for businesses such as streamlined planning approvals, subsidised training programs and accommodation support. Along with those other features of Jobs Plus, the bills provides yet more solid ground to build business success in an uncertain world. As the Premier said, New South Wales is open for business. Our world-leading management of the pandemic has made our State a premier destination for relocation and expansion.

The Jobs Plus Program is taking the right steps to help industries create new jobs. The bill will support businesses in the Jobs Plus Program to create new jobs during uncertain times. It will also encourage the relocation of businesses to New South Wales, keeping this State the premier destination in which to work, live and play. The bill also proposes to extend an important payroll tax exemption measure to support aged-care employers to retain critical staff. Those staff have assisted and protected our older citizens throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The exemption of the third Commonwealth-funded retention bonus payment from payroll tax provides tangible support for the important work that the aged-care sector does and it is important that we continue to support workers in that industry. The Jobs Plus Program is taking the right steps and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:09): I make a brief contribution to the debate on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. I note that the bill enacts the Government's announcement of a payroll tax exemption for businesses that are established in New South Wales and that create 30 or more jobs. Importantly, the bill also provides a payroll tax exemption for the third payment of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Bonus announced by the Commonwealth and any future aged-care retention bonuses paid by the Federal Government. I will focus on that aspect of the bill. Our aged-care sector and the extraordinary and passionate people who work in it need all the support and help they can get. The COVID-19 pandemic has put tremendous pressure on people working in aged care. It is already an incredibly tough gig, but the additional pressure of managing infection control, the logistics of social isolation for vulnerable people and attending to the deteriorating mental health of elderly residents is taking a toll. One aged-care worker recently told SBS:

As workers, our anxiety is high, no one wants to be that nurse who brings COVID-19 in because we know so many elders could die. We have been self-isolating from our own loved ones from well before the restrictions began in order to keep our elders safe. Our hearts break as residents plead to get out of their rooms, but there are already too many outside and we have to tell them to stay. We are being pushed to our limits trying to provide more care but there are only two staff and up to twenty needing care.

Chronic understaffing was identified by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in its interim report as one of the key drivers of the crisis in aged care during the pandemic. But understaffing was a problem

long before the pandemic. In fact, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety reported that 57.6 per cent of all residents living in aged care in Australia in 2019 lived in homes that were understaffed. The result has been catastrophic for residents. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation reported that there has been a 400 per cent increase in preventable deaths in aged care due to chronic understaffing, including deaths from falls, choking and suicide. Understaffing has also been catastrophic for workers. A national worker survey conducted in 2019 by the United Workers Union and the Health Services Union found that 40 per cent of aged-care workers were planning to leave the sector in the next five years because of chronic stress, feeling overworked and being underpaid. Ironically, 75 per cent reported that one of the key reasons they were overworked was because of chronic understaffing.

It is clear that the Federal Government's aged-care retention bonus and the provisions in the bill to exempt aged-care employers from payroll tax are critical to shoring up our aged-care workforce. Those provisions are a good start but they do not go far enough. I stand in solidarity with the Health Services Union, United Workers Union and others that have been campaigning for the bonuses to be extended to all workers across the aged-care sector, including people in the sector who work in cleaning, laundry and catering. All of those workers turn up day in, day out and they are no less critical to ensuring the health and wellbeing of aged-care residents; in fact, they are the very foundation of the sector. The Federal Government's decision to exclude those workers from the aged-care retention bonus is senseless, insulting and cruel.

The reason that we need aged-care retention bonuses and provisions exempting aged-care employers from payroll tax in the bill before the House is that the Liberal Government in Canberra has failed older people in aged care. It has stalled on real reform since the release of the interim report into aged care in 2019, which chronicled horrific neglect and abuse in our aged-care system. The Federal Government dragged its feet in protecting aged-care residents during the pandemic, with the Prime Minister choosing to spread confusion about who was responsible for aged care rather than step up and fix it. Newsflash! He is the one who is responsible. The Federal Liberals cut funding to the sector by \$1.7 billion. Even the rumours of a one-off \$10 billion investment in aged care in tonight's Federal budget is nowhere near enough. We know that an investment of \$10 billion each and every year is needed to fully implement the recommendations of the royal commission. Residents in aged care and the workers who support them deserve more from our leaders than spin and blame. They deserve respect, dignity and a commitment to real and lasting structural reform of the aged-care sector that will deliver ongoing funding. We want to see that tonight in the Federal budget.

Debate adjourned.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR KEIRA

The SPEAKER: I extend happy birthday wishes to the member for Keira, who celebrated his birthday on the weekend.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome warmly guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, from St Paul's Catholic College, who are watching question time from the McKell Room. Welcome to teacher Jessica Dufty, Alyssa Bishop, Grace Feenan, Matthew Boslem and Kent Azas.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPH

The SPEAKER: I have granted permission for a NewsWire photographer to take photos from behind one of the side doors on a pooled basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING

The SPEAKER: I remind members, electorate office staff, House department staff and ministerial staff that at 12.30 p.m. tomorrow there will be a professional development briefing in the Preston Stanley Room or online to showcase a number of external courses and professional development opportunities available to both MPs and staff, which can be undertaken by using their skills development allowance. I encourage all to attend. Light catering will be provided by way of lunch. Please RSVP to my office as soon as possible.

*Members***MEMBER CONDUCT**

The SPEAKER (14:17): Prior to commencing the routine of business, I will comment on some important aspects of parliamentary procedure relating to last week's sittings and subsequent public comment by the Leader of the Opposition. As the Speaker, I take seriously my responsibilities in presiding over the House with fairness and independence. As members know, it is an election by members of this House that determines the person who holds the office of Speaker. As such, the office deserves members' respect. Criticisms of the Speaker made otherwise than by a substantive motion is both disorderly and a serious contravention of the longstanding practice of this House. The House has formal mechanisms through which it can express its will, which embodies the principle that, as the Speaker, I am the servant of the House. Public criticism of the Speaker, including negative comment made to the media, demeans the office and diminishes the standing of this House in the eyes of the community.

To borrow a phrase from a previous Speaker in similar circumstances, the member's action last week was "undignified, unparliamentary and reprehensible". I cannot stand by and allow this Chamber, the Speaker's office and our democracy to be destructively degraded. While I can ignore the personal attack, I cannot accept a member of this House attacking the integrity of this Chair and therefore this Assembly. I therefore extend to the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to make a personal explanation regarding the statements she made outside of this Chamber last Thursday. Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to take that opportunity?

*Personal Explanation***MEMBER CONDUCT**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19): By leave: Mr Speaker, thank you. I had my say and now you have obviously had yours. It is really important that we just get on with what we need to do in this Parliament. For us that is holding the Government to account on privatisation.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I advise the House that in the absence of the Treasurer, the Premier will answer questions this week.

*Question Time***UPPER HUNTER PUBLIC LAND SALES**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. The Minister's new register of government property for sale lists more than 2,500 pieces of land in the Upper Hunter, including the Singleton and Muswellbrook TAFE, Burdekin Park at Singleton, Simpson Park at Muswellbrook, Bennett Park at Dungog, and Quirindi Showground. Why has the Minister put the Upper Hunter up for sale?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:21): Having an asset register, being in full control, understanding what land the people of New South Wales own and being open and public with that is a very positive thing. Those opposite think that we on this side work in the same paradigm as Joe Tripodi and Eric Roozendaal, who did little special deals with themselves when they were in government.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. In the true spirit of refereeing both sides of the House I say very clearly: What those former members have to do with that question is completely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: The Minister was 25 seconds into her answer. I will hear further from the Minister, who will continue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Having spent some time in the Upper Hunter and across New South Wales, one of the biggest issues that people want to engage with you on is housing and access to housing, whether you are a social housing tenant, whether you want to be a first homebuyer or whether you are wanting to find rental properties. It is responsible for a government to highlight what government-owned land might be able to be utilised by a community to ensure that we put in more housing.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I point out that since we released our housing strategy there has been a lot of public commentary. In a YouTube post or a Facebook post from the Leader of the Opposition, in which she talks about asking me a question in the House, she does not put my response in the House on her own Facebook page because that might improve the information that is available to the public. Whilst she is out there—on her own—

criticising our housing strategy, I point out that the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue headed by a former Labor member for Parramatta has said, "The Government is to be applauded for recognising the need for more diverse housing mix and the role that it can play as a land bank for proponents of new social and affordable housing."

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister has been asked directly about the Upper Hunter and what is for sale, including the Muswellbrook Hospital helipad and the cemetery across the road. That is what the Government has put up for sale.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question and will continue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: What is so disappointing about members of the Opposition misleading the House is the absolute fear they are trying to push onto communities in the Upper Hunter by suggesting that we will sell their showgrounds. We will not engage in lies. We will not engage in fear.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As I just pointed out, former Labor member in this place David Borger heading the west—

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

Mr John Barilaro: They like to ask the question but they don't like the answer.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is right, Deputy Premier. Members opposite will ask a question but they will try to shut you down with stupid interjections while you are giving an honest answer.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Leader of the Opposition asked a legitimate question in relation to land sales.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is giving a relevant answer. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time. If I ask a member to resume their seat, I expect them to sit down.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As I was pointing out, David Borger, former Labor MP for Parramatta, has said that the Government is to be applauded.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Western Sydney is in one direction; Upper Hunter is about three hours north-west of here.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: It is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question relates to the Upper Hunter.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Minister's time has expired.

COVID-19

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Government's response to COVID-19?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): I thank the member for Camden for his question. Like all members of this place, I know that community updates are important to make sure all of our citizens are not only well equipped with the latest health advice but also aware of the vaccine rollout, which certainly got a boost yesterday. I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to provide the House with some updated figures we received overnight that give us a sense of the enthusiasm with which the community is adopting the vaccine rollout in New South Wales. I thank Minister Hazzard, Secretary of the Department of Health Elizabeth Koff, Deputy Secretary Susan Pearce, Teresa Anderson and all of the local area health teams in the Sydney area in particular for making the mass vaccination centre operational within 20 days. If members have the opportunity to visit that centre, they will realise its capacity and the seamless way in which members of the public and key workers are able to obtain their vaccine safely through digital processes. I thank everybody working in that centre including the pharmacists, the medical practitioners and all the health staff, who are making sure that the people of New South Wales have access to a safe vaccine.

I also stress that that means in New South Wales we will have the capacity to provide around 60,000 vaccines a week, strongly complemented by the GP network. I thank the GP network in New South Wales. Last week with the Minister I had the opportunity to meet with key organisations representing GPs. It was pleasing

to be able to exchange information and support one another in our wish to vaccinate as much of our population as possible. I am pleased to advise the House that the total number of vaccines administered in New South Wales is now closely approaching 800,000 jabs—793,000, to be precise. About one-third of those have been done by NSW Health—just over 242,000—and the balance of over half a million by the GP network. I am pleased to say that in the past 24 hours the NSW Health system delivered nearly 6,300 jabs, not just in the mass vaccination centre at Homebush but in 100 sites across New South Wales.

We know that people in our rural and regional communities do not want to be subjected to travelling long distances to access the vaccine when it is their turn, so we have made sure that our footprint is built to service not only Greater Sydney and areas of heavy population but also regional and rural communities across the State. I am pleased to advise that nine facilities are now delivering both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines at Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Nepean, Lismore, St George, St Vincent's, Orange, Gosford and Tamworth—just to demonstrate that we are now in the next stage of the rollout.

As members are aware, from 24 May people aged 50 and over who want to get the vaccine through the NSW Health system can do so through the hub, but we are encouraging them to go through their GP in the first instance. That is the best way to get the AstraZeneca vaccine. However, if they do not have a GP or choose to go through NSW Health instead, they can register from tomorrow by putting their name down. They will then be called up from 24 May when it is their turn. Pleasingly, in the past 24 hours our State was able to ask people between the ages of 40 and 49 to come forward and register their interest to get vaccinated through the Service NSW app.

I am pleased to advise the House that between 5.00 p.m. yesterday and 11.30 a.m. this morning nearly 62,000 people came forward to say they were keen to get the Pfizer vaccine. That means that, if we happen to get additional doses we did not anticipate or if, for whatever reason, those who are in the key health worker categories have finished their vaccination earlier than anticipated, we can draw down on that list to make sure that we use up every dose that we are provided with. Coincidentally, it was pleasing to hear the Federal health Minister disclose yesterday that 900,000 additional doses of Pfizer would be sent out across the States. The timing of our mass vaccination hub could not have been better. New South Wales has a plan not only for the next few weeks but also to anticipate any difficulty in supply that might come up from time to time. I encourage all members in this place to provide that information to their constituents to make sure that everybody is clear on where they can access a safe vaccine and where they can seek additional information. [*Extension of time*]

In addition to all the health experts, I thank Minister Dominello's team and the secretary of his department, Emma Hogan, for making available the systems that allow us with pinpoint accuracy to receive registrations of interest and provide that information in due course to people directly through the Service NSW app, which is proving invaluable. I note that in her explanation to the House about issues raised by the Speaker today, the Leader of the Opposition said she will keep me accountable on privatisation. Potentially, in the likelihood that I may not get a question on privatisation this question time—I might, I do not know—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked specifically about COVID.

The SPEAKER: Consistent with my previous rulings, I will allow the Premier to digress slightly.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 74, which allows the Speaker to intervene to prevent quarrels between members. Given that you have raised you have a commitment not to have what happened last week—

The SPEAKER: I have asked the Premier to continue. I have made my ruling.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know the Leader of the Opposition does not want us to remind her of her position on privatisation, which was that she said she remains supportive of privatisation.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Premier has not come back to the question.

The SPEAKER: I have already ruled on that point of order. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The electorate does not appreciate hypocrisy. [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: To the extent that it is not already abundantly clear, I clarify that during question time all the public galleries are part of this Chamber. This week I will again allow one of the galleries to not be part of the Chamber on a temporary basis for the purposes of allowing visitors for the petition debate. I am happy to make that exception. But there is no question that while we are sitting in question time all the galleries, including the

Speaker's gallery, are part of the Chamber. A staffer came into the Chamber before to hand a Minister some papers. I will overlook that stranger in the House. I will put it down to a lack of understanding. That was inappropriate. I do not want to see it happen again.

MICHAEL JOHNSEN, FORMER MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:35): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Has the Deputy Premier or anyone else in his Government or The Nationals contacted their disgraced former MP Michael Johnsen in relation to his new lobbying firm?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:35): I thank the member for her question. I remind the member and the House of the actions I took when the accusations were made in this Chamber by the member for Blue Mountains. When it became obvious that the former member for Upper Hunter may have been the person in question, I proactively contacted him at the time. Within 2½ hours we had him resigning as a member of the Government and as a Parliamentary Secretary. I think people can judge me on my actions there and then. A few days later further revelations were made in relation to a series of texts.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: This is about the lobbying.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Allow me to answer the question. I expect a standard from members on my team and I asked the member to resign from Parliament. The reason I say all that is that I think my actions speak for themselves as to how I conducted myself in relation to the former member and the way that we wanted to set a standard in this place. Does the House think that, because the former member posts on social media—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I did wait, Mr Speaker, because I know your concerns about taking a point of order too early.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: I take the point of order under Standing Order 129. The question is: Has the Deputy Premier or anyone else in his Government or The Nationals contacted their disgraced former MP Michael Johnsen in relation to his new lobbying firm? We know what the Deputy Premier did.

The SPEAKER: I do not need to hear further on the point of order. The Deputy Premier is being generally relevant, but at some stage I expect him to answer the question directly.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have been very relevant in answering the question. My point is: Do members think that, after making all those tough and hard decisions early on to get a member to resign from this place, I would in one way or another want to talk to the former member in relation to his lobbying? Have members of this place reached out to the former member in relation to how he is going, because it is a tough situation and he is human? I know members on the other side have done that. Yes, they have. Have I contacted him in relation to his lobbying firm? Absolutely no. I cannot speak on behalf of other members. I am not privy to understanding what other people may or may not do. I can answer the question of whether I have. The answer is absolutely no. Do I support—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being directly relevant. He may continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: What is disgusting is those opposite trying to muddy the situation with the former member and members of this House. When we get into election time and by-elections, those people opposite go into the gutter. They are a disgrace. They are disgusting and are trying to malign me and my actions. I can tell members that I sleep well at night because I know that everything I did and everything I do is done at a standard that I believe is expected by the public. Those opposite are looking at the polling numbers.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The referendum on 22 May on the Leader of the Opposition's position as leader is the problem here. And what do they do? They get in the mud.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The question was very specific. We are dealing with a former member.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has directly answered the question and will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have answered the question. I will continue to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Directly answer the question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: When things get tough what do those opposite do? Of course, we know the Leader of the Opposition turns her back on a community when things get tough.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: But in this case now they want to get into the mud and the gutter. They want to use the Chamber, coward's castle, to impute—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 58. Mr Speaker, you have the right to tell the member that he is being irrelevant, which he is. We are discussing a very important matter in Parliament.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier will continue. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They use coward's castle to impugn other members of this House. They would not dare say this outside. Here is my challenge: Go outside this Chamber and make the same accusation.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:40): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is building a safer and stronger regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:40): I thank the member for Dubbo for his question in relation to the regions and investment. It is a period of prosperity. We are supporting those communities that have endured drought, bushfires, floods and, like most Australian communities, COVID. In the past 10 years, the past five years and in recent years, the Government's investment in regional and rural New South Wales has set up the regions to embrace this opportunity. From funds like the Regional Growth Fund we have seen money going into sportsgrounds, libraries, museums and what I call community amenities—upgrades to the showground, the local park and building playgrounds for children. We are building amenities in our regions and communities to bring families together.

I turn to investment in education. In this year's budget alone there is \$650 million for regional and rural school upgrades and new builds. In health \$950 million is going to the regions, upgrading or starting to build new hospitals. Only recently I was in Braidwood where we opened the \$35 million Braidwood MultiPurpose Service—a commitment from the Government that we delivered on. The roads and transport budget for regional and rural New South Wales this year alone is over \$7 billion, supporting councils and communities, building highways and improving our regional roads and connectivity. Right across the board we are seeing significant spend—in the tens of billions of dollars—into regional and rural New South Wales. The regions are getting their fair share.

We have targeted programs in certain areas like our Resources for Regions—a program that has seen over 149 projects since its inception in 2012, with \$345 million being reinvested into those communities impacted by mining. In the recent round we increased that to \$75 million. We have also made changes to the criteria. I acknowledge Singleton Council, which brought that to my attention a couple of years ago. We sat down with stakeholders and came up with a better program where now we base the allocation—a guaranteed amount of money each and every year to every local government area impacted by mining—on employment numbers out of mining. For somewhere like Singleton, in this year's round alone it is guaranteed in the vicinity of about \$8 million. That will continue, year in, year out. A guaranteed amount of money is going to Singleton and it is the same with Muswellbrook and all those other regional communities.

The Hon. Mick Veitch in the other place, a member of the Labor Party, said he only wished the Labor Party had such a policy. We have doubled down on that this time. The next round is about to open—another \$75 million in Resources for Regions—and that investment in communities will continue. With the recent announcement of our Royalties for Rejuvenation fund we have set aside \$25 million each and every year in perpetuity to support those mining communities as mining comes offline. We are working with industries and communities to see what that transition will look like.

The beauty of the opportunity that we have in the regions and in a place like the Upper Hunter is that the infrastructure—the industries, the businesses and the supply chain—that are in place today are the same industries and supply chain that will become the foundation industries of the future as new businesses, new innovation and new industries come to the region. From waste to energy and biomass, there are opportunities right across renewables. We have an opportunity to work with communities and industries. In the next couple of months I hope to put together the expert panel that will oversee that program. I would like to see members of the CFMEU and the other unions as well as community groups, environmental groups and council representation. I want a broad membership to help plan and prepare the guidelines and policy for the future.

Unlike those opposite, we have made a down payment of \$25 million a year in perpetuity in what I would call a future fund to support mining communities. That is what the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals do in government: We plan. We plan for the future and set the programs in place. We engage the community. We bring on board the people who are important to make the strategic decisions. That is how we get best value for the people of the Upper Hunter. Today I again reinforce that the Liberal-Nationals Government continues to have a plan for the regions.

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

MICHAEL JOHNSEN, FORMER MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:46): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Given that the Deputy Premier failed to rule out whether anyone in his Government or The Nationals contacted Michael Johnsen in relation to his new lobbying firm—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Coast and the member for Bega will remain silent.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: —will he confirm that nobody in his Government or The Nationals made a secret deal with Michael Johnsen and encouraged him to start a lobbying firm as an inducement for him to resign from Parliament quickly and quietly?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:46): I thank the member for that very direct question, rather than the political speak of the first question. I categorically deny that any inducement was made to the former member. I asked him to resign because I wanted to set a standard in this place, and I will not allow those opposite to use this House to impugn my reputation or anyone else's. I absolutely rule that out. There was no such inducement.

COVID-19 AND JOBS GROWTH

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic has helped secure jobs and increased employment opportunities for the people of New South Wales as we recover?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (14:47): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Vaucluse for her question today and for her passionate advocacy for job creation in New South Wales, but particularly in those new and emerging sectors that are so heavily influenced by research and development as well as the close working relationship that exists between industry in this State and our university and vocational training sector. She is a true, passionate advocate for that community and is doing a stellar job.

There is no doubt that over the past 12 to 18 months the New South Wales economy has been tested like no-one in this generation has seen before. The fact that we came into this pandemic in such a strong economic position gave us a strong base to respond to it. The New South Wales Government has invested over \$29 billion in making sure we cushion the blow of the COVID pandemic on our economy, and that means people getting back into jobs faster. Whether it be our infrastructure agenda, our stimulus packages, the fast-tracking of planning approvals or the work to support the public sector in New South Wales, it has all been about making sure we get more people back into jobs quickly.

The challenge was immense. From February through to May last year we lost over 272,000 jobs very quickly. I can now say to the House that we have now recovered over 271,000 of those jobs, getting people back into work. We know that new opportunities have been created through COVID, but there are still sectors that are struggling to get back on their feet and back to full employment. But we are seeing an incredibly strong domestic economy. In fact, the unemployment rate in New South Wales has dropped to 5.4 per cent. This is a reflection of the fact that the Government is targeting its expenditure towards support for businesses—particularly around reducing costs, with \$1,500 rebates for expenses for businesses. We have been able to lower and extend out the thresholds for payroll tax.

Last year the Premier, the Treasurer and I announced a new program called Jobs Plus to make sure New South Wales is seen as the best place anywhere in Australia to invest, grow and create new jobs. Today we made our first announcement for recipients of funding out of that Jobs Plus program. Two companies provide a really great example of what those projects are able to do. One called SpeedX, based at Eveleigh in our Tech Central precinct, is a rapidly growing small business that does molecular diagnostics. It has seen a lot of growth in its business. But crucially, before COVID it did not see a great pathway for growth in Australia and it was exploring options around manufacturing internationally and offshore. Since the implementation of the Jobs Plus program and responding to our call to arms, it has now come back to New South Wales. It will set up its global

headquarters here and crucially it will onshore the manufacture of its rapidly growing products in New South Wales, right here in Tech Central. That is a great example of a new business starting up, scaling up and getting access to the support that it needs from the New South Wales Government.

Then there is Baxter, a great western Sydney company based at Toongabbie. I know the member for Seven Hills would be quite familiar with this business. It is Australia's only manufacturer of intravenous fluids. It has also seen strong growth in its business but it has needed help and assistance to be able to take on board new technology, bring on board advanced manufacturing practices and grow the number of employees. It is the second recipient of support through our Jobs Plus program. Those two businesses alone will add 280 new high-tech, advanced, manufacturing-focused jobs in the medical technology space, which we know will be so important as we recover from COVID.

Jobs Plus will be there for businesses right across sectors in New South Wales to ensure that they can get the concierge service and the planning and funding support to extract investment from international markets. Baxter is not just using State Government funds to make this investment. Our commitment to supporting it has extracted more money from its corporate head office in the United States to invest more money into western Sydney. This is how investment attraction leads to creating new jobs in our local communities, but it reaches much further than the Jobs Plus program. We have seen the impacts across our visitor economy. Particularly during the intense periods of the COVID crisis, when restrictions were in place and State borders were closed, tourism really did it tough but it is bouncing back incredibly hard. The work that we have done to make people confident about travelling across regional New South Wales is seeing a surge in tourists across the State. *[Extension of time]*

We have worked to get our Love NSW campaign in place, working closely in line with the Commonwealth Government's Holiday Here This Year campaign. That has seen a surge of activity in the regions—places like Dubbo, Mudgee, Orange, the Hunter Valley and the North Coast of New South Wales. I was down on the South Coast with the member for Bega last week at the Narooma Oyster Festival, which is showing such confidence. People were enjoying the wonderful produce that we are generating in New South Wales and we have the capacity to export it across the world. The support that those businesses have got from the Government and the investment that we are continuing to make in improved infrastructure to make it easier for people to move around our State is now creating a new challenge for lots of businesses: They are now struggling to access skilled workers because there is so much jobs growth across regional New South Wales and also in Sydney.

I recognise the work that the Commonwealth Government has already announced in the lead-up to tonight's budget and particularly around the Global Talent Visa, which will allow New South Wales to work very closely with the Commonwealth Government. The Jobs Plus program, working hand in hand with the Global Talent Visa and our strong response to COVID, has now made New South Wales an incredibly attractive place to invest and grow your business—particularly if your markets are across the Asia-Pacific—and also the new tax treatments for business owners and employees in businesses so that they can seed-fund their own business work. I know that a big event is coming up in the Upper Hunter that is really about attracting lots of people to the community. We want to get lots of people out. It is Scone Cup Day this Friday. Make sure you get to the races.

Mr Gareth Ward: I think we'll back a winner there.

Mr STUART AYRES: I have a tip for you, Minister Ward. There is a guy called David Layzell—there is an omen bet—and a horse called Mr Dependable from the Gay Waterhouse yard. Get on Layzell and get on Mr Dependable and you are going to back a winner.

MICE PLAGUE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:54): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. People in the country are in despair as mice overrun their homes, farms and businesses. Crops are being lost, water is being contaminated, people are getting sick and farmers are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on baits, if they can find them at all. Why is the Minister doing nothing while these communities suffer?

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

Mr Paul Toole: Are you going to tell them you support them and then vote against them like you did—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:56): I thank the member for her question. Unlike the member for Maitland, I do not want to talk down the regions nor talk down agriculture. We have gone through some of the toughest periods in the bush. Yes, we are resilient but, I tell you what, it is a word. Being resilient is about what you do on the ground.

This Government provided more than \$4.5 billion in drought support to get farmers through the worst drought in recorded history. Those opposite had nothing to add to that—nothing; zero. They did not ask any questions in relation to drought support; nothing about the Local Land Services rebates; nothing about truck rego rebates; nothing about transport subsidies; and nothing about supporting farmers getting feed and fodder or getting stock to market. There was nothing from those opposite as to how the Government supported farmers to get through the worst drought in recorded history. Then bushfires came and ravaged our regional communities.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Everyone is aware of all the challenges of farming in regional New South Wales. We want to know what he is doing about the mice plague. He is doing nothing.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied the Deputy Premier is being generally relevant. He is heading in the right direction.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Then our communities were ravaged by fires. What did we do? We supported primary industry producers with \$75,000 direct grants. We also had industry grants, where we were supporting dairy farmers, our farmers on the ground.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Government made available over \$100 million for rebuilding fences. Again, during the fires we were supporting our primary producers, our farmers. Then the recent floods hit, and again the New South Wales Government, together with the Federal Government, responded with \$75,000 direct grants to support businesses like the dairy farmers on the mid North Coast. Again, it was this Government with \$4.5 billion of investment supporting—

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about the mice plague. It is not about this drivel. The people deserve to have an answer to this question.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier is heading in the right direction and is being relevant to the question.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: He has not even spoken about mice once.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coogee will resume her seat. The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Throughout all the events that have been faced in the regions, the Government's support has kept our farming sector alive. We have kept them strong. Since the rains have arrived, a lot of our farmers are now booming. They have got crops coming out of the ground, commodity prices are high and the price for cattle and sheep is high. They are getting a return on investment. Farmers for the first time—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: People in hospitals are getting bitten.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is Standing Order 129. Whatever they have done for farmers is not relevant. Say "mice plague". Say it. Acknowledge it.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied the Deputy Premier is being relevant. He is heading in the right direction.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If you keep the farming community resilient, if you support our farmers during tough times, when they are doing it tough, it puts them in a position to be stronger than before. Now we are seeing a mice plague out in the regions; we are seeing it across the board. Most farmers have a plan to deal with it. We have lobbied the Federal Government in relation to changing the rules around broadacre baiting.

Ms Jodi McKay: You have left them behind.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Not at all. We have supported our farmers by making sure they can bait these mice. Those opposite come into this House and attack us about what we are doing for farmers. But when it came to voting for property rights, they walked away. When it came to private native forestry, they walked away. When it came to our land commissioner, they walked away. What we are doing for farmers—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order, of course, relates to Standing Order 129—

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: This is not relevant to mice.

The SPEAKER: Sit down. I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: People in hospitals are being bitten. The CWA and the NSW Farmers were here.

The SPEAKER: Sit down. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Did you meet with them? You didn't meet with them because you don't care.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will continue. The member for Maitland has joined the member for Port Stephens on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If the member for Maitland cared, she would not have voted against property rights for farmers. Let us not pretend that those opposite are the friend of farmers. They are not. They are actually the direct enemy of farmers and landholders in the regions and rural communities. We have kept our farmers resilient and that is why they can manage the mice issue.

REGIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government and Corrective Services NSW are investing in regional New South Wales to keep the community safe, and other germane facts?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:01): I happen to have a prepared answer. I thank the member for her question. I am pleased to inform the House about the investment that this Government has made in regional New South Wales through its prison expansion program and how we are keeping the community safe by reducing reoffending. I start by acknowledging the tremendous work done by Corrective Services NSW staff across this great State and thank them for everything that they do in keeping our communities safe and secure. I take this opportunity to thank the Premier and the health Minister for the great job they have done in keeping this State safe during the COVID period.

It should be acknowledged that one of the best ways to ensure community safety is to self-isolate when there is a risk, just like the Treasurer is doing right now—bravely isolating for two weeks in his rumpus room to ensure the safety and health of all his colleagues. I am told the Treasurer is enjoying lockdown but not as much as The Nationals are enjoying running the Expenditure Review Committee. As corrections Minister, I have done an assessment of Dom's basement and can confirm it is 100 per cent secure—he is not getting out soon. Good behaviour by the Treasurer will be rewarded with one phone call a day, no-contact family visits and a weekly buy up of two-minute noodles. Upon the Treasurer's release, he will be subject to electronic monitoring, banned from visiting cafes and restricted from going within 100 metres of barbecue stores. Like the Treasurer, I encourage everyone to follow the Health advice: isolate when required and ultimately get vaccinated so we can get the borders open and Malcolm and Kevin can be allowed to leave the country as soon as possible.

Over the past five years, through its Better Prisons program, this Government has invested a once-in-a-generation \$3.8 billion into building, reforming and expanding the New South Wales correctional system, with much of this investment going to regional and rural areas. In 2019 the 480-bed expansion at Junee Correctional Centre was opened. Junee prison is one of the biggest employers in the Riverina. The expansion has led to an additional 130 ongoing jobs in the area and a continuing investment in the region. Also in 2019 the Government opened a 440-bed expansion at the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre. During construction more than 1,350 people were employed, most of whom came from the Kempsey area.

That new state-of-the-art facility has created about 120 new ongoing jobs based in Aldavilla, providing a much-needed flow-on effect into the local economy. In Cessnock, we opened a 330-bed maximum security extension, resulting in 85 additional ongoing jobs, a large percentage of which went to local people. In Bathurst, we built a 220-bed maximum-security wing, employing up to 150 subcontractors, which created another 92 jobs for staff there. As a result of a \$700 million investment, last year the Government opened the 1,700-bed Clarence Correctional Centre, creating 600 staff jobs and more than 1,000 jobs during construction. It is anticipated that over the next two decades the Grafton region will receive a boost to its economy of almost \$600 million.

One of the programs that I am most proud of is the racehorse rehabilitation program that runs out of St Heliers Correctional Centre in the Upper Hunter. The program, in which inmates help rehabilitate ex-racehorses on site at St Heliers, was established in 2011 in collaboration with Racing NSW and has been incredibly successful. Hundreds of thoroughbred horses have been paired with inmates to be retrained for new pursuits. Inmates feed, groom, stable and transport the horses. They also assist visiting veterinarians with equine health and help farriers with hoof care. Inmates have the opportunity to complete a number of certificates. All inmates selected for the programs always participate under the strict supervision of correctional officers.

This Government is committed to community safety, which is why the Premier announced her Premier's priority aimed at reducing recidivism in the prison population. That is acknowledged by this Government's incredible \$330 million investment in its strategy for reducing reoffending. Also, we are increasing access to interventions for higher risk offenders using a number of programs. Throughout correctional facilities, we are delivering better programs and continuity of care for people with complex needs, which is critical. That includes people with a serious mental illness and women in custody who have children. Further to that, we continue to deliver a prison environment that enables rehabilitation and post-sentence jobs. When it comes to jobs, it would be remiss of me not to address the elephant in the room: There has been a lot of discussion in recent weeks about one job in particular. However, I take the Leader of the Opposition at her word when she says that her job has never been safer. [*Extension of time*]

After all, if the only prerequisite for the job of the Leader of the Opposition was being very well liked by the Health Services Union, it would go to the member for Wakehurst. In fact, during COVID Labor has managed impressively to isolate three out of four people in the State from ever voting for it. Mr Speaker, I thank you for encouraging social distancing in the Chamber last week. It was refreshing to see the unwavering cooperation of Opposition members who took social distancing to the extreme by completely removing themselves from the Chamber during question time. I am hearing that many of those on the other side of the Chamber are quite desperate for two weeks' isolation from each other after this week. I am informed that the only Opposition member who has remained in self-isolation and who has continued to hold factional meetings is the member for Cessnock. He has not even had to use Zoom. But as I have said before, just like for the Manchurian Candidate, that telephone call will come.

The focus of Corrections in operational areas in custodial settings is to ensure roles, responsibilities and staff culture are geared towards rehabilitation, desistance and progression through a sentence. We do that through a number of opportunities that have been presented by the Premier's massive investment in correctional facilities. During this COVID period I thank correctional staff. Due to the huge amount of work that our correctional staff have done, we have had no COVID cases in Corrections. This Government will continue its commitment to reducing reoffending and keeping our communities safe.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE POLICE NUMBERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Given the high level of concern for safety in the Wagga Wagga community, what action is the Government taking to provide more police to the Wagga Wagga electorate, particularly in light of plans to take police off the beat to guard and transport prisoners?

Mr Michael Daley: He's going to get his badge and his toy gun out and pretend he's a copper in Wagga soon as well.

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

Mr Michael Daley: He's going to impersonate another officer.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:10): Do you not have a Ku Klux Klan meeting to go to or something?

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Maroubra that he is on a first call to order.

Mr Michael Daley: It's alright; I have two left.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Have you not got a Klan meeting to go to? I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question and particularly for his interest in policing in the Wagga Wagga electorate. His interest in policing, not only in Wagga Wagga but also outside his electorate, has always been inspiring. I very much appreciate the support he has given the emergency services also. That support can be seen in the number of briefings he requests from my office and, indeed, in the enthusiasm he shows in his attendance whenever we visit his electorate. I will be back in the beautiful Riverina very soon for a range of engagements with the member for Wagga Wagga. Every time I visit I am heartened by the stories from our frontline officers in that very busy region. Our record budget for the New South Wales police and emergency services ensures that, whether one lives in Sydney or Springvale, the benefits of our \$4 billion budget for our police and our \$1.8 billion budget for our emergency services is being felt locally.

As I have said many times in this place, policing resources, especially in our regional areas, have never been greater. This year we will continue to see the deployment of the largest single increase in our frontline policing strength in more than 30 years, which will see 1,500 new police officers deployed to all commands across the State. As the member knows, that includes not only general duties officers but also youth liaison officers, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, Multicultural Community Liaison Officers, child protection and sex

crime officers, Domestic Violence Liaison Officers and Aged Crime Prevention Officers. Additionally—this will be of particular interest to the member for Wagga Wagga—we have seen an increase in investment in our rural policing with a record budget allowing for 18 new rural crime officers. Rural crime costs millions of dollars every year. It includes theft of livestock, produce, equipment and illegal shooting, trespassing and other crimes affecting people's lives and livelihoods. Those officers will bolster the existing team and ensure that our regional farming communities will be safer than ever. Those new officers will join the 18,000 police officers who risk their lives each day to keep our communities safe. On behalf of everyone in this place, once again I put on record our thanks for their service.

Importantly, since April 2018 the Riverina Police District has been allocated 14 new police officers. Since the Coalition Government's election in 2011, the member's region has been bolstered by 117 new police. We wish those officers all the best as they start their policing careers and take up the fantastic opportunity that country policing provides. It has been a busy period in the region, with the significant impacts of our Black Summer bushfires, the floods and, of course, the recovery from those two disasters. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the flexibility of New South Wales police, who managed 27 checkpoints along the border, including major checkpoints at Albury-Wodonga, Moama-Echuca and Buronga-Mildura. Every day from 8 July to 23 November last year New South Wales police facilitated the movement of tens of thousands of vehicles across the New South Wales and Victorian border. One night last year I was thrilled to join those officers on the border for dinner to thank them for the work that they had done in keeping us safe.

The Government is serious about policing in regional New South Wales, both in the boots deployed on the ground and the facilities they work in. Since coming to government, investment in the southern region has exceeded \$72 million, which has enabled the building of state-of-the-art facilities for our men and women in blue. In September last year the member for Wagga Wagga and I were in the charming country town of Adelong opening the new Adelong Police Station, which was delivered through the \$15.9 million Regional Small Police Station Program. Members in this place know how much emphasis I put on the work that police do with our youth. I make particular mention of the great work that the Riverina Police District does each and every day in that regard. Indeed, it takes a village to raise a child. The great initiatives undertaken by the New South Wales police include the Youth Action meetings, breakfast programs with local schools, a girls camp, a fishing camp, the RYDA program and the successful Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery Program with our Indigenous youth all rolled into one.

The PCYC Fit for Life program is encouraging 45 young people per week in Wagga Wagga and 30 young people per week in Temora. I am proud to note that since being in Government we have produced record funding to our close community partners at PCYC. Close to \$80 million has been committed to club infrastructure, programs and staff across the State, providing more young people with the opportunity to visit their local PCYC. *[Extension of time]*

I note the concerns of the member for Wagga Wagga about prison transportation. I assure him that the Government is working hard to ensure that there are minimal disruptions to day-to-day policing and to the great proactive work that I have detailed. The NSW Police Force and Corrective Services NSW share the responsibility for escorting tens of thousands of prisoners across metropolitan and regional New South Wales each year. As it is a shared responsibility, the NSW Police Force is committed to working with its government sector counterparts, in consultation with the Police Association of NSW and other unions, to establish how best to proactively and collectively manage the function of prison transport. All agencies are working together to ensure that police officers retain the ability to protect and serve their communities and to complete transportation duties for prisoners, particularly mental health patients. Once again I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. I note his interest in the work of police in his electorate and I look forward to my visit next week.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Prior to the police Minister giving his answer, he made a deeply offensive comment about the member for Maroubra. I ask that the police Minister be given an opportunity to withdraw the comments he made in the Chamber.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I politely decline.

The SPEAKER: I cannot force the Minister to withdraw his comments. He has declined to do so. I will take a question from the member for Holsworthy.

Ms Kate Washington: The Minister made a deeply offensive comment about the member for Maroubra and that comment is now on record, in *Hansard*.

ANIMAL SHELTERS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:16): I address my question to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's investment in upgrades to animal shelters and how that is creating jobs across the State?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:16): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. I note her commitment to and passion for animal shelters, especially the RSPCA shelter at Yagoona. I also note that the member for East Hills is committed to animal shelters. Both of those members were present on several occasions to mark every milestone of the \$19.5 million investment at Yagoona, which will create 750 new jobs. This is not just about animal welfare; it is also about creating jobs, as the question from the member for Holsworthy alluded to. I congratulate both members on their commitment. I also congratulate the member for Miranda—we also invest in council shelters—who recently visited the fantastic Sutherland Shire Council pound. Councils right throughout the State are performing extremely well in their roles and responsibilities.

The Government has invested about \$6 million in council pounds. I thank those three members in particular for their passion and commitment. One member even took home a foster kitten from Yagoona, which I am thankful for. Members in this place value their pets, whether it is a dog, cat, scorpion, rat, snake, crustacean, marsupial or amphibian.

Mr Ryan Park: Or a poodle.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Or a poodle. Whether we enjoy scorpions, snakes, cats or dogs, we value that care and concern for companion animals because we are here to elevate the standards of companion animals in New South Wales and we have done that. As the member for Holsworthy would know, in March this year I announced another \$10.5 million for shelters right throughout the State. We do not always hear about those announcements because they are not terribly sexy—sometimes the press reports on them—but that money will go towards animal shelters right throughout the State, from Broken Hill to the north, to Lithgow in the Blue Mountains and down to Wollongong in the south. In Lithgow there is a tree-planting area for koalas. We are upgrading specific areas right throughout the State. As the member for Holsworthy would know, the 50-year-old Yagoona shelter is past its use-by date. With the help of Government investment, the RSPCA is rebuilding Yagoona from the ground up. That fantastic centre will contain new catteries, kennels and veterinary centres. I encourage members to visit Yagoona and pick up a pet. Foster a rat, scorpion or spider. Take one home and look after it.

In the time that is available I will go through some of the projects that the Government is funding. I am really proud of that investment because it goes towards not only animal welfare but also job creation. The Government is upgrading the animal shelter in the Hunter. Some \$1.17 million has been provided to upgrade the service road and car park as well as landscaping, veterinary equipment and a vehicle shed. Funding has been provided to upgrade the breed and compliance unit building on the Central Coast. That project will improve security, lighting, perimeter fencing, bushfire protection, service roads, car parks, upgraded dog exercise yards and general landscaping. In Broken Hill—we do not forget about Broken Hill and the issues out there—nearly \$2 million has been provided to upgrade the veterinary hospital along with veterinary equipment and service roads. One can only imagine the jobs that will be created in those areas as a result of those investments.

I note the member for Keira is wandering out of the Chamber, but a lot of money has been spent upgrading the facility at Unanderra in the Illawarra. The reception area and adoption rooms have been refurbished, and funding has been provided to improve access roads, erosion control and security. Those upgrades at Unanderra are fantastic. As I have said, the Government has funded a gum tree plantation and improved water services for koalas at Lithgow. Nearly \$1.4 million has been provided for wildlife rehabilitation, a companion animal facility and bushfire protection assistance at the site at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains. Funding has been provided to renovate the old cattery at Coffs Harbour as well as for an upgrade to its hydraulic system. Some \$210,000 has been provided to renovate the old cattery at Orange. Funding has also been provided to Tweed Heads. It is clear that funding has been provided statewide for various programs. The Government continues to invest in RSPCA shelters, animal shelters, rescue associations and local councils.

I congratulate local councils—I take any opportunity to congratulate local councils—on running those rescue centres. That huge job involves not only housing animals but also providing veterinary care, microchipping and any surgeries that must be undertaken for animals that are surrendered because of injury. Local councils take that responsibility very seriously. I am proud of each and every one of them. I am sure the member for Kiama has been to the shelter at Nowra.

[A member interjected.]

He does not live there; he lives in Kiama. [*Extension of time*]

I do not require much more time. I encourage all members to go to their local shelter or to Yagoona, where we have committed \$19.5 million and created 750 jobs—the most recent funding is worth \$10.5 million—to foster an animal and care for it. It does not have to be permanent but just care for an animal until the shelter can find a permanent home. I congratulate the CEO—

Ms Kate Washington: This is how they're going to deal with the mouse plague; they're going to put them up for adoption.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I know the member for Port Stephens is not interested in animal welfare—well, she might have a scorpion.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You're not the Speaker anymore.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: God help you if I was. The member for Holsworthy would know that the statewide CEO of RSPCA does a fantastic job. He has hosted the member for Holsworthy, the member for East Hills and me many times at Yagoona. I congratulate him on his fine work. He is a fine man, as are all of the rescue and veterinary staff at that facility. I thank them all again. I acknowledge the commitment of the Government to invest in animal welfare and to create jobs, jobs and jobs. We are the party for the animals as well as the party for the workers.

Documents

ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 35 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Advocate for Children and Young People entitled *Review of the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016 – 2019*, received 7 May 2021. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into the conduct of a Service NSW officer*, dated May 2021, received 11 May 2021. I order that the report be printed.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT ACT 2000

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the 2020 Review of the Exemption for Private Gaming Rooms under the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000, received out of session on 7 May 2021, and authorised to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms FELICITY WILSON: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 30/57*, dated 11 May 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 29/57*.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Ash Road Sporting Complex COVID-19 Testing Clinic

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly direct the Department of Health to relocate the COVID-19 drive-through testing clinic at the Ash Road Sporting Complex, Prestons, so the Liverpool City Robins FC can use the complex as their home ground, received from **Ms Melanie Gibbons**.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business orders of the day (general order) No. 1 (Shoalhaven Anglican School Site) and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1893 to 1901 and 1903 to 1951 have lapsed.

Personal Explanation

MEMBER FOR MAROUBRA

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:25): By leave: Earlier this day when the Minister for Police and Emergency Services answered a question, he made a remark to me, which I and other members found particularly offensive. I have been in this game for a long time and I can roll with the punches, but there are comments that ought not to be made in this Chamber. This day the Minister crossed a line when he made that comment. My instinct with the police Minister, who has proven over time that he has difficulty controlling himself and sometimes well overplays his hand, is just to let it go. But today he invoked the name of an organisation that ought not to be invoked, even when you are fighting your enemies in this place or in another place. The Minister was asked to withdraw; he ought to have, for the decorum of this place. Most well-balanced members of this place with control—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: This is now going beyond a personal explanation into an attack on the Minister.

The SPEAKER: I tend to agree. I ask the member to make it not a counterattack but a personal explanation.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Minister would be well advised to reconsider his remarks and withdraw them. Remarks invoking that organisation are unacceptable at the best of times, but in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, this is not the best of times. I am disappointed that the Minister chose to make that attack on me and I reject his assertions wholeheartedly.

Bills

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT (JOBS PLUS) BILL 2021**Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:27): The Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 is an important bill allowing for time-limited payroll tax exemptions for certain jobs that are created right here in New South Wales. It delivers on a commitment that the Government made when it announced the \$250 million program last November. The bill was introduced to create or support up to 25,000 jobs to June 2022. The focus of that program and of this legislation, enabled through the payroll tax exemption, is to bring forward private sector investment and attract new investors into our State. It is critical to our COVID-19 economic recovery strategy.

Under the leadership of the Government, New South Wales recorded impressive economic growth over the past few years before the COVID pandemic struck our State. Our swift and strong response to the impact of COVID involved a number of measures that helped contain the virus by way of health preventative measures and supported those parts of our economy where that economic support was required. It was a balance of health and economic support. We must remember, however, that through COVID the gross State product [GSP]—what gross domestic product is for the Federal Government, GSP is for the State—contracted by 0.7 per cent. That is the weakest outcome since official statistics were first published in the early 1990s. In the early months of the crisis, employment fell by more than 270,000 jobs; that is, over 6 per cent of the entire State's workforce.

That said, even with that impact, we saw some positive signs of recovery in the New South Wales Government's half-yearly review presented late last year in this House by the Treasurer. It was through that very successful world-beating management of the coronavirus pandemic. There were \$29 billion of health and economic supports across our economy. Because of that swift, purposeful and strategic response, we could lift

some of our COVID-19 restrictions earlier than in other parts of the world and enter into a recovery phase. In the 2020-21 New South Wales budget, there was a focus on job creation; I suspect it will continue to remain a big focus of the Treasurer's budget, to be presented next month in this House. It is preparing for a stronger economy in the long term through economic and other reforms to come out of the pandemic and out of crisis, which the Government is particularly good at doing.

We know now that the economy is forecast to grow by 2.75 per cent in this financial year. The labour market has surprisingly performed better than we expected, with only a 6 per cent unemployment rate at January 2021. I understand from the comments by the jobs Minister during question time that it is now below 6 per cent, which is even more welcome, and it is projected to be reduced to 5 per cent by June 2024. Through January 2021, New South Wales has recovered over 80 per cent—that is 220,183 jobs—of the aggregate jobs lost during the peak of the pandemic. During question time the Minister updated the House about those new jobs that have been created and the restoration of jobs. Gratifyingly, more women have entered the labour force, and older workers have been encouraged by the Government's support to remain in the workforce.

There has been a move to greater part-time employment. That is welcome because it gives flexibility to many in our community who act as carers and nurturers and do not have the capacity, or perhaps the will, to remain in full-time employment, but want to remain in employment for many reasons—not only to be able to pay their bills, but also to rejoin employment in New South Wales when those caring responsibilities fall away. There has been an amazing response by the Government to economic and health challenges. We have seen that borne out in the very early figures of reduction of unemployment; the readjustment of employment back to pre-pandemic levels; changes in our labour practices and productivity around women coming into the workforce in a more profound way than they were before; older workers staying in the workforce; and greater flexibility about employment models, which is important for productivity in the workforce.

But we cannot be complacent, and that is why we have before the House a bill that was introduced to create more jobs and give payroll tax concessions to ensure that we bring forward the employment and investment opportunities that might not be there at the moment but that we can encourage through smart incentives. Today the Premier and Minister Ayres announced that Baxter Healthcare, which is a mature company in the health tech sector, and SpeedX, which is an innovative company, are the first businesses to be part of the Jobs Plus Program. Baxter Healthcare is a Harvard business case study; I remember studying what it had done in the healthcare sector when I was at business school. It is the only local manufacturer of intravenous medical fluids. Through the Jobs Plus support, it will invest in a major expansion of its advanced manufacturing facility in western Sydney, supporting more than 600 existing jobs and creating approximately 80 new jobs by June 2024.

It is really important that it is based at the aerotropolis, the core of which is now called Bradfield, where the Government is taking the opportunity to build new industries, new jobs and new training. It is going to be an economic powerhouse, together with the infrastructure of the new airport, rail, road and all the kinds of things that will build our community in the west of the State and build its economic credentials.

SpeedX, a company at Eveleigh I visited, has done remarkably well, but the Jobs Plus Program is going to give it a substantial boost. When I visited its people, they said that one challenge to growing their business was that they could not obtain many of their supplies, such as reagents they use in tests, because supply lines were cut during the pandemic. So they had taken the opportunity to pivot in an innovative way to build their own manufacturing capacity in New South Wales, in a suburb adjacent to Parliament House, taking their fate into their own hands and building our economy at the same time. I am so proud of the innovative journey they have taken.

The company started with an early grant from the Medical Devices Fund. It is one of our great exemplars of companies starting in our State, having taken advantage of various programs in the innovation pipeline such as the Medical Devices Fund, which is run by the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer and the Office for Health and Medical Research. It has benefited from and built on that funding. Now it has come back to us at the point where it is scaling up. The company is tapping into the Jobs Plus Program to grow jobs and its advanced manufacturing capacity. Seeing this State support businesses from "soup to nuts" is so gratifying. We want to see more of that. That is part of the reason why I am working with Minister Ayres and the Premier on the research and development strategy in New South Wales.

Other aspects of the Jobs Plus Program include a concierge service—which Minister Ayres touched on in the House during question time—subsidised training, package rebates and infrastructure rebates. There is subsidised short-term access to government-owned accommodation for companies. From talking to start-ups and scale-ups, I know that they want a first customer—which is very good if it is the State Government in procurement—they want capital and space and skills. So that benefit of the Jobs Plus Program, making available subsidised short-term government accommodation from our vast portfolio of property, will be so welcomed by those companies that are seeking to build employment in our State. Another fantastic asset of this program is assistance with planning approval. Criticism is often made that our approval process can be a little too slow and

at times lacking in transparency. Under our planning Minister, Rob Stokes, the process has gone ahead in leaps, but in relation to creating new jobs in manufacturing this fast-track approval process is welcome as well.

The bill contains a welcome package that will turbocharge our economy in New South Wales and provide opportunities to businesses that they may not have had prior to the pandemic. The State Government has become even more purposeful in its economic supports of innovation than perhaps it was before the pandemic. I back this bill. Baxter Healthcare and SpeedX are showing the difference that investment in and support of innovation in the economy can make to job creation and to the emergence of new industries in New South Wales. As the State Government, we pride ourselves on doing that, and we are doing that through this bill. I support the bill before the House.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:38): I support the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 and thank the Premier and the Treasurer for prioritising New South Wales citizens' health while building resilience into the New South Wales economy. It is around one year since New South Wales first eased restrictions on public gatherings. Social distancing rules became the norm, and the New South Wales Government had listed just 16 reasons for people to leave their places of residence. In one year we have come a long way. Successful management of the virus has allowed mobility restrictions to be eased much more quickly than had been expected.

In the 2020-21 budget the Government made a conscious decision to put people's health and the economy first. The Government made a commitment to build on its health and economic responses and successes. The bill reflects that commitment to keeping people safe and to creating the jobs needed to move forward, firstly, by supporting the economy and shifting the approach to one of focusing on creating jobs for the future and, secondly, by continuing to direct efforts to safeguard the health of the community.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures needed to suppress the spread of the virus have had a significant impact on the New South Wales economy. In the early stages of the pandemic employment fell by more than 270,000, which is over 5 per cent of the entire State's workforce. The State's initial recovery from the impact of COVID-19 has far exceeded expectations. At the time of the 2020-21 half-yearly review the economy was on track to recover to pre-COVID levels, six months sooner than expected, and economic growth was forecast to improve to 2.75 per cent by 2023-24. There needs to be continued support for businesses and jobs to ensure that robust economic conditions are in place when the COVID-19 pandemic passes.

The Jobs Plus Program, supported by the exemptions to payroll tax that are contained in the bill, will drive job creation in the non-government sector. That is critical to a successful COVID-19 recovery strategy. The \$250 million Jobs Plus Program will stimulate and strengthen the New South Wales economy by creating or supporting up to 25,000 new jobs. The program is designed to support companies that want to expand their footprints or relocate to New South Wales. It clearly signals that New South Wales is backing private and non-government companies that are seeking to invest in job-creating projects, proposals and partnerships by supporting them throughout the critical stages of business development.

The Jobs Plus Program will boost new jobs by offering various financial supports and the payroll tax exemptions that are provided in this bill. The bill will support the program by amending the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt from payroll tax for up to four years the wages of positions identified in Jobs Plus agreements. Published program guidelines outline for businesses the eligibility criteria to access this assistance. Payroll tax relief will be provided for up to four years to eligible businesses for positions identified in approved Jobs Plus agreements. To gain access to these exemptions, businesses will be required to create at least 30 new jobs, initiated before 20 June 2022 and completed by 30 June 2024. Payroll tax exemptions under the Jobs Plus Program will support the delivery of new jobs from the time the first agreements are signed until 30 June 2028.

All businesses entering into the Jobs Plus Program will be subject to the terms specified by their agreements. The agreements will include the commitment of the businesses, the benefits to be provided by the Government, a process for reviewing progress against milestones and rectifying any problems with performance, and the grounds or circumstances in which payroll tax exemptions may be revoked if necessary. If a business is not delivering on its commitments, the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney can issue a written notice which may revoke the payroll tax exemptions for a business. If a revocation notice is issued, the payroll tax exemption will be revoked as if the wages identified in the agreement had never been exempt and the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will issue an assessment or reassessment to the business.

By enticing top-performing companies from interstate and across the globe to participate in the Jobs Plus Program, we will ensure that New South Wales remains the best place to do business in Australia. The changes in this bill will continue to support existing jobs and drive job creation. Job creation is critical as we push the agenda to reopen our economy, sending a clear message that New South Wales remains the economic powerhouse of Australia, even through a pandemic. The New South Wales Government is creating and supporting jobs for the future to build long-term economic prosperity as we deliver a better quality of life for current and future

generations of our State. This is especially true for the Camden electorate, whose members are either in or on the doorstep of the aerotropolis.

The bill will continue to support the Government's efforts in providing quality care for our older citizens by facilitating the third Commonwealth retention bonus for aged-care workers. The Commonwealth, through its Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity, has provided three bonus payment rounds to eligible employers of aged-care workers in residential and home care settings. The payments are to be passed on to eligible workers as bonus wages, to assist in the retention of this workforce and to keep them caring for Australia's vulnerable elderly citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Payments to successful applicants were based on average weekly hours worked by eligible employees and were pro rataed according to hours worked so that employees who worked more than 30 hours per week received the full amount and those who worked less than three hours per week did not receive any amount.

The bill extends the payroll tax exemption passed by Parliament on 5 August 2020 for the first two rounds of bonus payments by removing the final date for eligible bonus payments. The bill will exempt the bonus wages paid under the third round of the program, and any additional future round, from New South Wales payroll tax. That will ensure participating employers are not subject to payroll tax if they pass the third round of retention bonuses to workers. It will also encourage employers to participate in the program in the future if there are additional rounds. The removal of the barrier for participating in the third round may assist employers to retain or increase employment levels and will support the workforce continuity objective of the program, thereby investing in the provision of quality aged care for older Australians. The exemption may also encourage uptake of the grant for any additional round, benefiting employees with additional wages.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the New South Wales Government made a conscious decision to put people's health and the economy before the 2020-21 New South Wales budget through a number of programs. The New South Wales Government brought forward an increase in the payroll tax threshold to \$1.2 million and also cut the payroll tax rate from 5.45 per cent to 4.85 per cent for two years. The New South Wales Government is now continuing this by introducing the Jobs Plus Program and the aged care retention bonus payroll tax exemption. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:47): Payroll tax is an extremely important issue, especially in my electorate of Wollondilly and in the Southern Highlands. The member for Canterbury keeps teasing that she is going to come down and spend her Dine & Discover vouchers in our community and help regional businesses in the beautiful Southern Highlands. I know the Minister for Water, Property and Housing had a great time not long ago in beautiful Bowral—my town. The Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 will amend legislation to provide payroll tax exemptions for jobs specified by the Jobs Plus Program for up to four years.

The bill will also exempt from payroll tax further retention bonus payments for aged-care workers who are funded from a Commonwealth Government grant program. That is particularly important in my electorate of Wollondilly, especially in the Wingecarribee local government area where 40 per cent of the population is over 65 years of age—aged care is a critical industry in my electorate. This will remove the tax liability for employers who have participated in the third tranche of the program and the disincentive under any future announced tranche for employers to apply for and pass on those payments to workers.

Under the Jobs Plus Program there are payroll tax exemptions for certain positions. Businesses are eligible to apply for the Jobs Plus Program if they achieve the threshold of increasing their net number of full-time equivalent employees before 30 June 2022 and by at least 30 new full-time equivalent employees by June 2024; or if they are a revenue-generating business and have at least 20 full-time equivalent employees for Australian Business Number [ABN] registered businesses or up to 100 full-time equivalent employees for foreign-owned entities. The Jobs Plus Program will help to stimulate economic activity and jobs by supporting businesses that want to enter or expand their footprint in New South Wales. An example of that relates to a different fund—the New South Wales Regional Job Creation Fund, to which the Government committed \$100 million to create at least 5,000 jobs in regional areas of New South Wales.

I am happy to announce that a business that came and saw me last year, XCEM, which creates a unique product of high-strength, lightweight fire-resistant fibreglass panels for residential and commercial buildings, is getting absolutely hammered by business and cannot keep up with demand. Currently it has 18 employees but this \$3.9 million investment from the fund will create 235 jobs. It is a small business that will expand rapidly and provide high-strength, fire-resistant panels which will revolutionise the construction industry, especially in apartment buildings. As someone who has come from the construction industry, I know that square metres are very important inside units and these panels will reduce cavity space. Importantly, they are fire resistant—we have seen what has happened with flammable cladding and other things in the past—and sound resistant. It is a great new product and I am happy that the business was able to get this funding of \$3.9 million to expand and employ

up to 235 employees in the Southern Highlands. That is great news for the area and great news for the construction industry.

In relation to payroll tax exemption for the third and any future retention bonus payments for eligible aged-care workers funded from a Commonwealth grant program, in late August 2020 the Commonwealth Government announced a third tranche of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program. The program provides funding for aged care retention bonus payments for eligible workers providing services in residential and home care settings to incentivise the continuity of this workforce during the pandemic. The pandemic hit aged care hard, especially in the regions. The funding is provided to aged-care employers to pass on to those workers as wages, with the first tranche made around July 2020, the second around September 2020 and the third around January 2021.

In August 2020 an exemption from payroll tax was provided for wages paid to aged-care workers from bonus payments received by employers under the grant program before 1 January 2021. That has the effect of only exempting wages paid under the first two tranches. The proposed reforms being put forward for Jobs Plus payroll tax exemptions would apply to identified positions for the period agreed in the Jobs Plus agreement, up to a maximum of four years. The exemption may be revoked by the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney in circumstances that will be identified in the agreement.

In respect of the Commonwealth's aged care retention bonus payments, the bill provides an exemption from payroll tax for wages paid or payable under the third tranche and any future announced tranche of the program. The bill therefore extends the exemption provided for the first two tranches in 2020 by removing the current exemption end date of 1 January 2021. Only a couple of weeks ago I was at a function with the Treasurer. One of the guests at the function employs up to 3,000 people just in New South Wales and he was paying up to \$430,000-odd a month in payroll tax. I congratulate him because during COVID he kept all those people employed. I was impressed by that because the amount he was paying per month was incredible.

In relation to stakeholder management, the Treasurer and the Minister for western Sydney are talking to business owners, especially of small business. Companies in my region operate differently from those in metropolitan Sydney. The bill will help businesses that have lots of tradies, small and medium-sized businesses and construction businesses in the Wollondilly electorate. One advantage in regional areas is that many of those companies set up and run their operations from home. Obviously the impost of the cost of having large factories in western Sydney is something that would be tough for them. So a lot of those operations are coming out of Wollondilly.

I believe the study found at least 70 per cent of those in Wollondilly leave the area each day to go to work around Sydney and western Sydney. In respect of stakeholder management, the applications for support under the Jobs Plus Program opened on 15 December 2020 and it will close when the support is fully allocated, or on 30 June 2022. Investment NSW will work with proponents to access the received applications. We are going out there, we are consulting with the community, we are consulting with the business community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:55): I wholeheartedly support the Government's Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. As established, this bill allows for time-limited payroll tax exemptions for certain specified Jobs Plus positions and for exemption of further Federal Government retention bonus payments for aged-care workers. In essence, it will amend legislation to provide payroll tax exemptions for jobs specified by the Jobs Plus Program for up to four years. The bill will also exempt from payroll tax further retention bonus payments for aged-care workers that are funded from the Commonwealth grants program. This will remove the tax liability for employers that have participated in the third tranche of the program. It will also remove a disincentive under any future announced tranche for employers to apply for and pass on these payments to workers. I see that the member for Terrigal also supports the bill through his interjections.

Mr Adam Crouch: Absolutely.

Mr MARK COURE: In practice, this bill means more encouragement for employers to participate and more money in the pockets of workers. It is yet another example of how the New South Wales Government is fighting the economic challenge presented by COVID-19 through sensible and adaptable economic financial management. There can be no doubt that New South Wales is leading the nation in our economic recovery.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Absolutely.

Mr MARK COURE: I note the interjection from the outstanding Minister for Water, Property and Housing. The Jobs Plus Program will also help to stimulate economic activity, economic growth and jobs by supporting businesses who want to enter into or expand their footprint in New South Wales. This is a particularly important issue to which all members of this House need to pay attention—the payroll tax rate reduction and the

increase to the threshold for the 2020 and 2021 period. The New South Wales Government has announced a reduction in the payroll tax rate to 4.85 per cent for the 2021 period and the 2021-22 financial year. The threshold has also increased to \$1.2 million for the same period—2020-21. If we look back in time for the past couple of years we find that this follows previous increases in the threshold since 2017-2018, which started at \$750,000. We have come a long way from 2017 to 2022, which will be \$1.2 million. The member for Terrigal is nodding his head in agreement. It is estimated that around 8,500 businesses that would have paid payroll tax will now be exempt as the threshold has increased to \$1.2 million. I see the nods from Government MPs and one Opposition MP is also nodding.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: No, I am not nodding.

Mr MARK COURE: You are nodding for this one.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: It is worth repeating: Under these changes it is estimated that around 8,500 businesses who would have paid payroll tax are now exempt for the first time since 2017. As members know, I have met with many businesses in my electorate—some would say maybe all of them, being the outstanding campaigner that I am.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order—

Mr MARK COURE: I am being honest; I cannot mislead the House. One of the major things that people bring up time and again is payroll tax. If you are one of the 8,500 businesses now not paying payroll tax but you were before say, 2017, or under the previous Labor Government, that is money that is going back into employing more people. Am I right? Now, I do not understand payroll tax. I do not understand why we have it as a State.

Ms Melanie Gibbons: That is why you are not the Treasurer.

Mr MARK COURE: That is why I am not the Treasurer, thank you.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: The Treasurer is listening, even though he is in the dollhouse, in the rumpus room.

Mr MARK COURE: The member for Canterbury should remain silent; it is my turn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MARK COURE: But the good thing is that this Government is listening. A number of times it has raised the threshold to ensure fewer businesses are paying payroll tax. I have spoken to a childcare centre operator who lives in my electorate. He has three or four childcare centres not just in my area but right across Sydney. He mentioned to me only the other day that he is paying over \$10,000, I think it is twice a year, in payroll tax. That is \$20,000 in payroll tax each and every year. That could fund someone to be employed part-time in any one of his three or four centres across Sydney. I have also spoken to many other businesses. A cabinet-making factory in my electorate was paying over a five-year period \$30,000 to \$40,000 in payroll tax. Another business was paying a whopping payroll tax bill of \$64,000. That could employ at least one person.

So hats off to the Treasurer. By increasing the threshold to \$1.2 million—as I have mentioned a number of times already in the past few minutes—there are now 8,500 extra businesses that would have paid and are now not paying payroll tax. Historically this Government has always been the Government to encourage business and enterprise. We have always been the party encouraging innovation and giving businesses that step up, that confidence to grow. This bill continues that mission. The bill will also administer a payroll tax exemption for the third and any future retention bonus payments for aged-care workers funded under the Commonwealth grant program.

In late August 2020, the Commonwealth Government announced a third tranche of the Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity program. That program provides funding for aged care retention bonus payments for workers providing services in residential and home care settings to incentivise the continuing of this workforce during this pandemic. The funding is also provided to aged-care employers to pass on to these workers as wages, with the first tranche made around July 2020, the second around September 2020 and the third around January 2021. In August 2020 an exemption from payroll tax was provided for wages paid to aged-care workers from bonus payments received by employers under the grant program before 1 January 2021. This has the effect of only exempting wages paid under the first two tranches.

Finally, I am also satisfied this bill has been subject to extensive stakeholder management. I am advised applications for support under the Jobs Plus Program opened in December 2020 and will close when the support is fully allocated, or on 30 June 2022, whichever comes first. Investment NSW will work with proponents to assess received applications. In summary, this bill will go a long way towards creating economic growth across

New South Wales. In light of this, there can be no doubt the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021 is to the benefit of our State's employers and workers. I commend this bill and recommend that this House approves its introduction to Parliament.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:04): I speak on behalf of the Government in support of the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021. From the outset I acknowledge the excellent contributions from other members of this House—the member for Holsworthy, the member for Miranda, the member for Albury, the member for Vacluse, the member for Camden, who I think is still in the Chamber, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Oatley, who gave a Churchillian speech about the benefits of the payroll tax amendment bill to the businesses in his electorate of Oatley. It would be remiss of me if I did not also highlight the great work that is being done during this COVID-19 pandemic in regions. The Central Coast is a rapidly growing region and businesses from one end of the Central Coast to the other have been benefiting from the Government's good, solid fiscal management when it comes to working our way through the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was lucky enough, not that long ago, to host the Premier on the Central Coast and the feedback that was given to her was, firstly, "Thank you." Secondly, businesses were delighted with the way in which the Government had been able to pivot and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that businesses stay open. Regions have been some of the beneficiaries of this where we have seen increased population growth, especially on the Central Coast. Obviously not only is it the best place to live, work and play but also it is only an hour and 20 minutes from the Sydney CBD.

We have businesses on the Central Coast who are having solid business turnover at the moment. We also saw the businesses pivoting at this crucial time during COVID-19; we saw businesses adapting. That is what business does; it adapts and adjusts. We have a government that matches those same processes. What we have seen is a solid base for business to keep reinvesting, keep going and keep making decisions that support the growth of business but also ensure that we are providing jobs and opportunities for people from one end of the Central Coast to the other. The member for Keira has just returned to the Chamber. He is also a regional member and we have seen strong support for our communities for local business during this whole COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen young people jump into the workforce, possibly earlier than they would have predicted, but they are enjoying it. They are contributing to the economy and contributing to their own sustainability and wellbeing. This Government is absolutely focused on creating and sustaining those high-value jobs well and truly in the future.

As a regional member yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker, you have seen your community adjust. You have seen businesses make the necessary decisions, at short notice, to ensure their survivability. But now we are seeing them prospering and growing. I was also lucky enough to visit Madam Deputy Speaker's electorate and see how the businesses there have dealt so well with the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the support for businesses on the Central Coast, the community of Port Macquarie has rallied behind its local businesses. Port Macquarie has outstanding businesses and outstanding restaurants and cafes. The Stunned Mullet has to be one of my particular favourites. As a business, it has a COVID plan, kept its patrons safe, kept its staff safe and it is prospering. It is not only a great restaurant but also a great business, looking after both its patrons and its staff. We have seen the same initiatives being rolled out across the Central Coast.

The recovery of the New South Wales jobs market has been extraordinary, to say the least, and unprecedented. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, New South Wales employment fell by more than 270,000 jobs. That is 270,000 people who suddenly found themselves out of work—over 6 per cent of the New South Wales workforce. Now we fast-forward and see that New South Wales has recovered almost all of those jobs lost during the peak of the pandemic. We are now back around a pre-COVID level of employment, which is great news for businesses of all sizes—small, medium and large. The New South Wales unemployment rate has also declined in recent months, falling by 0.3 of a percentage point to 5.4 per cent in March 2021. That is the second lowest among the States and Territories. That is well below the 7.2 per cent peak seen in July last year and is around 8 percentage points higher than it was in February 2020 before the COVID pandemic changed the world.

Of course there is more work to be done to ensure that we support businesses to create jobs now and for future generations. The Jobs Plus Program was announced by the Government in October 2020 and was widely applauded by the business chambers on the Central Coast. These business chambers represent businesses of all sizes and they were the first out of the blocks to commend the Government for this great initiative. I highlight the great work done by the Treasurer and the rest of the team to ensure that the program helped to stimulate the economy and support the creation of new jobs during difficult times. It will entice existing New South Wales businesses to look for job-creating opportunities and attract top-performing businesses from interstate and overseas to come to New South Wales.

Providing payroll tax exemptions for a period of up to four years for every new job created will reduce the tax liabilities for businesses investing in the people of our State. As we heard from the member for Oatley, these

exemptions are people's wages. What this allows these businesses to do is to take on other employees, to take on an apprentice and to benefit and grow their business in a sustainable and solid way. This will encourage businesses to keep people in their roles for longer and will have a flow-on impact on income, spending and the economy of the State and our regions more broadly.

The aim is to support up to 25,000 new jobs by June 2024. It is an ambitious target but this Government is up to the task. We have seen how we have managed this COVID crisis and, as the Premier said, there was no structure manual going into this. We have seen a fiscally responsible and mature Government doing the right thing to keep its residents safe and to keep the economy moving. One cannot close down business and then suddenly kickstart it and expect it to pick up overnight. That is where New South Wales has fared exceptionally well because of the responsible, mature way in which the Government has dealt with this. The payroll tax exemptions in this bill for Jobs Plus agreements are only one form of assistance that the Government is proposing to offer through the program.

Under the Jobs Plus Program, successful applicants can also access assistance to the New South Wales planning system, including fast-tracked planning approval pathways and advice to increase speed to market. We are seeing that playing out on the Central Coast. There are cranes in the sky and there are jobs in construction from one end of the Central Coast to the other. Whether it be the 243 safe and affordable housing projects that are being delivered or residential housing or upgrades—a brand new school at Porters Creek that had an accelerated planning system—we are seeing tradies, apprentices and businesses flourish on the Central Coast because of this sort of stimulus.

Subsidised training programs in order to build specialised skills are aimed at sustaining these new jobs in the future—this includes funding to deliver specialised skills training which can also be accessed by the wider New South Wales community—providing and enabling infrastructure such as building local roads, providing access to utilities and futureproofing digital infrastructure. Again we are seeing these sorts of projects rolling out across the Central Coast, especially investment in local roads and access to utilities. The increase in digital technology being utilised in regions like the Central Coast and others gives people the flexibility to work confidently from home and travel to Sydney only a couple of days a week. This was not something that was the norm but we are now seeing it as the way in which people do business. If they do have to travel to Sydney, it is in a minimal way. What they are doing is getting better quality time with their families and their loved ones at the beginning of each day while not having to commute. Rolling out that digital infrastructure is key and essential, especially in the regions, to make sure we continue this growth in sustainable jobs.

Access to a jobs concierge service to help businesses efficiently navigate and access government agencies and programs might not sound like a lot but when you are busy running a business and you can pick up the phone and work through with another person on the line, either face-to-face or one-on-one, it makes navigating these sorts of issues so much easier. We have seen exactly the same sort of process at our outstanding Service NSW facilities right across New South Wales and including the Central Coast. I seek a brief extension of time. *[Extension of time]*

I thank members for their indulgence. Accessing short-term free or subsidised government spaces and accommodation is also part of the Jobs Plus plan. The program stands to be a true game changer for New South Wales jobs and the payroll tax exemptions in this bill are a key element in that strategy. The bill will also help retain aged-care workers, as we have heard earlier from other members, at a time when older Australians require a high level of quality care and support. The Commonwealth Aged Care Workforce Retention Grant Opportunity has provided funding for aged-care providers to make a third retention bonus wage payment to their aged-care staff, and rightfully so. The Parliament has already exempted two earlier rounds of payments from payroll tax last year. This payment round should be treated the same way.

The bill extends the previously legislated payroll tax exemption by removing the final exemption date of 1 January 2021, as it rightly should. The change will allow the existing exemption to apply to the payments made to staff in the beginning of this year. There will also be no need to make further amendments to cater for any future such payments that arise under the Commonwealth program. I commend those people who have spoken before me on this bill. We have heard firsthand stories of businesses and how they will benefit from these savings with regard to the liabilities of payroll tax. In addition, we have rebates with regard to apprentice and trainee wages. All wages, including superannuation allowances and fringe benefits, paid to apprentices and trainees are liable for payroll tax and must be included in payroll tax returns.

Employers can claim a payroll tax rebate on wages paid to appropriate apprentices and new entrant trainees who are recognised by Training Services NSW. While the changes in the thresholds may not seem like much on paper, they equate to millions of dollars back in businesses' pockets to ensure that they keep employing people. They have kept these businesses' heads above water during what could unarguably be the toughest time they have ever faced. Again, I congratulate the Treasurer and his team. I also congratulate Minister Ayres, who has carriage

of the bill in the Chamber today. This is all about the Government continuing to support small, medium and large businesses right across New South Wales. We know firsthand that this initiative has not just helped support and keep businesses running on the Central Coast; it has allowed them to grow, expand and employ more people, including younger people on the Central Coast, who may have been struggling for that job. Again, this is a fantastic initiative. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (16:17): On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: In reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the following members: the member for Keira, who led for the Opposition and proposed a number of amendments that I will address—our position on those is largely supportive based on where we have landed—the member for Holsworthy; the member for Canterbury; the member for Miranda; the member for Balmain, and I will also address some concerns that he raised in his remarks; the member for Albury; the member for Summer Hill; the member for Vacluse; the member for Camden; the member for Wollondilly; the member for Oatley and the member for Terrigal. I thank them for their contributions to debate on the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill, which is an incredibly important bill before the House.

The bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to keeping our people safe and supporting the creation of new jobs that will keep New South Wales moving forward, particularly in the post-COVID environment. The Jobs Plus Program, announced in the 2020-21 budget, attracts top-performing companies from interstate and across the globe, as well as existing businesses here, to grow their opportunities in New South Wales and sets up New South Wales for a dynamic recovery from the impacts of COVID. The bill also supports the efforts to keep our most vulnerable members of the community safe by supporting the retention of aged-care staff. It achieves these outcomes by providing payroll tax exemptions to support investments in job-creating projects and employers inside the aged-care sector.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the amendments proposed by the Opposition and indicate that the Government is supportive of those amendments. Primarily the amendments do two things. First, they reduce the minimum number of jobs an employer must create when accessing the Jobs Plus Program outside metropolitan Sydney. Secondly, they include reporting to Parliament about the number of jobs and amount of payroll tax exemptions created under the Jobs Plus Program. The Government considers both amendments to be reasonable and therefore accepts them. They also recognise supporting job creation in regional New South Wales and the challenge around creating jobs and being able to access this program. Having a lower threshold would allow more small and medium enterprises in regional New South Wales to access the program, bearing in mind that all the oversight, guidelines and criteria in place under which the jobs scheme will be assessed will continue to apply.

We also support the provision of information to the Parliament about the payroll tax commitments under the program. The Government supports introducing a requirement for annual reporting on job creation and payroll tax exemptions under the program until the expiry of payroll tax exemptions, which will take place on 1 July 2028 at the latest. At the same time, we also need to respect and treat individual company information sensitively, bearing in mind that we continue to operate in a highly competitive and commercially sensitive environment. I think the amendments proposed by the Opposition, with the Government's support in the structure of bill, provide the right balance. Because of that, we are instead proposing that the information sought by the Opposition be reported across an aggregated period by all employers in the program. We believe this will provide the Parliament with an ongoing reporting arrangement to enable transparency of spending under the program.

While The Greens did not propose any amendments formally, the member for Balmain raised some concerns in his remarks. I will address those by saying that a rigorous assessment process takes place for Jobs Plus applications. The creation of Investment NSW, located in the central Department of Premier and Cabinet agency, is equipped with a highly skilled professional team to assess these applications. The guidelines are published publicly and transparently and are available to everyone. The assessment around how these applications take place is considered seriously and also has appropriate Cabinet oversight. I reference the Cabinet oversight to put the mind of the member for Balmain at ease about the perception that an individual Minister could make a determination about a Jobs Plus allocation without having an appropriate level of oversight by the Cabinet.

I also think The Greens referenced the idea of supporting jobs in regional New South Wales. We have already indicated that we will support the Opposition's amendments to reduce the threshold from 30 to 20 for businesses with headquarters outside metropolitan Sydney. I have also indicated that the guidelines are publicly available through the Service NSW website. They continue to be used quite regularly by businesses. At this point in time applications, with 5,000 prospective jobs, are attached to those. This program will continue to run over the course of the next 12 months and take applications with jobs to be started by 30 June 2024 at the latest. The bill will help drive economic recovery by supporting and creating new jobs through our \$250 million Jobs Plus Program.

Jobs Plus is being delivered through Investment NSW, a new and exciting central government agency created to leverage our successful COVID-19 response by consolidating and leading investment attraction and economic development activity across the State. As a one-stop-shop for private sector engagement with the New South Wales Government, the agency is tasked with driving investment and jobs, boosting tourism and international education, and fostering our world-leading research and development innovation ecosystems. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting the jobs of the future by laying the foundations to build world-class industries supported by physical and digital infrastructure. The Jobs Plus Program is a central part of our offering to local, interstate and global businesses, and sends a clear statement to the private sector that New South Wales is the best place to invest and grow their business. Whilst we are saying there is no wrong door for coming to the New South Wales Government, this is about making it incredibly clear to industry that there is a very clear front door and an "Investment NSW" plate sits on top of the door.

The program has committed to strengthening our economy through the creation or support of up to 25,000 jobs by June 2024 by helping businesses that wish to establish or expand in New South Wales through the critical stages of business development. I understand it is the first of its kind. It provides support including payroll tax relief for newly created jobs, fast-tracked planning approvals and advice through our one-stop Jobs Plus Concierge service, subsidised training programs across specialised skills and access to free or subsidised government spaces and accommodation where appropriate.

For those businesses looking to scale up and grow in New South Wales, the support reduces the cost of establishment and the financial risk as well as increasing their speed to market. Program guidelines outline clear criteria for access to this support. The payroll tax exemption will apply only to new staff who live and are paid in New South Wales. The bill will support the program by amending the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt the wages of identified positions from payroll tax. Payroll tax relief will be provided to eligible businesses for every new job created where a business has created at least 30 new jobs—20 in regional New South Wales after the Opposition amendment—and will be available to businesses in the form of a payroll tax exemption for positions identified and approved through the Jobs Plus agreements. The relief will be available for up to four years for each new full-time equivalent job established before 30 June 2024.

All businesses that enter into the Jobs Plus program will be subject to terms specified by their agreement, including the grounds and circumstances in which their exemption may be revoked. As the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, I will monitor how those businesses are meeting their milestones and engage with any that are not delivering on their agreed commitments. If required, I can escalate through written notice to revoke payroll tax exemptions and if issued the exemption will be revoked as if the identified positions were never exempt, while the Chief Commissioner of Revenue will issue an assessment or reassessment of that business. That is an important recognition of some of the concerns that the member for Balmain raised, not just about transparency and the clear oversight of the allocation of the funds in the initial stage but also recognising that there is ongoing oversight of businesses that are receiving this support.

Support for the bill will enable us to continue in our pursuit of putting New South Wales at the centre of supporting investment and creating jobs, as the best place to do business in Australia in the post-COVID world. This is a game changer for us in this State. It is about taking a proactive position to say we that are not just open for business but also are here to help and support. It is good to see that the Opposition is supporting the bill, with its proposed amendments. We all recognise the devastating impact COVID has had on our economy. We have seen a very strong economic recovery but we want to make sure that we continue to take full advantage of the strength with which our State has fought off COVID. This is a good example of bipartisan support that puts jobs at the centre of our economy and keeps putting people first. I largely think it is what the people of this State have elected us to do.

We want to make sure New South Wales is the number one economy in the country. We want to make it the best place to do business. We want to make it the most attractive place to invest capital. We want it to be the place where someone can start their business, grow their business and scale up their business. We want it to be at the leading edge of research and development. We want to change the shape and nature of our economy to have more jobs in science, technology, engineering and maths. We want those jobs to be more sustainable and we want our economy to continue to lead the nation when it comes to the direction that Australia takes. The bill achieves that and definitely sets out an opportunity for New South Wales to really be proactive in the investment attraction space.

I also reference a second section of the bill, which relates to the Aged Care Workforce Retention Bonus exemption. The bill also supports older Australians in aged care by removing the payroll tax liability on Commonwealth-funded bonus wages paid to aged-care workers. The Commonwealth funded two rounds of retention bonuses for aged-care workers in 2020. Each round consisted of two types of payments of up to \$800 for residential care workers and up to \$600 for home care workers on pro rata amounts. On 5 August 2020 this

Parliament passed amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to exempt wages funded from those two bonus payment rounds, paid between July and September 2020 and announced when the program was introduced in June 2020. The original amendments specifically exempted bonus wages paid or payable before 1 January 2021. On 31 August 2020 the Commonwealth announced an extension to the aged-care workforce retention grant program to fund a third payment round. The payment was available to be passed on to workers from January 2021. The bill ensures that wages paid from the third round or any future round under the program will be exempt from payroll tax by removing the effective end date of 1 January 2021.

The Commonwealth program incentivises aged-care workers to continue to provide frontline care to the elderly, who are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. By supporting the continuity of the workforce during this critical time, the New South Wales Government will assist in ensuring that older citizens are protected from the virus and continue to receive high-quality care. The bill supports older Australians and also supports job creation here in New South Wales. It looks to build on the State's incredible response to the COVID-19 pandemic not by looking backwards but by strongly looking forwards.

I thank the Treasurer, who is indisposed today because of his own brush with the COVID restrictions, for his leadership in this space. It has been a genuine pleasure working with a Treasurer who has been so committed to making sure that the New South Wales economy not only rebounds well from COVID but also looks brightly to the future. We know we have to keep reforming and evolving our economy. We know we need to keep opening the door to foreign direct investment into the State. We know we have to keep incentivising business investment for businesses that are already here and we know we have to create an environment that allows the risk-takers to set up and start new businesses. The Jobs Plus program does all of those things, and it does so with the full support of the New South Wales Government and the leadership of both the Treasurer and me in this particular role. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Ryan Park.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I shall propose the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Mr RYAN PARK: By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2021-024F in globo:

No. 1 Jobs Plus agreements

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 66F(2)(b), line 16. Omit "section.". Insert instead—

section, and

- (c) for an agreement with an employer whose registered business address is outside the metropolitan area—that the exemption cannot be revoked merely because the employer has only created between 20 and 29 new jobs (inclusive).

No. 2 Reports

Page 4, Schedule 1[2]. Insert after line 12—

- (10A) The relevant Minister must, until 1 July 2028, cause to be tabled in each House of Parliament an annual report containing the following for each financial year—
 - (a) the total number of employers who entered into a Jobs Plus agreements,
 - (b) the total number of new jobs the employers agreed to create, as specified by the agreements,
 - (c) the total number of new jobs in fact created by the employers,
 - (d) the total amount of payroll tax from which the employers was exempt under this section.

No. 3 Jobs Plus agreements and reports

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 66F(11). Insert after line 21—

metropolitan area means—

- (a) the Greater Sydney Region within the meaning of the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*, and
- (b) the local government areas of Newcastle, Shellharbour and Wollongong.

new job, in relation to an employer who enters into a Jobs Plus agreement, means a position created by the employer after entering into the agreement.

My colleague wants to make a brief contribution on amendments Nos 1 and 2.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:32): I support the amendments put forward by Labor. It is certainly the case that those amendments, particularly relating to the reduction in the threshold from 30 to 20 jobs supporting rural and regional communities, are very sensible. It is disappointing that members opposite had not considered that themselves. Being a regional MP, I was very pleased to see shadow Treasurer the Hon. Walt Secord and the shadow Minister for Finance and Small Business bring the amendments to this debate. It is also pleasing to see that the Government has supported them.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Hear, hear!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I know that the member for Canterbury is in agreement with me on this. In regional areas, jobs are critical. We hear Government members gloating about the jobs that they have created. But in the Hunter, for instance, we have 15 per cent youth unemployment. If we can get those young people into jobs then we are helping our communities in regional areas.

But again, we see a Sydney-centric view of the world with this Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill. The Government congratulates and pats itself on the back but there is no consideration for regional areas. I am pleased to be able to stand in this place as a regional MP and defend regional jobs and young people in regional areas to ensure they have job opportunities, and that businesses in our areas have an opportunity. For once the Government is supporting them, which it has not done for a long time. We all know about the closure of manufacturing, particularly in the region that I represent, the Hunter, where we have seen tens of thousands of jobs lost in the past 10 years with this Government. So it is critically important that we put our intentions into legislation, and this time the Government has agreed, which is excellent. We now have a threshold of 20 outside of the Sydney metropolitan area. I suggest that the Government considers these measures in a lot of the legislation that it brings to this place—which is always Sydney-centric—and thinks about areas beyond the Hawkesbury or Sutherland or, indeed, the Blue Mountains and beyond as well.

I also support annual reporting, which is critical. Again, the Government has agreed to that, and so it should. We must make sure that these mechanisms that are put in place are working. The only way we can do that is through transparency, but we see a lack of transparency in most things from this Government. It is good to have the opportunity to put that in this legislation as well. It would be beneficial for the Government to use the amendments as an example for its other legislation, so when it says 10,000 jobs here or 50,000 jobs there we have a reporting mechanism to show whether those jobs have come to fruition. When do we ever see that? Never. We have put it into legislation, which is critically important. Again, I am pleased about the sensible amendments moved by our Labor colleagues in the upper House. I cannot stress strongly enough how important they are and how much I support them, along with my colleagues in both this House and the other place. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (16:36): I will make a few remarks because I do not want to break too much of the spirit of bipartisanship around these amendments to the bill. We are all trying to do the same thing. I acknowledge that there was quite significant engagement about what Jobs Plus does in regional New South Wales. The threshold of 30 is low. We have accepted the position of moving to 20 to facilitate greater job creation in regional New South Wales. There is no recognition that this was not something that the Government did not consider, or that the Government was not focused on job creation in regional New South Wales. We are more than happy to agree to the amendments. That is how Parliament works and we should allow this exercise to function as if it was a normal process. That is what we are paid to do. I also say that the numbers we quote in question time and in speeches in this Parliament—the Treasurer does this regularly when talking about job numbers—are not made up. They are numbers that are reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I used them today when I talked about the number of jobs that were lost in New South Wales in the first quarter of last year in relation to the COVID pandemic and the number of jobs that have been returned. Those numbers are not made up.

They are not fictitious. They are reported by accepted research entities and used as measurements and vision benchmarks for the economic performance of the State. Whilst I did not think there would be an issue with introducing this reporting mechanism to the bill, I have no problem with it in this case. The one thing that is different about this compared to perhaps the standard reporting of jobs that have been created in the State is that there is a clear payroll tax exemption—we know that a job has been created for which we are not collecting payroll tax. The benefit of this piece legislation is that we know we are not losing because if the exemption did not exist that job would not have come to New South Wales. Businesses are responding directly to the incentive that has been put in place, so it is easily measured. The amendments are sensible and that is why the Government has accepted them.

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

Amendments agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr STUART AYRES: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 5 May 2021.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: I seek the call pursuant to Standing Order 64, which allows the member in charge of the order of the day when the order is read to speak more than once.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:40): The Opposition has circulated amendment No. 1 to this bill on sheet c2021-026C, and I seek a ruling that the amendment is out of order. The amendment seeks to amend the bill by inserting at page 27 a proposed amendment to the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990, in particular to amend section 23, which deals with the powers of the TAFE Commission relating to property. I will hand up a copy of that Act to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and to the Opposition. I take you to section 23 of that Act. You will see that section deals with the powers of the TAFE Commission relating to property. Subsection (2) provides:

The TAFE Commission must not, except with the approval of the Minister, alienate, mortgage, charge or demise any of its land.

The amendment proposed by the Opposition on sheet c2021-026C seeks to amend that subsection so that not only is the approval of the Minister required but also if the land is used for the provision of technical and further education services for a period of five years it has to be authorised by an Act of Parliament. This amendment is out of order. It goes beyond the scope of amendments that are permitted by Standing Order 210, which provides:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders and practice. The proposed amendment is none of those things. If you go to the long title of the bill you find that it reads, "An Act to repeal an instrument". The amendment does not repeal an instrument; it amends certain other Acts and instruments in various respects—what I call for short the "TAFE Act" is not one of the Acts or instruments identified in the bill—for the purpose of effecting statute law revision. Madam Deputy Speaker, you will see from the amendment and the Act that I have taken you to that it is not effecting statute law revision. That is a term of art understood in this place to refer to minor change of a non-substantive or technical nature—typographical errors and so on. You get a flavour of that from schedule 2 to the bill, which deals with statute law revision—typographical errors, changes in titles of agencies and so on. This amendment is not within the long title of the Act. It is not relevant to the subject matter of the bill. No part of the bill deals with the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990. The bill deals with minor and non-controversial amendments, and the proposed amendment is not otherwise in conformity with the standing orders and the practice. Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask you to rule, therefore, that the proposed amendment is out of order.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Standing Order 210 states:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within—

and this is important—

the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill ...

Let us be clear about this. The long title of the bill is:

An Act to repeal an instrument and to amend certain other Acts and instruments in various respects and for the purpose of effecting statute law revision; and to make certain savings.

That clearly sets out four distinct, separate purposes of the bill: repealing an instrument; amending certain other Acts and instruments in various respects; effecting statute law revision; and making certain savings. The amendment proposed by the Opposition plainly falls within the second of those purposes—amending certain other Acts and instruments in various respects. In this case it is amending the very important Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990. As I have outlined, the proposed amendment is plainly within the long title of the bill. I encourage members to understand the difference.

The overview of the bill contained in the explanatory note lists several objects of the bill, the first of which is to "make minor amendments to various Acts and instruments". The amendment that the Opposition seeks to

make to the bill would have the effect of making a minor amendment to the Technical and Further Education Commission Act, which is clearly within the first objective. The Technical and Further Education Commission Act is more than 30 pages long. The Opposition amendment seeks to add—and I encourage members of the House to listen—a single extra clause to that 30-page Act. The amendment does not change the functions or objectives of the TAFE Commission; rather, it makes a minor procedural change to the manner in which the commission is to gain approval to sell any land it owns. It is very simple. The Opposition's amendment clearly falls within the stated objective of the bill and within those four distinct areas. Therefore, the amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the bill under Standing Order 210.

Mr Mark Speakman: To the point of order: The member for Keira identified four parts of the long title to the bill but appeared to rely on only one part, namely amending "certain other Acts and instruments". He then referred to the overview of the bill and drew attention to one of the paragraphs, being "make minor amendments to various Acts and instruments". There are two problems with the proposition put by the member for Keira. The first is that the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990 is not one of the Acts and instruments identified in schedule 1. The second is that the proposed amendment is not a minor amendment. An amendment is not judged as minor or not by the number of words that are used—I see the member for Lakemba smiling. It is judged by its effect. Otherwise, if an Act stated, "You shall be quiet", on the member for Keira's reasoning, inserting the word "not"—"You shall not be quiet"—would be a minor amendment. The proposed amendment is not minor. Without debating its merits, it is intended to be a significant fetter on the ability of the Minister to alienate land et cetera. I am not debating the merits of that, but it is intended to be a significant amendment. For those reasons, the amendment is out of order and I request that it be so ruled.

Mr Ryan Park: Further to the point of order: Now the cat is out of the bag because we are adamant that TAFE campuses will be sold off.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mark Speakman: Further to the point of order—

Mr Ryan Park: That is clear because if it was minor, we would be allowed to have it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will resume his seat.

Mr Mark Speakman: My friend is not raising a point of order; he is now attempting to—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the Attorney General's point of order relating to the debate. Does the member for Keira wish to speak further to the Attorney General's original point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: Yes. The Attorney General thinks the proposed amendment introduces a major change. The Opposition does not think it is a major change because we would never think to sell off TAFE campuses. It would be unusual, but we would not think to do it. From our point of view, it is not a major change.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

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

Mr Mark Speakman: My friend is not addressing the point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order again. I uphold the original point of order raised by the Attorney General. I rule that the Opposition's amendment is outside the scope of the bill. The practice of this House is that statute law bills are, one, of a minor nature and, two, contain non-controversial amendments to a number of bills, as is the case in the bill currently before the House. My view is that the amendment would effect a significant change to legislation, namely the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990. Accordingly, I uphold the point of order.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:51): I lead for the Opposition on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. I understand that the proposed amendments relating to the Hairdressers Act 2003, the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 and the Motor Dealers and Repairers Regulation 2014 are being withdrawn by the Government. The bill is of a type that has been used by governments of all colours for several decades to move seemingly uncontroversial and comparatively minor amendments, thus avoiding the need for separate bills for minor propositions.

Schedule 1 to the bill makes minor amendments to a range of Acts and instruments. Schedule 2 makes statute law revision amendments to another group of Acts and instruments. Schedule 3 makes amendments flowing from the changes of the name of First State Superannuation. Schedule 4 repeals the redundant Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (New South Wales) Temporary Exemptions Regulation 2016. Schedule 5 contains savings, transitional and other general provisions. I also note that on page 17, line 24, of the tabling copy

of the bill that I was given there appears to be a grammatical error or a missing word in the explanatory note in schedule 1.27. Someone may want to look at that. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:52): In reply: I thank the member for Liverpool for his contribution to debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021. I foreshadow that the Government will move amendments to the bill and ask that the bill be considered in detail. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Mark Speakman.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 3, and schedules 1 to 5 be agreed to.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:53): By leave: I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-028A in relation to the Hairdressers Act 2003, amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-029D in relation to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 and amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-030C in relation to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Regulation 2014 in globo:

Sheet c2021-028A

No. 1 **Hairdressers Act 2003**

Page 6, Schedule 1.9, lines 7–17. Omit all words on those lines.

Sheet c2021-029D

No. 1 **Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013**

Pages 13 and 14, Schedule 1.20, line 45 on page 13 to line 5 on page 14. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 **Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013**

Page 14, Schedule 1.20, lines 9–16. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

Explanatory note

The proposed amendments update references to the Department of Customer Service consequent on recent administrative changes to government departments.

Sheet c2021-030C

No. 1 **Motor Dealers and Repairers Regulation 2014**

Page 14, Schedule 1.21, lines 18–34. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 **Motor Dealers and Repairers Regulation 2014**

Pages 14 and 15, Schedule 1.21, line 38 on page 14 to line 5 on page 15. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

Explanatory note

The proposed amendment updates a reference to the Department of Customer Service consequent on recent administrative changes to government departments. Those amendments will omit clause 1.9 of schedule 1, which contains the proposed amendment to the Hairdressers Act 2003; clause 1.20 (2) of schedule 1, which contains the proposed amendment to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 as well as the relevant explanatory note; and clause 1.21 (1) and (2) of schedule 1, which contains the proposed amendment to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Regulation 2014 as well as the relevant explanatory note. It is a longstanding practice in this place that statute law revision bills are passed only with the agreement of all parties. In the spirit of that protocol, the Government has moved those amendments in response to objections raised by the Opposition, particularly the member for Granville.

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

Amendments agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 to 3, and schedules 1 to 5 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 3, and schedules 1 to 5 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Condolences

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHILIP THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Debate resumed from 6 May 2021.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:56):

Today I acknowledge the incredible life of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, late husband to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who passed away peacefully on 9 April 2021. On 10 June 1921 Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark was famously born on the dining room table at the family villa on the Greek island of Corfu. He was the fifth and final child of Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark and Princess Alice of Battenberg. Prince Philip was the younger brother to four sisters: Margarita, Theodora, Cecilie and Sophie. A member of the house of Glücksburg, he was a prince of both Greece and Denmark by his descent from King George I of Greece and King Christian IX of Denmark. He was baptised in the Greek Orthodox rites at St George's Church in Corfu. His godparents included his grandmother, Queen Olga of Greece; his cousin, Crown Prince George of Greece; his uncle, Louis Mountbatten; and the then mayor of Corfu, Alexandros Kokotos.

On 22 September 1922 Prince Philip's uncle, King Constantine I of Greece, was forced to abdicate the throne. The court banished him and his wider family from Greece. The family was forced to flee to France, where they settled in Paris. Prince Philip first attended the MacJannet American school and was then sent to the United Kingdom to study at the Cheam School. During the 1930s he moved on to the prestigious Gordonstoun school in the Scottish Highlands. After graduating in 1931, Prince Philip eagerly joined the Royal Naval College, where he commenced his training as a naval officer. He was reported to be an outstanding officer who was intelligent, tough and committed to serving his king and his country. However, the tour of the Royal Naval College by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, along with their daughters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, would change Prince Philip's life forever.

Philip was asked to escort the young ladies around the barracks, where it is believed that the shy, 13-year-old Elizabeth developed a fondness for the handsome officer. The young Princess and Philip then began to exchange letters, which they would continue for several years. To think that this brief exchange between two strangers would have such a profound impact on generations to come and arguably become one of the greatest love stories in modern history.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

COVID-19 AND STATE ECONOMY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:49): I move:

That this House acknowledges that this Government is building for a post-COVID economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of many people who have been unable to conduct their regular business or employment and who have faced a reduction in income due to the life-saving measures that were necessary to deal with the unprecedented pandemic. I saw firsthand the effects of the pandemic on my constituency and I understand the importance of a strong post-COVID recovery. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, strong economic management and investment from the Coalition Government has ensured the recovery of our economy. The steady reopening of the New South Wales economy, the easing of restrictions and the start of the vaccine rollout have all boosted confidence and the State is well on the road to economic recovery. The measures that the Government has undertaken are reflected in the reduction to the unemployment rate, which was down to 5.4 per cent in March 2021 from a peak of 7.2 per cent in July last year. That is just 0.8 per cent above pre-COVID levels.

Almost all of the jobs that were lost during the peak of the pandemic have now been recovered. Retail sales in New South Wales are up 10.7 per cent for the year to February 2021. I am proud to be part of a government that has invested a total of \$29.3 billion in the 2020-21 health budget. Some \$3 billion of that funding has been allocated to capital works to continue the Government's commitment to building and rebuilding hospitals and health facilities across the State. The Government is ensuring that those facilities that need funding most are being looked after. The Government is also aware of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on regional and rural communities throughout New South Wales. That is why we will spend more than \$900 million on capital works in Health for regional and rural communities throughout the State in 2021. Of the 47 New South Wales hospital

redevelopments or upgrades that are underway or set to commence in the 2020-21 financial year, nearly two-thirds are in rural or regional parts of the State.

Investment in health also assists with job creation in the industry. The New South Wales Government's 2021 budget will provide \$27 million to employ an additional 180 paramedics and control centre staff in order to improve response times, reduce paramedic fatigue and support safety. That is the third tranche of the Government's plan to employ 750 paramedics and control centre staff over four years. The safety of our medical staff is paramount. I am pleased to report that between June 2012 and June 2020 there was a 23 per cent increase in security staff, because everyone has the right to feel safe at all times, including at work. That strong investment in our health system will ensure that we are well placed to respond to any future crisis, thereby saving lives, improving health and ensuring minimal economic disruption in the unfortunate event of another disaster.

An important aspect of building for a post-COVID economy involves facilitating the vaccine rollout to ensure that COVID-19 poses minimal disruption to our lives and the economy in the future. NSW Health is working closely with the Australian Government to deliver a safe, timely and effective vaccination program to ensure that we can go about our lives with minimal disruption and to allow the economy to recover naturally through strong employment and consumer spending. The latest national accounts show that the New South Wales economy grew 2.9 per cent in the December quarter following State final demand growth of 6.8 per cent in the September quarter. That means that New South Wales is just 0.7 per cent below the levels that were seen at the end of 2019. It is vital that people continue to return to work and remain financially independent, as each individual desires to be. The Government's investment seeks to continue to lower unemployment in light of the challenges that we face.

Another important part of the post-COVID recovery involves investment in our police force to ensure a safe and secure New South Wales. The recovery requires discipline and adherence to the law. Those who are rebuilding their businesses appreciate the presence of the police in the community. That is why the 2020-21 budget has provided the NSW Police Force with a total expenses budget of \$4.2 billion and a further \$549 million to fund capital investment, comprising \$287.7 million in capital expenditure and \$261.3 million in lease acquisitions.

The investment into capital works creates jobs, particularly for those in the trades. Hawkesbury people are tradie people, so we love this. In 2020-21 the Government is investing \$14 million as part of the program to build new police stations in Bega, Goulburn and the Jindabyne area, to carry out major upgrades to police stations in Bourke and Bathurst, and to construct a new police education and training centre in Dubbo. Those works are being undertaken as part of the \$100 million election commitment program over the four years from 2019 to 2023. There is \$52 million to continue the construction of police stations in Cessnock, Broken Hill, Inverell, Parramatta and Hurstville and for the acquisition of land in Port Macquarie, under the \$107.9 million multipurpose police station program, over the 2018 to 2023 program.

There is \$17 million to complete construction of the Queanbeyan police station and \$37.7 million over two years for property-related capital works in metropolitan and rural areas. Those works include the commencement of new or replacement police stations under the Regional Small Station Program; heating, ventilation and air conditioning; disaster resilience; facade cladding remediation; female amenities; upgrades to solar panel programs; security upgrades; and minor works. It is vital that the New South Wales police have the resources needed to conduct their roles within COVID-19 hotel quarantine operations. Successful quarantine minimises outbreaks and reduces the risk of having to engage in restrictions that, whilst saving lives, have a negative effect on the economy. [*Extension of time not granted.*]

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:06): For this debate today on building for a post-COVID economy, I have brought a musical instrument. It is in my pocket, in case I need it. I figured that all these unfortunate members of the Government would have been sent into the Chamber to spew rhetoric and blow their own horns about how great they are and how hard they have to work to revive the post-COVID economy. What I have in my breast pocket is the world's smallest violin, so we can beef up the orchestra. I get it; it is tough. It is tough having your mates at the top of town throwing money at you to hand over public assets. It is tough outsourcing more and more of your responsibilities to the private sector so you do not have to do your job. It is tough sending contracts overseas so that issues can be blamed on someone else. Government members certainly are great at that. Actually, they are better than that. They are, in fact, rather excellent at dismantling the pillars that make our State great.

Local manufacturing—no more! Public training institutions—bugger them off! State-managed transport infrastructure—not a chance! Surely if there is one thing we have learned during this pandemic, it is the value of local. Import and supply chains were disrupted. Countless industries were sent to the brink because they sorely needed international people and international dollars to be pumped in. Employers were desperate to fill the jobs that would normally be taken by seasonal international workers. But let us not pretend that this came crashing down overnight. By sending contracts for trains, buses and ferries overseas, ripping the guts out of TAFE and

flogging off anything that is not nailed down, for 10 long years the Government has systematically stripped our State of what we need right now to thrive and build a post-COVID economy: skilled labour, affordable post-school education and publicly controlled assets to support the public. Under the Liberal-Nationals Government, New South Wales is up for sale—and when you sell out our State, you sell out our people.

When the Government sold off the Land Titles Office, 30 per cent of its workforce was gone within 12 months. Within 12 months of Ausgrid being privatised, 1,000 workers were gone. While we are speaking of 12 months, that seems to be the length of the job cuts cycle at TAFE. When you sell out our State, you sell out our people. It saddens me that the members opposite have drunk the Kool-Aid and think that the philosophy of privatisation builds economies. When 1,000 Ausgrid workers lost their jobs, how much were they contributing to our economy? When the trains were built in South Korea, how much were those workers contributing to our economy? The Government privatised our roads and made Sydney the most tolled city in the world. How does lining the pockets of Transurban help local families contribute to their local economy? That is what the Government does: It stuffs over the workers and looks after its mates. A prime example—and members know I love this one—is the anti-competitive container cap on the Port of Newcastle.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Biggest rort in town.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: Biggest rort in town. In fact, give me another five minutes, because members know I could talk about this all day. Do those opposite want to talk about building a post-COVID economy? With the stroke of a pen, and without opening its pork-barrelling wallet, the Government could back in the ultimate economy building project: \$1.8 billion of private investment in a multipurpose deepwater terminal, creating 15,000 direct and indirect jobs and tipping an incredible \$2.5 billion into the national economy. It has a 98-year lease and is currently the world's biggest coal port, but in 98 years that will not be the case.

What is the Government suggesting we do with it? It has no idea. The Government has no vision or leadership. Well, Labor does, and a key part of it is a container terminal. I know Government members like to take credit for things, but even they know they need to create the appearance of contributing. I have a proposal and it is win-win: Just deliver on the promises you have made. It is about social housing and social capital. When you sell out our State, you sell out our people—and without our people, you do not have a post-COVID economy with any strength whatsoever.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:11): That is five minutes we will never get back. I am a proud member of a government that has led the way at every stage of this pandemic and is building for a post-COVID economy.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: How so?

Mr MARK COURE: You might learn something here.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I will have a go at you in a second.

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

Mr MARK COURE: Much of the focus of this debate has been centred on COVID-19. There can be no doubt that the Government has done an exceptional job in keeping the community safe and keeping the economy alive. Since March 2020 the Government has committed \$29 billion to support sectors right across the economy, from businesses to health, education and public safety. The Government has acted swiftly to contain the virus and at the same time put support in place to bolster the economy. We have that prompt action and decisiveness to thank for the strong economic position New South Wales finds itself in today. In reality, the Government was building for a post-COVID economy well before we had even heard of COVID-19. Since 2011 the Coalition Government has delivered a record infrastructure pipeline to create jobs, build infrastructure—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time.

Mr MARK COURE: —and deliver the essential services that we rely on. The measures that the Government has put in place since March 2020 are expected to support an average of 27,000 jobs per year over the next four years—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Wollongong to order for the second time.

Mr MARK COURE: —with a particular focus on the next 12 to 18 months.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Wollongong to order for the third time.

Mr MARK COURE: Just boot them out. They obviously do not want to hear this; they do not want to learn. While the rebound of economic activity to date has been stronger than expected and the near-term outlook appears relatively positive, there is still a lot of work to be done. This is especially evident in the labour market. While the New South Wales unemployment rate has fallen sharply from its peak to 5.4 per cent in March 2021, the Government is committed to seeing lower trends. The New South Wales Government has delivered \$169 million over four years for more mental health support; \$100 million over four years to accelerate the Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration to improve facilities; \$55 million over four years to expand palliative care; and \$45 million to expand telehealth capacity to deliver faster and more convenient care across New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the second time.

Mr MARK COURE: In education, we are spending \$240 million over two years to partner with local regional and metropolitan schools to accelerate capital improvement. We are spending \$157 million over two years to upgrade schools across the State with LED lighting and \$120 million to extend the COVID-19 free preschool program for community and mobile preschools that was due to end in 2021. Skilling for Recovery will be upgraded. We are spending \$10 million on the Return to Work program to assist women to get back into the workforce. More than 2,300 Return to Work appointments have been booked to date and 519 applications have been approved. Relating to the Trades Skills Pathway Centre, the Government has committed \$57 million over four years to create alternative pathways to trades beyond the apprenticeship model that are more suitable for women and experienced workers. Because of the Government's strong economic management, female and male employment rates have improved recently and will continue to improve in the coming months and years. Members on this side of the Chamber are getting on with the job of rebuilding the economy and investing money where it is deserved.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Tweed to order for the first time.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:16): As a humble working-class economist from Macquarie Fields, I can tell Government members what it takes to build a post-COVID economic recovery and how we can speed up this recovery. They can start by doing their own thinking and researching their own facts rather than being sent to the Chamber to read words they did not write about concepts they do not understand, all in the hope of getting promoted. Anyone would know that in a free open-market economy such as ours, economic recovery must involve lifting aggregate demand through consumer spending, which stimulates economic activity, the production of goods and services, and jobs growth.

What we do not do to hasten this recovery and build a better economy is cut wages of frontline workers. It is not because our frontline workers have not done a good-enough job to keep us safe during the pandemic. It is not because our frontline workers have not worked enough hours or given up personal and family time or do not deserve their pay rise. The Liberal-Nationals Government cuts workers' wages because it is in its DNA. I can assure members that there is no vaccination to cure that one. It is in their frozen unreconstructed ideology to attack workers' wages and their hard-fought conditions, which consequently hurts our economy. The Liberal-Nationals Government deliberately took legislative action to cut the wages of frontline workers. Those wages would have pumped \$3 billion into the economy and, with an economic multiplier effect, would have pumped billions more to help us recover and build back better. If this Government wants to build a better post-COVID economy, they should not rely on voodoo economics and an un-reconstructed Thatcherism to attack workers' wages just because that is all their ideology allows.

To add further to the insult of cutting frontline workers' wages, this Government then decided to hand out millions of dollars' worth of bonuses to their hand-chosen icare corporate executives—à la the Treasurer's millionaires' factory—and for what? It was for ripping off injured workers earning an honest wage, for awarding contracts to family members or those within their social network or for ensuring people who have experienced injury at work do not get supplementary wages. That is wages and income for injured workers who would have spent that money in our economy to help us bounce back better. Do your job to the highest standard: Keep us safe, keep our economy going, and we will cut your wages. Be mates with the Treasurer: Get appointed to a cushy job, run the agency to the ground, rip off injured workers and share in a million-dollar bonus.

This Government was not content with cutting wages so it decided to inflict further pain on our citizens, especially those in south-west Sydney, by imposing a new toll on the M5 East. It is an old road built by Labor that has been free of tolls for 20 years. It now costs \$7.23 each way, every day, increasing 4 per cent every year for many more decades. That is tens of thousands of households being ripped off of thousands of dollars for millions

of trips to be had. It is a rip-off toll on a once-free road. That money could have gone towards hard-earned wages that could have been spent in the New South Wales economy. Instead, it is paying for a toll that has not existed in 20 years. But wait, there's more! This Government is like a bad Demtel ad for a flawed economic policy that is cutting wages, increasing the cost of living, and jacking up tolls. Who can forget the Treasurer's snake oil stamp duty reforms to tax family homes every year for the rest of our lives. It is a formula for higher property prices, higher rents, higher taxes and lower spending in our economy to get the economy going.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the member for Tweed to order for the second time.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: This is supposedly the great economic panacea for improving housing affordability, stimulating billions of dollars' worth of economic activity and creating millions of jobs. It is the ultimate economic unicorn. It is funny that there never seems to be any credible economic evidence or commentary to support any of those grand conclusions. Replace a one-off tax with one that never ends so that people have less to spend on goods and services, which would stimulate jobs in the local economy and help to build a better post-COVID economy. That is economic policy and thinking we would find on a QAnon website. We have cutting wages, increasing tolls and taxing the family home but I could list many more if time permitted. The motion moved by the member for Hawkesbury shows that she and her Government are the ultimate super-spreaders of bad economic decisions that hurt our economy and households and the chances of building a better post-COVID economy for all people in New South Wales.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:21): I applaud the member for Hawkesbury for bringing our attention to this very crucial matter. All members in this Chamber have gone through well over 12 months of COVID and the unique and financial impacts it has made on everyday life. I am proud of what this Government has done for building a post-COVID economy. The Government is already on the front foot in building a strong post-COVID economy, thanks to the COVID stimulus support and sound economic management. That is not to say that the task has been easy. The economic impact of bushfires and COVID-19 has been felt across New South Wales.

In line with the sharp contraction in the national economy, in 2020 the New South Wales economy recorded its first recession in nearly 30 years. Since then the State's recovery from the impact of COVID-19 has exceeded all expectations. In July 2020 the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 per cent, which is its highest level since the late 1990s. Solid employment growth since then supports a revised expectation that the unemployment rate has peaked at a lower level than previously forecast. A forecasted continued recovery in economic activity would see the unemployment rate ease to around 5 per cent by June 2024. The closure of international borders has lowered the State's population growth to the slowest growth in 100 years. It has not only weighed heavily on short-term economic growth but also severely impacted the State's education, tourism and exports. It has also contributed to slower productivity and an ageing population. That makes the massive COVID stimulus measures provided by this Government all the more crucial.

The stimulus measures include \$3 billion for the health response, \$2.8 billion to support businesses and the economy, \$536 million to support communities and families, \$3.7 billion in high-quality capital and maintenance works, \$1.1 billion in revenue waived and \$5.2 billion in revenue deferred, \$2.1 billion in savings to businesses via a payroll tax reduction from 5.45 per cent to 4.85 per cent in 2021-22, \$744 million in savings to businesses via an increase to the payroll tax threshold, \$500 million for the Dine & Discover Scheme, \$427 million for a digital scheme to provide rebates to eligible small businesses, \$337 million over the 2021 school year targeting intensive tutoring in all Government and non-Government schools, \$363 million in social and Aboriginal housing, \$250 million to support councils to deliver legacy projects for public spaces and \$400 million to extend the program for additional cleaners. The list goes on and on. Even in my electorate I can see the beneficial impacts. Currently we are building a \$700 million hospital in the Tweed—the largest one in the regions—and that was fast-tracked with another \$90 million in the last budget, plus another \$50 million for free car parking at the hospital.

Ms Yasmin Catley: We all want free car parking.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: You should advocate for your electorate. If you do not advocate strongly enough you do not get the case through. You should advocate for your electorate rather than come in here rehashing the same old lines.

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

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: When I was in Opposition I remember the financial mess that the Labor Party created in this State over 16 long years. We were billions of dollars in debt. In contrast, we have \$140 million going into our schools, we have upgrades to four of our major schools in the Tweed—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: —and apprenticeships in our TAFE colleges are up 30 per cent.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Swansea will come to order.

Mr Paul Scully: Six thousand teachers down.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My TAFE does a tremendous job up there. The number of teachers employed in the Kingscliff TAFE are up—they are not down, they are up—and enrolments are up. People are working in my electorate and that is thanks to the good fiscal management of the Liberal-Nationals Government. This is financial planning at its best.

Mr Paul Scully: How are your police numbers going?

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My policing numbers are up. I have 14 new probationary constables out of the last five attestations.

Mr Paul Scully: Did you thank Justine Elliot for it?

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Irrespective of Justine Elliot, the local Federal member. She should get out and see what is really going on.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind the member for Wollongong that he is on three calls to order. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: The Liberals and Nationals are doing great things in this State. The State is behind them and long shall they rule.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:26): This gives me a great opportunity to put some facts on the table. We have heard a lot of garbage about the economy coming from those on the opposite side. I will give the House the facts, which come from CommSec economic data, which the Government itself relies upon. First and foremost: New South Wales is ranked number six. We are behind Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. We are at the bottom of the list. Other CommSec economic data shows that New South Wales is fifth in economic growth; fifth in equipment investment; sixth in housing finance; seventh in dwelling starts; and seventh in population growth—why would anyone come here? Everyone is going to Victoria. New South Wales is fourth in retail spending and third in construction, even though the Government had an opportunity during COVID to invest in construction to create jobs and to conform with our social responsibility to build more public housing. But what did the Government do? The Government cut public sector wages instead.

One thing we do know is that during this period of COVID we have become incredibly exposed when it comes to making stuff in this State. Do members remember the day it was disclosed that we had no masks for our health workers in the hospital sector? And what did the Premier do? Three days later she sent a billion dollars overseas to buy masks and have them shipped here to our shores. Shame on her! It is because she does not believe in manufacturing in our State. We did not have ventilators in our hospitals. What a disgrace!

Mr Paul Scully: They could have got them from the mines.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: They could have got them from the mining industry. The member for Wollongong knows all about that. He is an avid supporter, of course, of manufacturing—as is everybody on this side of the Chamber. We are so exposed, and we had an opportunity to invest in manufacturing and to reset this State after it has been absolutely bludgeoned for the past 10 years in the manufacturing sector. But, instead, the Government has continued to leave us exposed. And why did we not support the medical and health manufacturing? Why did we not set up vaccines? The Hunter Medical Research Institute in Newcastle is one of the best in the world, set up by a Labor government—the member for Newcastle would remember that; he knows how proud we are of that institution. Why did we not do that? Instead, the Government has left this State exposed. It decided to do nothing but the bare minimum. We have had to put up with that and, guess what? We are sick of it; we are sick to bloody death of it!

What about skills? Why do we not start to really invest in skills so that we have the skills to create these vaccines in the future? Who knows, there may well be another pandemic down the track and we will need our medical and health manufacturing. But no, the Government takes the lazy option as usual and again leaves this State exposed. The problem is that we remain vulnerable because the action that should have been taken was not taken, and that is because this Government is lazy.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Not all of us!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That is true. The member for Tamworth is a very active member, we know that, and I do agree. We still have the problems that we had before and I say: Shame on the Premier for doing that. The Premier has banked herself significant personal and political dividends during COVID-19 because of the hard work of public sector workers who have done all the heavy lifting on our behalf, and they are to be congratulated in spades—I want everybody to acknowledge that, as we should. But we did not give the public sector workers a pay rise. Even though we call them heroes one day, on another day we say we are not going to pay them. But back to the motion at hand. The Premier has no plans to fix this State for the future and she has done nothing to ensure that we never go into a future crisis with the same weaknesses that are going on right now in COVID-19. I therefore move:

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

this House acknowledges that this Government is not building for a post-COVID economy.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind the member for Newcastle that he is on two calls to order.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:32): I support the motion moved by the member for Hawkesbury and thank her for bringing it to the Parliament. I put on the record the thanks I have for the New South Wales Government in working so constructively with the City of Sydney to support one of the greatest negatively impacted parts of our economy from the COVID-19 pandemic—Sydney's CBD, which was hit hardest. As we know, Sydney's CBD has resting on its shoulders the State's and the nation's economy, but it was hit so hard. I put on the record the great work that the City of Sydney has done in collaboration with the New South Wales Government, which includes \$2 million in small business relief grants. These were grants of up to \$10,000 and they were to be used to support businesses through some of their difficult times.

The CBD summits have been held twice so far throughout this time and they have included the Treasurer, the Lord Mayor, the shadow Treasurer and me, as well as key stakeholders from impacted sectors. We were able to all come together and come up with ideas and solutions to support the economy in the city. The city has also put in place a dedicated team to help people through the grant process and provide tips on how to make a successful application. We have seen a great waiving of fees and rent reviews from the city as well to help their tenants be able to thrive. Most importantly, a key part of ensuring that we are building this post-COVID economy has been some of the policy changes that we have seen put in place. Many policy changes were initially temporary or emergency measures, but many of them are now permanent. Anybody who has spent time in the CBD and surrounding suburbs has seen the huge success of outdoor dining and the way in which we have made it easier for restaurants, cafes and small bars to use footpath space, thus enabling people to enjoy the beautiful outdoors while dining and enjoying some of Sydney's great meals.

We have seen changes to the way in which loading docks and deliveries work, which has meant we are able to have more efficient delivery and distribution of goods. We have also seen great work done with cycleways across the CBD, where uptake in cycling has increased by 40 per cent. It has taken a pandemic to get some of these policies changed but it is great that they have changed. The lockouts have also been finally removed—great support for our nightlife economy, which has been hit extremely hard. Following advocacy from the sector, the Lord Mayor and me, the New South Wales Government has also injected a great deal of support into live music venues, which has been welcomed by a hard-hit sector.

We have seen the fast-tracking of capital works by the City of Sydney—the fast-tracking of some \$23 million worth of capital works—from paving upgrades, park and landscape renewals and essential building upgrades. It is important to note that it takes a well-run, economically stable and strong local government to be able to support its community through some of the toughest financial times. That has been achieved by the City of Sydney—a testament to the continued strength and leadership of Lord Mayor Clover Moore. I thank the Government for bringing this motion to the House. We still have a long way to go in supporting so many communities across the State through the COVID recovery but it is good to see the local and State governments working together to achieve that end.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:36): In reply: I have been listening to this interesting debate and acknowledge the contributions of my fellow colleagues—the member for Newcastle, the member for Oatley, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Tweed, the member for Swansea and, in particular, the member for Sydney. I know how hard the member for Sydney has been working to get Sydney back to its pre-COVID conditions. One can see the cooperation and partnership between local and State governments. I hanker to get back to the way we were pre-COVID. I thank the member for working with both governments to achieve that. My colleagues on this side of the House talked about the stimulus that this Government has been creating but all I heard from Opposition members was, "Let's jack up the wages. Let's strip away the tolls." Why do they want to jack up wages and strip away tolls?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: This Government has successfully built up the post-COVID economy by reducing unemployment to 5.4 per cent in March 2021—down from 7.2 per cent in July 2020—which has to count for something. The Dine & Discover vouchers were massively utilised at the recent Hawkesbury Show where 70,000 people attended and almost everyone accessed and loved the Dine & Discover vouchers. Opposition members are probably kicking themselves that they did not think of that in the first place.

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

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: In all, 3.5 million people downloaded the Dine & Discover vouchers. What a successful program that has been. That is just one government initiative on the road to recovery. Anyone visiting the Hawkesbury would know that restaurants and bars are returning to normal and tradies are going about their work.

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

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: We have stimulated the economy with infrastructure growth, with new build and with capital works programs. That is what it is all about.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Tweed will come to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: This Government is getting the economy back up and running post-COVID. I think we have done that. Opposition members ignored their responsibility and fell flat on their faces.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. A number of members are on two and three calls to order.

The member for Hawkesbury has moved a motion, to which the member for Swansea has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Swansea be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes39
Noes49
Majority.....10

AYES

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

NOES

Anderson, K	Gibbons, M	Provest, G
Ayres, S	Greenwich, A	Roberts, A
Barilaro, J	Griffin, J	Saunders, D
Berejiklian, G	Gulaptis, C	Sidgreaves, P
Bromhead, S	Hancock, S	Singh, G
Butler, R	Hazzard, B	Smith, N
Clancy, J	Henskens, A	Speakman, M
Conolly, K	Kean, M	Stokes, R
Constance, A	Lee, G	Taylor, M
Cooke, S (teller)	Lindsay, W	Toole, P
Crouch, A (teller)	Marshall, A	Tuckerman, W

NOES

Dalton, H
 Davies, T
 Dominello, V
 Donato, P
 Elliott, D
 Evans, L

McGirr, J
 O'Dea, J
 Pavey, M
 Petinos, E
 Preston, R

Upton, G
 Ward, G
 Williams, L
 Williams, R
 Wilson, F

PAIRS

Harris, D

Perrottet, D

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***GRAYS POINT RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:48): I congratulate the Grays Point Rural Fire Service 1B unit, which recently received the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation during the 2021 St Florian Day awards in recognition of "outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties". The unit, whose patron I have been proud to be since 2019, also received the Premier's Citation in December 2020 for efforts to protect the community in the 2019-20 bushfires. I am delighted to share with the House an excerpt of the citation that accompanied the conferral of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation:

On 19 December 2019, Grays Point 1B responded to properties under threat in Balmoral Village. On arrival, crew members began hasty preparations to defend a position surrounding Settlers Cottage at 362 Wilson Drive.

As the fire approached the crew took position at the rear of the tanker and waited for impact. The fire front reached the rear of the property at approximately 1200hrs and due to its ferocious nature the crew was forced to seek refuge inside the tanker. The vehicle protection sprinklers were deployed and the crew proceeded to a fall-back position on Wilson Drive.

Grays Point 1B was overrun as they reached Wilson Drive and for eight minutes they were impacted by flames at times exceeding 50 metres high. During the overrun Acting Captain Ian Kemp instructed Firefighter Aaron Minshull to manoeuvre the tanker along Wilson Drive to find a safe refuge stopping the vehicle when the fire became too intense. Firefighter Minshull executed this task with great skill and presence of mind.

After the fire passed Firefighters Joshua Howes, Mathew Lee, Aaron Minshull and Matthew Garrett dismounted to make the area around the vehicle safe. Even though they were under ember and smoke attack they did this without hesitation extinguishing residual fires from around the tanker.

Grays Point 1B returned to 362 Wilson Drive to find the roof fully involved in fire. An attempt was made to extinguish the fire to no avail. On their own initiative, Grays Point 1B proceeded along Wilson Drive and employed aggressive firefighting techniques to save two homes.

Later in the day desperate calls were made for more resources to respond to Buxton. Even though they were surrounded by intense fires on three fronts Grays Point 1B activated the vehicle protection sprinklers to push through and save another property.

The actions of the crew from Grays Point 1B resulted in the survival of a number of properties and three domestic pets in a township where so much was lost.

The Grays Point 1B volunteers demonstrated extraordinary courage in some of the worst Australian bushfires in living memory. They are very deserving of this prestigious commendation. I acknowledge office-bearers Captain Ian Kemp, Senior Deputy Captain Craig Mulley, Deputy Captains Craig Byrne, Matthew Gates and Craig Smoothy and all the firefighters involved in the operation near Nattai National Park. I thank them for their bravery and unflinching professionalism.

INDIA TRAVEL BAN

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (17:51): I speak on behalf of the Indian Australian community, including in my electorate, who are rightly appalled by the travel ban on Australian citizens wanting to come home from India. Over the past few weeks, members of the community have contacted me with heartbreaking stories about the COVID-19 situation that their families and friends are facing in India. I have heard stories, as we all have, about the lack of oxygen and hospital beds. We have heard stories about farewells that are unexpected and sudden. People have told me of the trepidation they feel with each new communication from loved ones, knowing it will likely bring more bad news.

Then there are the stories of Australians who have been stranded in India for months, including those who travelled there in accordance with the Federal Government's travel advice. As we speak, over 9,000 Australians stranded in India have registered to come home. Last week it was confirmed that 900 of those Australians are classified as vulnerable. There are 173 Australian children stuck in India without their parents. Those Australian citizens have been told that they face fines of up to \$66,000 and five years in prison if they attempt to return home. It is important to note that no such ban on citizens was ever introduced when the USA and the UK were facing significant levels of COVID-19 transmission.

Our Indian-Australian community rightfully feels this ban is discriminatory and racially motivated. I implore those in the Chamber today to imagine a situation when they are told they are no longer welcome in their own country and that their country of citizenship has turned its back on them during their time of need. Imagine living in fear, being terrified that you will acquire the virus while you have limited support around you, and that your country locks you out of all help and support? After much backlash, the Prime Minister announced on Friday that the ban on returned travellers from India would not be extended beyond 15 May. There are also vague promises of repatriation flights. But the question is: Why did the Government implement this ban in the first place? It has not been justified.

For months NSW Labor and Federal Labor have been calling on the Government to repatriate Australian citizens living abroad. This includes those stranded in India. However, the opportunity to get more Australians home has been hampered by entry caps, limited flights and expensive airfares. The Government did nothing to address any of those issues. If there are concerns about the integrity of our hotel quarantine system, then the Premier must show leadership and work with Scott Morrison to find solutions. It is clear that our hotel quarantine system is inadequate, but threatening stranded Australians with fines and prison time if they try to come home is, quite frankly, simply shameful. We are in this situation because of a failure to show leadership and compassion and a failure to adequately prepare. NSW Labor stands with our Indian-Australian community, including those in my electorate of Strathfield, during this difficult time. We support their calls to overturn this draconian ban immediately.

The Australian Government and the New South Wales Government have a duty of care to our citizens. They simply cannot turn their back on Australians during their time of need, and that is what they have done. I also take this opportunity to thank our many Indian-Australian community groups. At a time when government has turned its back on its own citizens, our Indian-Australian community has fiercely advocated for those who cannot come home. They are raising money and collecting supplies to assist with on-the-ground efforts in India in the battle against COVID-19. We saw this same spirit of charity, compassion and determination during our own battle against COVID-19. Many in New South Wales were on the front line helping those impacted by the pandemic, particularly supporting temporary visa holders and international students who received no government support. The Australian Government and the New South Wales Government have a duty of care to their citizens. Wherever they are in the world and whatever their background, Australians have a right to enter this country, particularly in their hour of need. We have to do better to help our Indian-Australian community.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:56): I wish to speak on the regional Stronger Country Communities Fund. The fund is now open and closes at midday on 25 June and I am calling on the Myall Lakes community to make applications under this round of funding. The Stronger Country Communities Fund was introduced by The Nationals and is a purely Nationals in government program. It has been so well received in regional communities and has brought money into the community for community groups, councils and the like. These communities have never seen money like it before. It is interesting to note that the other side of the Chamber says, "Well, you're not getting any money. You're not getting grants for a regional area." And then when we do, it says, "You are pork-barrelling." Well, I have to say, I wear that with a badge of honour. In 16 shameful years of Labor, no money came into our community. Money was being diverted away from regional areas to metropolitan areas for the Olympic Games, for example. It was an absolute disgrace.

But now the money is coming in. Regional New South Wales is simply catching up on those years when so little was spent and invested in their communities and on infrastructure. So far there have been three rounds. Round four is open now and closes on 25 June. In the Myalls Lake electorate we have received \$511,000 for infrastructure at the Wingham rugby league ground, \$240,000 for an equal access playground at Fotheringham Park in Taree, \$200,000 for the Manning Aquatic Leisure Centre, and \$200,000 for the Forster Main Beach precinct upgrade. Those examples were just in round one. In round two there was \$605,000 for the Great Lakes women's refuge—something that is very important and the community supports—\$98,000 for the Old Bar Men's Shed, \$98,000 for a storage shed at the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons club, an upgrade to lights at the Wingham Tennis Club, and \$62,000 to upgrade Marlee Hall. A little village like Croki would never have a chance of getting funding. It received \$271,000 to upgrade the river park, swimming pool, amenities and picnic area. Things that

these little villages and communities could only dream of are now being delivered by this Government and The Nationals in government in regional New South Wales.

In round three there were many more projects—for example, \$99,000 for Blackhead Tennis Club, \$188,000 for Taree PCYC and \$75,000 for a community bus for Mitchells Island Public School. You say, "Why?" Well, that little school on Mitchells Island has only a few students. But with a bus, children can be picked up at Oxley Island. So instead of going to one of the bigger schools, they will be able to go to Mitchells Island Public School, a great school where there is almost a boutique, purpose-led, child-focused education that they will not get at a bigger school. They will get that in that little school, and there are great teachers at Mitchells Island Public School.

There was also \$124,000 for an inclusive aquatic facility at Coomba Park. This facility has been chosen as the headquarters of North Coast Sailability and disability sailing. Money has been going to that area to install car parking, footpaths and other infrastructure that is accessible for wheelchairs, as well as a jetty where people with disabilities are able to get in and out of sailing craft. That is a great initiative. Money is going to Bulahdelah. Service clubs like Rotary and others are getting funding, as are the Taree basketball centre, which does so much for Indigenous children, and youth programs like the Delhuntie youth resilience program at Bulahdelah to help with youth resilience. These projects have been delivered. I encourage the community to apply now for the current round so that we can improve our area. Well done to the National Party in government delivering for regional New South Wales.

THE ALBURY PROJECT

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:02): *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW* sets out the New South Wales Government's vision for social housing. The objectives include using wraparound services to support tenants to build their capabilities and setting government on a course to create pathways to independence for those where it is appropriate. A particular feature of this policy is that those most disadvantaged in our community must be "assisted to live in a safe and stable home environment." As well as recognising the key role of feeling safe at home, the policy looks to make better utilisation of social housing properties and to improve the educational outcomes of students living in social housing. This will involve changing "allocation processes so tenants can be placed in, or relocated to, areas where there are better educational and employment opportunities". We are working through these themes within Albury and its accommodation services for youth, the homeless, and those seeking refuge from domestic and family violence.

Betty's Place, which is Albury's much-loved domestic and family violence refuge, has been operating since the 1970s in its 90-year-old building. Rising maintenance costs and failing heating and cooling systems mean the structure is due for a fundamental upgrade. I have been working with Albury agencies to seek government support for a complete rebuild, either on the existing site or at a new location. COVID has not been kind to many families. In the six months to March 2021 there were 1,040 referrals for domestic and family violence [DFV] incidents to the Albury region's Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. Of those, 145 were specific requests for accommodation and housing-related support. There is a case for urgent attention and significant change at Albury. That case has led our community to consider a "core and cluster" model of emergency accommodation to replace the communal nature of Betty's Place. As one border domestic violence survivor put it:

A core and cluster model would be ideal so you can remove yourself if necessary—you could engage and disengage. You wouldn't have to manage the difficulties that arise when people do things differently from you, you wouldn't have to be uncomfortable.

Bringing together schools, housing agencies and health authorities, the Albury Project surveys students from the three public high schools in Albury and screens more than 1,800 students a year to look for early warning signs that are indicative of homelessness, school disengagement and mental health needs.

Over the past three years of the Albury Project, an average of 6 to 7 per cent of students annually are being flagged as at risk of homelessness while attending school. Homelessness can be daunting for a young person and their concerned family as they navigate the push and pull of support services and policing. But there is an option we are working towards in Albury that will help homeless young people to get on track, which is known as a youth foyer. Key features of a youth foyer are quality accommodation that is self-contained and secure, study areas and wi-fi, onsite support through 24-hour staffing and a central location to allow young people to attend education and employment opportunities. The tenant, for their part, gets this accommodation upon entering into an agreement that they will engage with education or employment from that safe place. A youth foyer dovetails with the Albury Project and we continue to support local stakeholders in their drive for this.

The 2020-21 budget includes \$812 million for new and upgraded housing across the State. That takes total New South Wales Government investment in social and affordable housing to \$4.4 billion over four years. It includes \$400 million for a new, fast-tracked housing construction package to deliver almost 1,300 new social homes across the State and \$200 million to upgrade more than 3,500 existing social housing dwellings. I am

pleased that the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, and the Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence have come to Albury to contribute to our housing discussions. Just two weeks ago there was an opportunity to advance the planning further, bringing key housing stakeholders together in Albury with Albury City Council and senior State housing representatives to work towards those goals. I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for helping to facilitate those meetings. We are tackling this combination of social issues by treating them not individually but as a more complex set of interacting influences and possible solutions: housing, security, peace, safety and education. This is in tune with insights from *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW*.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (18:07): We associate scenes of rows and rows of tents crammed full of desperate people with a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis like the shantytowns that we had in Wallsend during the Great Depression—we had lots of those at Jesmond, where the town was called "Hollywood"—or refugee camps that pop up in warzones around the world. They are scenes we could soon see in our suburbs as the housing crisis gripping our State and our suburbs worsens. Every day my office receives messages from people struggling to find housing. Since 2007 it is the most common phone call that my office receives.

Housing stress, defined as being experienced by households that spend more than 30 per cent of gross income on housing costs, was bad before COVID. The pandemic and the recession were both hammer blows, one after the other, to people already doing it tough. People saw their jobs disappear or lost hours as businesses were forced to close. Some who had developed careful routines to avoid abusive situations at home were trapped with their abusers. Relationships broke down. It has contributed to a sharp increase in housing stress and a soaring housing demand that both public and private sectors are struggling to meet, and it has got worse in recent weeks. With JobKeeper ending on 1 April, many families cannot afford to pay the rent. The economy is stagnating. What will they do? Where will those desperate people go? Women, young people and men are living in cars and tents, couch surfing, rough sleeping or staying in unsafe domestic and family violence situations because they have no other options.

There are over 1,200 applications on the Newcastle social housing waitlist. In the private rental market the most recent data shows a vacancy rate of just 0.3 per cent. Add to that the increasing number of no-grounds evictions of tenants by landlords and New South Wales is facing a housing crisis. It is no surprise that the demand for homelessness services is soaring. Services in and around the Wallsend electorate have many more new clients and their budgets have been exhausted. They no longer have the capacity to supply temporary accommodation. I share the story of Hilda and her partner, who contacted me on social media:

My partner and I have been told we have to vacate the premises by 7 April. In all honesty, we have applied for hundreds of houses. I have a full time job with a government agency and my partner a casual security guard. We've heard nothing.

I have called real estates and asked what's wrong with my applications and they said nothing but there's hundreds of people applying and they have more money and a better rental history ... It has gotten my partner and I extremely depressed and we are at a loss with what to do.

There are so many people in this boat, it's wrong. I don't know what the solution is but it's affecting people's mental health and physical health severely.

This is a public servant working a stable full-time job but she is still unable to find accommodation. Recently the Deputy Premier was asked about the housing crisis gripping regional areas. His response was, "I call this a champagne problem—these are the problems you want." I ask the Deputy Premier what he means. We must have significant investment in social and affordable housing in the very near future to avoid tent cities popping up all over the State.

ROTARY DISTRICT 9650

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:12): It gives me great pleasure to recognise the management committee of the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards [RYLA] of Rotary District 9650. The week-long RYLA camp was held at Lake Keepit Sport and Recreation Centre within the Tamworth electorate. The leadership course is a program designed to shape the leaders of our future, with numerous graduates over the program's 51 years of existence noting the significance the camp has had on their lives. In the 9650 district RYLA offers young people from the ages of 19 to 27 the opportunity to focus on their goals moving forward and reflect on the ways they wish to contribute to their communities. Committee members David Mayne, John Carroll, Louise Matthews and Andrew Stokes volunteer their time to lend a hand to young people from Tamworth and Gunnedah right across to Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. With record attendance this year I know that committee members have put their blood, sweat and tears into making the camp a success.

I have the pleasure of using this opportunity in the New South Wales Parliament to recognise them for their contribution to young people in our communities.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:13): Over the past decade the community of Inverell has undergone the largest physical change in a generation. Record government spending on roads and recreational facilities has created avenues for expansion in local manufacturing, tourism, retail and sport. To encourage future economic growth and encourage people to relocate to this outstanding part of the world, investment has also been made to modernise vital public infrastructure—builds like the brand new \$16 million 24-hour Inverell police station, which I am pleased to advise the House will be officially opened next Monday 17 May by Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott and Commissioner of Police Mick Fuller. That facility will cater for the changing needs of the NSW Police Force and assist to keep the community safe by catering for more local police.

Likewise, the \$60 million redevelopment of Inverell District Hospital will revolutionise health care in the Inverell district and beyond. Last month I had the absolute pleasure of joining local health practitioners and the Deputy Mayor of Inverell Shire Council, Anthony Michael, to officially open the new Inverell Community Health Centre, which is located in the nearly century-old Inverell hospital building. This milestone marked the completion of six years of planning and construction and rounded out the entire \$60 million redevelopment. Located alongside the brand new hospital building, which was opened in May last year, the redeveloped old hospital has delivered Inverell a contemporary state-of-the-art primary and allied health precinct, able to cater for new models of health care delivery for the residents of the region.

Referred to as stage two of the overall redevelopment project, the gutting, refurbishing and repurposing of the old hospital building has allowed the existing community health and ambulatory care services to relocate from former premises across Inverell to be located under the one roof. The community can access under one roof for the very first time in Inverell's history the full range of primary and allied health care services, something they have never been able to do before. The facility offers adult ambulatory care, including mental health services, women's and children's services, a dental clinic, chronic disease treatment programs and allied health.

A key improvement to the building has been the inclusion of advanced communications technology to facilitate the delivery of a variety of telehealth services from hospitals across the region. During the opening we were all treated to a display of telehealth in action. Inverell-based clinical nurse consultant Peter Kam delivered an exercise class to cardiac rehabilitation patients who were located at satellite clinics in Inverell, Tingha and Glen Innes. These patients have been able to participate in their rehabilitation whilst staying in their home towns, and actually in their homes, removing the need to travel vast distances.

While telehealth is an important tool in the delivery of local health services for the community, I say it is there to support, not to supplant, existing medical staff and face-to-face medical treatment. Unlike the opening of the main hospital building last year when the community was not allowed to view the facility due to COVID-19 restrictions, this time locals were given a full walk-through of the refurbished building prior to it coming online. I was particularly pleased to note well-known local health advocate Bob Bensley, who has been on this redevelopment journey a lot longer than the six years of construction, was blown away by the finished product. Bob made a very important point about what this refurbishment will achieve. He said:

I've been going to the Community Health Centre as I've gotten older, and I more and more get convinced that half the population or more don't know how many great services are here. At least people know they are here. It can lead to so many good results.

I could not agree with Bob more. This is the first time in Inverell's history that all those services are together. It is good for staff, it is good for patients, it is great for the community and it enhances our ability to attract doctors, specialists and other medical staff. The icing on the cake now this project is complete is the hospital's helipad, which had been out of action for the entirety of the redevelopment and now, thankfully, has been reinstated. This means that any aerial retrievals by air ambulance or the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service will occur at the hospital helipad rather than Inverell Airport, which is a 15-kilometre journey from the hospital itself. The refurbishment of the old Inverell hospital has ensured its 60-year legacy of caring for the community continues for generations to come. I thank the community for its perseverance and hard work over many decades lobbying for this. I thank Mayor Paul Harmon of Inverell Shire Council, Di Baker and all of the people who have been involved over many years. We could not have achieved this magnificent result without you.

LUNA PARK GHOST TRAIN FIRE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:18): I speak today on a matter of justice. I do not speak as a Minister of the Crown. I speak as a private member, and as a citizen who seeks the truth about why six children and a young father perished in the ghost train fire at Luna Park in 1979.

I refer honourable members to the ABC's recent airing of a documentary entitled *EXPOSED: The Ghost Train Fire*. It is a methodical, detailed and harrowing examination of how seven people were incinerated on what was supposed to be a fun night out. The blaze was so fierce it took dental records to identify the victims. By any measure the death of seven people, six of them innocent children, should have mobilised the biggest and most detailed investigation that this State has ever seen. Instead, the ABC's investigation reveals the opposite occurred. I am concerned that there was a limited investigation by a small coterie of officers. Fact after fact, witness after witness, evidence, information and leads appear to have been discounted or ignored altogether. Multiple witnesses said they smelled burning kerosene, yet the possibility of arson was discounted early in the investigation.

Corroborated statements of witnesses who identified a group of bikies acting suspiciously shortly before the fire were never followed up. Worse, we now have statements by witnesses that they were pressured to change their stories. Just yesterday another three witnesses have come forward who smelled kerosene and saw the bikies. None of them were ever contacted by police, let alone interviewed by police. None were included in the sole coronial inquest or the National Crime Authority investigation. A number believe the fire was deliberately lit. There is now in the public domain a weight of evidence supporting the suspicion that the fire was caused by arson, that corrupt police managed the direction and scope of the investigation and, further, a strong possibility that the fire was orchestrated by organised crime. I acknowledge that 42 years have elapsed since the events of that terrible winter night. I acknowledge, too, that this will pose a challenge to any investigation. But it is never too late for justice to be served.

Our commitment to justice should not be measured in years but in the strength of our resolve, and our dedication to the integrity of our institutions must never, ever have a use-by date. I have carefully watched each episode of the documentary. I have spoken to the journalist Caro Meldrum-Hanna about the investigation. I have read the multiple witness statements now published on the ABC's website, where witnesses claimed they were "intimidated" and "hounded" by New South Wales police to change their original statements about what they heard and saw. I have read the Coroner's report and the National Crime Authority report. I have read the statement of retired detective senior constable Michael Maher, who maintains that witnesses who implicated potential arsonists were not followed up.

And I have read a letter from Jenny Godson. Jenny Godson is the wife of John Godson and the mother of Damien, six years old, and little Craig, just four years old, who were all killed in the ghost train fire. Jenny Godson's family burned to death in front of her eyes. She was a victim and a witness, yet she was never called to give evidence at the coronial inquest. It was just one of the many institutional failures she was forced to endure as she sought justice for John, Damien and Craig. Their deaths cry out for justice. The deaths of Jonathan Billings, Richard Carroll, Michael Johnson and Seamus Rahilly cry out for justice. The balance of evidence that is now in the public domain; the statements from multiple witnesses, including retired police; the families; and the interests of justice call for a special commission of inquiry. Today I add my voice and call for a special commission of inquiry to be established into the causes of the ghost train fire at Luna Park in 1979.

RABBI TZURI AVILA

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:23): I acknowledge the contribution of Rabbi Tzuri Avila to the community in St George and to wish him well as he prepares to take up a new post in Eastern Suburbs. As the Rabbi of the Southern Sydney Synagogue, located in my electorate in the suburb of Allawah, Rabbi Avila has played an important role as the minister and spiritual leader of the Jewish and indeed the gentile community since 2015. Tzuri and his wife, Fiona, have brought great energy and passion to their roles, making the Southern Sydney Synagogue a vibrant and welcoming place of worship. I think it is worth speaking to Rabbi Avila's journey to the St George community as a mini representation of the multicultural community that we have in St George. He was born in Mexico City, the eldest of eight children. He grew up in Los Angeles and spent four years in yeshiva, the Jewish college, as well as completing his degree in religious studies.

He moved to Australia 20 years ago to work as the assistant rabbi at the synagogue in Double Bay before a brief period in Los Angeles where he married Fiona. Ten years ago the Avilas returned to Australia. Six years ago in 2015 Rabbi Avila took up the position as Rabbi of the Allawah Southern Sydney synagogue. The success of Rabbi Avila can easily be measured by the wonderful community he has built in partnership with my friend Dr George Foster, the president of the synagogue. The community is warm, friendly and welcoming to people of all faiths. The Jewish community in Sydney's south includes people of many backgrounds: Australian, English, South African, Middle Eastern and Russian to name a few. Founded in 1943, the shul was first known as the Illawarra Hebrew Congregation and later as the Illawarra Synagogue. The synagogue included many European Jews who came to Australia fleeing Europe just prior to the Second World War.

Originally based in a small hired hall, the synagogue moved to a house in Carlton in the mid-1950s. The congregation soon outgrew that little house, so it acquired a hall in Allawah. Eventually that hall became too small, and the congregation purchased the nearby Mormon church, which became the present location. The

dynamic little community works away at its synagogue but, like any community, funds are required to keep pace with aging facilities. From the Community Building Partnership fund, I was privileged to provide funds for a new floor in the adjoining function room in 2010 and for much needed painting of the synagogue in 2017. As a regular guest at the synagogue over my six years as a member of Parliament, I have routinely taken questions from the community about all manner of local, national and international issues.

One issue that has persistently emerged is that of economic sanctions against the State of Israel, sometimes referred to as the "BDS movement". I do not support economic sanctions against the State of Israel. We all long for peace in the Middle East and a two-State solution, but economic sanctions against Israel—a country this House and my party has supported for over 73 years—may place in peril the only democracy in that region. I would not support a motion with a similar sentiment directing Australia to work with other nations to sanction Israel, such as the motion that is currently circulating in local branches. I thank Rabbi Avila and his family for their service to the St George community. On 2 May this year it was a great privilege to attend Rabbi Avila's formal farewell at the synagogue with my wife, Anna. He has created a lasting and important legacy at the Southern Sydney Synagogue. On behalf of this House, I wish him all the best in his new role.

HILLS COMMUNITY AID

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (18:27): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Kogarah. My grandmother used to attend the Southern Sydney Synagogue. It is a great institution in the St George district. It has been a challenging year for charity and service providers due to the economic and social disruptions caused by COVID-19, which have increased demand for community services and limited opportunities to fundraise. The Hills has not been immune to the impact of the pandemic. However, we are fortunate to have local organisations, such as Hills Community Aid [HCA], that assist those most vulnerable and marginalised. I dedicate my private member's statement to the hardworking and dedicated staff, under the legendary leadership of executive officer and program director Mici Beer, who make Hills Community Aid the exceptional organisation that it is.

I also extend my gratitude to the board, led by the compassionate Maria Kovacic, for its commitment and effectiveness in ensuring that HCA strives to provide quality service and assistance across The Hills. Finally, I pay tribute to the generous and selfless volunteers of Hills Community Aid, who make it possible for the organisation to deliver pivotal community services through a vast range of social, financial and education programs, including but not limited to emergency relief, homelessness prevention, domestic violence support, job skills, leisure learning and community transport. I make special mention of the extraordinary Shyama Perera, who is the HCA's Financial Inclusion program manager. Recently Shyama celebrated 20 years of service to the organisation. She joined HCA in May 2001, initially for four months as a volunteer to cover a period of maternity leave and help with IT and administrative tasks. It was not long before she was offered a role to join the team permanently. Two decades later Shyama's deep knowledge and expertise are at the core of Hills Community Aid's Financial Inclusion program.

Shyama dedicates many additional hours to deliver first-rate service to some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community, blending compassion with professionalism to ensure that those most in need receive the highest quality support and guidance. Notably, Shyama has been instrumental in establishing the Hills Community Aid's No Interest Loan Scheme [NILS] and the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance [EAPA] Scheme in The Hills. She has developed an outreach service under NILS and emergency relief funding in numerous locations to ensure that those in need can access assistance. I am told that it was not long after Shyama joined Hills Community Aid that she saw a need for the NILS program, pioneered by the Good Shepherd Sisters in Victoria, and presented it to the board. At the time, the board was not as enthusiastic as she was. In 2006 it reluctantly agreed to deliver the new program. In 2016 the Department of Fair Trading nominated Hills Community Aid as the most efficient loan provider in New South Wales. In 2017 Hills Community Aid tendered successfully for continued NILS funding and increased its reach to broader western Sydney.

The NILS program has been a constant in The Hills for over a decade. Now it has the opportunity to be considered a constant in western Sydney as well. From 2014 to 2020 Shyama conducted over 1,100 client visits and was responsible for the assessment and processing of \$100,000 in food vouchers, \$130,000 in EAPA support, \$20,000 in phone vouchers and 551 NILS loans worth \$646,730 since September 2018. Shyama epitomises what it means to be dedicated to serving the community. She continually goes above and beyond the requirements of her job to help her clients and strives to exceed expectations. I offer my sincerest congratulations to Shyama and thank her for her selfless and inspirational service to the community.

Last month I was honoured to attend the official reopening of Hills Community Aid and view its new renovations courtesy of the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program. The pandemic has placed a significant strain on volunteer-driven organisations, so I was glad to see the funding from the Community Building Partnership program go towards the upgrade of Hills Community Aid's office and

improve the utilisation of space for the organisation's clients, staff and volunteers. I commend Hills Community Aid for its resilience, strength and flexibility to support our community through these challenging times. I look forward to seeing what they will achieve in 2021 and beyond.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:31): It is not often that I support an announcement from the Federal Government. However, the funding provided in tonight's budget for the extension of the Newcastle Airport runway was music to the ears of the entire Hunter region. The upgrade will allow the airport to cater for larger international aircraft and will unlock 4,500 ongoing jobs and over \$12 billion in economic benefits. No-one in this Chamber is going to pretend that this funding is purely because the Federal Government has seen sense and definitely not because the airport is within cooee of three target electorates. But, hey, we will take it because in pandemic recovery we cannot stymie projects that will deliver significant economic growth and thousands of jobs. The New South Wales Government would do well to remember that, without having to consider projects' pork-barrelling potential.

The first project that I am suggesting will not cost the Government a cent. All it requires is a stroke of a pen to remove the anti-competitive cap on containers at the Port of Newcastle, paving the way for the development of a deepwater multipurpose terminal. Not only would that protect jobs by allowing the port to diversify as we transition away from coal, it would create, directly and indirectly, 15,000 jobs nationally. The Government continues to stand in the way of this privately funded \$1.8 billion project so it can protect the interests of its mates. With the Federal Government's airport funding enabling a boost to both Hunter and northern New South Wales tourism, it is time for the New South Wales Government to get a move on with the Broadmeadow Sports and Entertainment Precinct. In 2017 the pretty pictures accompanying that announcement were whipped out, but four years down the track we have not seen any funding for a business case, let alone the infrastructure.

Newcastle has already proved its ability to host international sporting events. Soon international visitors will be able to fly into the region via an upgraded runway, so it makes sense to get on with the precinct's overhaul and promote Newcastle to the sporting world. Another project that has been on the table for a long time is the redevelopment of the Newcastle Art Gallery, for which there is also a \$10 million bequest. Further, recently the Newcastle city council reaffirmed a strong desire to proceed with the redevelopment by increasing its financial commitment to \$16.2 million. Given that, and the fact that the arts Minister has stated that it is a good project, why will the Government not fund it? Why not fix the inequities in cultural infrastructure funding programs and ensure that our city receives a fair slice of the pie, just like the sports Minister did at the last budget? That project should be coupled with the restoration of the gorgeous Victoria Theatre, a heritage-listed building owned by Century Venues, which has development approval to be restored to its former glory. That would fill the gap in mid-sized arts performance venues that currently exists in the city.

While those are all great projects, if I could be granted just one thing in the budget, it would be for the Government to take a leaf out of Victoria's book and invest significantly in social and affordable housing. I do not mean \$10 million for a block of units over here or \$1 million for a couple of villas there; I am talking substantial investment. I am referring to the \$5.3 billion that the Victorian Labor Government is pouring into housing across the State. That investment will deliver more than 12,000 new homes as well as support a further 10,000 per year for four years. The Victorian Government is delivering 9,300 new social housing homes through additional stock and by replacing old apartments, which is a 10 per cent increase in supply.

Some 2,000 of those homes will be for people living with a mental illness, because the Victorian Government recognises social capital and the importance of stability and safety that those people need. Another 2,900 new homes will be built under the affordable housing scheme. In Newcastle there is a 10-year wait for social housing. Our residential rental vacancy is currently the lowest of the State's major cities at 0.7 per cent. Our housing crisis is the worst it has ever been. If the Government does not use the budget wisely and pull its head out of the sand, the problem will spread and make its way into our health, education and justice systems, which will cost us much more both financially and ethically in the long run.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE SERVICE AWARDS

CAMDEN ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:36): In early March it was a privilege to award and congratulate a number of residents from the Camden electorate with their 50 years of service certificate. This year marks a significant milestone in their service as justices of the peace. In appreciation of that service and long-term devotion, my office held an afternoon tea, which included tea, coffee, cakes, cookies and cheese. Hours were spent talking and telling stories. It was a highlight of my week to give back and thank those JPs for their service to our community. Justices of the peace are volunteers appointed by the Governor of New South Wales. Their

primary roles are to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and to certify copies of original documents.

For 50 years those JPs have worked as independent and objective witnesses to documents that may be used for official or legal purposes. For 50 years they have provided fair and indiscriminate service to members of the community. For 50 years they have respected individual privacy and confidentiality. For 50 years they have assisted other local residents in the electorate of Camden by attesting the execution of documents, witnessing statutory declarations, witnessing affidavits for use in court, certifying true copies of original documents and certifying a person's identity. For that exceptional dedication to the community I am honoured to congratulate Mr Robert Collins, Mr William Dowson, Mr Warren Eggins, Mr Colin Hancock, Mr Terry Kaperonis, Mr Matthew Merton, Mr Michael Moore, Mr Ronald William and Mr Neil Burns, who I was advised passed away shortly after reaching that milestone. I offer my condolences to Neil's wife, Kay, and his family, and I recognise his outstanding devotion and service to the community. I also acknowledge Mr Collins, Mr Dowson, Mr Eggins, Mr Hancock, Mr Kaperonis, Mr Merton, Mr Moore and Mr Williams for their 50 years of service as justices of the peace.

I recognise that the foundation of our success in the community is built upon the commitment of our JPs. The service award is a token of appreciation for the part that those residents have played in providing their service to our community. People are and always will be our greatest asset, and those men are an example of that. I thank the Attorney General, Mark Speakman, for recognising those residents. I thank all of those men who continue to serve to their community as justices of the peace into their retirement. I congratulate them again on their remarkable service, dedication and commitment to the community and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Finally, given that next week is National Volunteer Week I thank all volunteers in the electorate of Camden for their selflessness and commitment to the community. Governments at all levels would not work without those volunteers.

LISMORE ELECTORATE HOUSING

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:41): I will outline the housing needs of the electorate of Lismore, which I represent. First, I put on record that the issue will not drop off the radar as other issues do; it is too critical. The lack of supply, the issues of affordability and the increase in homelessness is creating an insurmountable challenge for distressed people, families and communities. The document entitled *Discussion Paper: A Housing Strategy for NSW* was comprehensive in scope and spoke to the housing problem, but the recent Government strategy entitled *Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy* and its action plan has not quite hit the mark. We need immediate action followed by short-term, medium-term and long-term action. I will draw the attention of the House to some of the recommendations in the discussion paper and my responses to them. Page 3 of the discussion paper states:

A holistic approach to housing – from homelessness to home ownership.

That is definitely what we need. Page 35 states:

Options like prefabrication and modular design can help.

I will not detail every recommendation or response to the discussion paper but I will outline the general nature. Page 36 states:

Funding critical infrastructure through the Housing Acceleration Fund which has equated to more than \$1 billion since 2012 for more than 50 projects in metropolitan and regional areas.

My response states:

According to the Department of Planning website, there are no projects carried out north of Port Macquarie.

It is understandable that I submitted that we want projects north of Port Macquarie. Page 38 states:

The NSW Housing Strategy should look to maximise investment in regional NSW.

That recommendation is pretty obvious. The recommendation on page 38 continues:

A contemporary social housing renewal program could also be investigated for key regional centres.

My submission on that recommendation states:

Better utilise available NSW Government-owned land.

It has to be better utilised in a way that means we can build housing on that land and there must be bipartisanship to make sure that happens. Page 41 states:

Detached dwellings make up two-thirds of all homes in NSW and most of these have more than three bedrooms. I made a further comment on that. About one-fifth of people in New South Wales had a disability in 2016. Presumably those statistics are somewhat

higher now, particularly in regional areas where access to support is less common. No State Government-resourced disability advocacy service exists in my electorate of Lismore. That was defunded with the advent of NDIS, which does not provide the advocacy that we still need. Page 49 of the discussion paper states:

Beyond existing local strategic planning by councils, this could include State-level controls that ensure an appropriate baseline is met and respond to needs identified by councils.

It then talks about supporting council land and on page 63 it references the Housing First model, which is a good model that can work. On page 65 it references the Build to Rent program. Page 67 looks at how better to utilise government-owned land to address homelessness through meanwhile use, which I agree with. Then on page 68 it recommends that the State Government's partners must also be involved. The discussion paper makes a number of other suggestions, many of which I commented on in my report and advocacy paper. Those suggestions are all evidence-based—we know they work—and are desperately needed.

They include resources for community housing providers, earmarked funding for the regions from the Skilling Australians Fund, investment in public housing stock for Department of Communities and Justice Housing and other providers and an increase in the rental subsidy that DCJ Housing can offer to reflect current rental prices. Members will know how much they have gone up in recent times, so there needs to be an incremental increase to assist renters. Lastly, I said in my submission that Parliament should make housing a priority and listen to those with lived experience of housing problems who can suggest better ways to respond with programs that can work.

NAOMI SMITH

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:46): I commend and thank Naomi Smith, president and founder of A Butterfly's Embrace, and her team for providing support to parents and families affected by the overlooked or underserved areas of pregnancy and infant loss. Naomi was motivated to start the organisation and assist others who have lost a baby after her own baby, Lucas, passed away on 9 April 2014 after having been born on 22 March 2014. She honours his memory by making a difference to the lives of parents who have also lost a little one. The loss of a baby or infant is traumatic and something a parent would never want to go through. It is vital that those who have suffered this experience are supported in any way possible. Naomi and her team of volunteers provide parents who have suffered a loss with resources and the details of organisations that can provide sorely needed assistance. They also help grieving parents and families to make connections with other bereaved parents.

I was honoured to join Naomi and her team for the launch of their Butterfly Kisses project, which is the brainchild of Naomi and involves the creation of a beautiful space neighbouring the Secret Garden and Nursery in Richmond on the Western Sydney University campus. It will become a place of contemplation and reflection for "angel parents", who have lived through the loss of their baby in pregnancy or infant loss. I commend the Secret Garden and Nursery for gifting this large space so that families can reflect and honour their little ones. I hope the space assists loved ones in dealing with their grief.

Naomi and her team also provide ideas on how families may create memories and keepsakes, such as taking photos, asking the hospital for an ID or birth announcement card, other hospital items as well as time-sensitive ideas. The widespread support that Naomi and her team offer demonstrates their desire to assist bereaved parents. It is clear that Naomi and her team have the emotions and wellbeing of other parents at heart, which is why what they do is so touching and important. I extend my commendations and thanks to the board members and volunteers who assist Naomi in this important cause.

I particularly mention secretary and operations manager Lisa Eaton, treasurer and communications manager Juliet Williams, social media coordinator Odette Farren and event coordinator Kelly Hayes, whom I met at a recent function. I also commend and thank all other supporters and volunteers who assist the organisation in any capacity. It is a very important cause and the effect of their support is immeasurable. I wish Naomi and her team of supporters and volunteers all the best. I have no doubt that they will continue to assist bereaved parents. I encourage any families who have lost a baby or infant to reach out to organisations that offer support, visit a GP or contact Lifeline Australia.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:49): I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her private member's statement. I had the privilege of being with her at the recent function that she mentioned, along with the local Federal member and the mayor. It was truly moving to hear the speeches of two women and one father, who had all lost either infants or children who were stillborn. Just to be there and hear their stories was a truly challenging experience. I commend them for the good work they are doing to reach out to others going through the same experiences to make their life a little bit easier. I say: Well done to A Butterfly's Embrace.

EASTERN CREEK BINGO INDUSTRIES SITE

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:50): I bring to the attention of the House the ongoing suffering of my constituents who reside in the suburb of Minchinbury and surrounding areas caused by the offensive odour emanating from the Bingo Industries site at Eastern Creek. It has been an issue for more than 12 months and previous complaints by residents during this time have been dismissed, with the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] claiming that the source of the odour cannot be identified. Last month Blacktown City Council carried out its own investigation and identified the source of the odour to be the Bingo Industries site. The EPA issued Bingo Industries with a clean-up notice with a deadline of Tuesday 27 April 2021 to eliminate the offensive odour. That deadline has passed with Bingo Industries failing to stop the foul odour. My office has received numerous complaints from residents regarding the offensive odour, which they say resembles the smell of rotten eggs. The Federal member for McMahon, Chris Bowen, and I have raised those complaints with Minister Kean.

Today media outlets have reported that the EPA has issued Bingo Industries with an infringement penalty of \$577 for failing to comply with the clean-up notice. This afternoon the EPA contacted me to advise that those media outlets had got it wrong and the \$577 is an admin fee and not for an infringement. That makes the EPA's position much worse, as to date no infringements have been issued by the EPA. Whether it is an infringement or an admin fee, it demonstrates weak action by the EPA. I am calling on the EPA to stop pandering with bandaid, short-term solutions and commence legal action in the Land and Environment Court. The EPA should immediately shut down Bingo Industries' operations at Eastern Creek until such time as a permanent solution with a defined time frame is agreed upon.

My constituents continue to suffer from symptoms caused by hydrogen sulphide exposure, including headaches; nausea; dizziness; irritation of the eyes, nose and throat; infections; and asthma. A confidential meeting between Bingo Industries and the EPA was held on Friday 7 April 2021. The EPA banned Blacktown City Council from attending, claiming that it was a confidential meeting. Why is there no transparency around the discussions between the EPA and Bingo Industries? Following the meeting, the EPA has varied the operating conditions of Bingo Industries' licence by imposing two main orders: It needs to apply a 300-millimetre layer of topsoil to cover the waste and it must not accept any smelly waste. Those changes to the operating procedures are only a temporary fix. Within a short period of the new waste being put on the topsoil, the odour will return. How will Bingo Industries or the EPA monitor not accepting smelly bins? Will they employ a human sniffer to stand at the gate and sniff every bin coming in? That is a ridiculous and unworkable condition.

Local residents have lost faith in the EPA as an independent authority because CEO Tracy Mackey attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the site at the same time the EPA issued Bingo Industries with a clean-up notice. In addition, former EPA CEO Barry Buffier is a board member of Bingo. Given the ongoing nature of these complaints, I call on the EPA to set up air quality monitoring stations at the Bingo site. The nearest air quality stations are located several kilometres away at St Marys and Prospect. My constituents should not have a diminished quality of life due to the failure of Bingo Industries to stop its noxious pollution. Today I have given notice of motion in this Parliament calling on the EPA to shut down the Bingo Industries operation at Eastern Creek until a permanent solution is implemented.

OXLEY ELECTORATE NATURAL DISASTERS

BELLINGEN SHOW

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:54): They say Australia is a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of rugged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains. The mid North Coast has experienced all of that and more over the past 18 months. And it is particularly true of the southern part of my electorate through the Port Macquarie-Hastings district, which has experienced all extremes in the past two years. The 2019-20 bushfires destroyed 80 buildings and damaged 31, with the region accounting for 38 per cent of the total burn scar of the State. Areas like Rollands Plains through to Wauchope, Bago and others were punished. Just as we were recovering, the rains came—as is the way in this country.

The devastating floods brought damage to businesses and communities that were already suffering, destroying 28 buildings and leaving nearly 2,000 damaged. We still have incredible access issues. The Oxley Highway, which is an important traffic and transport route, is closed to Walcha. That makes it particularly difficult for the timber industry in particular to provide timber for our homes in Sydney, other parts of Australia and the world. It has led to tough times for local businesses and organisations, with many in the community calling for government assistance. The Liberals and The Nationals being in government have ensured that assistance is there. It is not always 100 per cent perfect. You cannot plan for these experiences, but you can be there hand in hand and side by side. The bushfires and floods destroyed buildings and left primary producers and small businesses in

disarray, but our Government and The Nationals are committed to standing by every community that was affected by natural disasters until they are back on their feet.

I acknowledge the work of our Federal members David Gillespie and Pat Conaghan, who represent parts of these areas. In response to the floods, The Nationals have established a multi-agency strike force comprising the Australian Defence Force and New South Wales emergency services to assist with the clean-up. I remember travelling from Port Macquarie Airport to Wauchope and seeing ADF personnel on the ground. With my son currently training at Duntroon, to see those uniforms was a very heartening experience. The strike force was responsible for removing over 6,500 tonnes of waste, assisting with the wash down, and clearing vital access routes to reconnect communities. The initial bulk waste clean-up in Port Macquarie-Hastings is now 95 per cent complete. I have wonderful images of the mayor of Port Macquarie, Peta Pinson, out with her husband helping many people in those communities around Camden Haven in the southern part of Port Macquarie to clear their homes from an event that no-one had ever seen before.

The NSW Nationals understand the extent of the damage that occurred because it happened in our communities, and we took the fight to Parliament to ensure that we would get the funding needed to repair and rebuild. In response to the bushfires, the State and the Commonwealth governments have contributed nearly \$50 million in funding to the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area. To date we have contributed close to \$12 million in response to the floods. This support remains ongoing. It has been a very difficult time as we experience things that we have not experienced before, but it has been a privilege to represent those communities and the dairy farmers. To have the Premier and John Barilaro meeting with dairy farmers to hear their complaints and concerns, and to have a package of funding and support announced on the day, was a heartening experience.

On the weekend I attended the Bellingen Show, which is one of the few agricultural shows to go ahead in this COVID world. The fact that the volunteers put technology in place to ensure that everything ran in a COVID-safe way was a testament to their effort, their endeavour and their ingenuity. It was a stunning success and I thank everybody who was involved. It was spectacular to see things coming back to a relative normal. I did not put my dog in the dog show because I knew it would be unfair. He would have won, and I did not want him to take the prize when there were other worthy dogs. It was exciting to see the kids from Kempsey High School and Bellingen High School take part in the cattle parade. My favourite part was the food that I enjoyed in the showground pavilion, thanks to the \$180,000 upgrade to the kitchen on top of the \$109,000 improvement to electrical infrastructure throughout the showground that was delivered through our COVID stimulus funding. Many showgrounds across New South Wales are experiencing similar improvements, and I acknowledge our Government for helping through our COVID stimulus package.

WAGGA WAGGA TAKES 2

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:00): It has become one of the biggest events on Wagga Wagga's social and charity calendar. Each year it takes 12 locals, teams them up with professional singers who mentor and guide them through rehearsals, then thrusts them right out of their comfort zones in front of hundreds of people to raise money for charity. I am talking about what has become an Australian legend: Wagga Wagga Takes 2. According to Duncan Potts, show host and member of the organising committee, when Wagga Wagga Takes 2 started in 2007 it was inspired by a television show called *It Takes Two*. The premise was that you took a well-known singer and teamed them up with a local celebrity. Duncan Potts says he, Troy Fisher and Gary Silvestro realised they could do something like that in Wagga Wagga. They used their musical connections and begged and pleaded to line up 12 people to do the show.

The first show raised \$14,000. They thought the idea might last two or three years, but 14 years on—and with more than \$3.2 million raised for charity—Wagga Wagga Takes 2 is more successful than ever. It was always intended to be a charity event, but it is about more than just raising money. As Duncan Potts says:

It's all about creating awareness for the charity, because some of the charities that get involved have very low profiles. They're very, very small charities ... And for a charity to jump on board with the Wagga Wagga Takes 2 vehicle and create awareness about the great work that they do in our community and build that profile, that means more to us than any dollar figure raised.

Each production involves hundreds of people volunteering their time and talent, and Wagga is especially lucky to have so many talented musicians who donate their time and energy to create something special. Dave Wall and Dale Allison have been involved since the beginning. Others who have been involved in many of the events include Bill Robertson, Shelley McCormack, Rene Van Delft, Joel Harrison, Deirdre Moulden, Matt Olsen, Josh Mackellar, Mel Hale, Dionna Crook, Mark Atkinson, Jamie Way and Aaron Oldaker. The performers are backed by a band of some of Wagga's finest musicians and supported by a team of dancers and a large production crew. Members of the band and backup singers this year included Alexandra Richards, Nick Salter, Wade Burgess, Rob Broberg, Heather Wall, Roger Ansell, Dave Wall, Alex O'Neill and Jono Apps. The Kapooka Army Band has also long been providing support. Duncan Potts agrees that one of the most wonderful experiences is watching people grow into becoming performers. He says:

They come in as shy people who believe they can't do this. And they come out the other end just this confident person.

My wife, Kerin Fielding, and I have both done it as "celebrities". I am not sure about becoming more confident; I remember being scared as hell. The support we got was fantastic and it gave me a new appreciation of just what performers go through. Duncan Potts says that the longevity of Wagga Wagga Takes 2 has garnered it national attention. He says:

It is really a unique Wagga thing. It's been tried to be replicated elsewhere and it might've had a run for a couple of years in certain towns ... But the Wagga event just keeps going from strength, to strength, to strength. And you know, it doesn't look like slowing down.

The key to success is of course the organising committee. I specially thank Narelle Potts, the Chair, who is a tireless power of energy. I also thank the other members of the committee, including Michael Patterson, Nora O'Donoghue, Patrick Kenny, Duncan Potts, Dave Lugton, Patrick McRedmond, Michael Small, Jasmine Woodland and Linda Hoey.

Wagga Wagga Takes 2 is a family event for the Potts family. I mentioned Narelle and Duncan being involved, but so are their daughters, Haylee and Aleasha, and son, Callum. The family tries to be involved each year, contributing in one way or another. It has become an important event to them. It is an important aspect of life in Wagga Wagga and an important contributor to our community on so many levels. There are many who I have not mentioned who have contributed to the success of Wagga Wagga Takes 2, not the least being the locals who actually took on the challenge. I apologise to any that I have not mentioned, but I thank all of them for contributing so much to the community. Take a bow, Wagga Wagga Takes 2. Take an encore! Actually, take many more encores. It is a credit to our community.

FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE EDUCATION RESOURCES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:05): In 2020 the teaching and learning of students in Fairfield was turned on its head as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students moved quickly into remote learning as learning online from home began. This was not a preconceived idea prepared for at the commencement of term 1; rather, it was born out of necessity due to the swift onslaught of the pandemic. The remote delivery of curriculum would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of local teachers in all sectors in both primary and secondary schools not only in Fairfield but also right across New South Wales. Since remote learning began in 2020, it has been noted on numerous occasions in this place that teachers went above and beyond to assist students. I for one can vouch that all of the teachers of Fairfield performed their duties to an exemplary standard given the circumstances of the pandemic. Teachers were forced to use resources that they had never been trained in. They had no choice but to adapt as quickly as possible.

Online teaching and learning brought with it many difficulties for families in the Fairfield electorate and in other culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities across the State. Those difficulties ranged from access to reliable broadband, the extra cost of internet access and additional devices, and the availability of space for multiple children to learn in the home environment. For CALD communities there was the even greater challenge of the language barrier that impeded parents from assisting in the delivery of the curriculum to their children. I have heard numerous stories of local schools having to provide families with extra resources in order for the children not to miss out on education. I commend all local school principals and teachers for making sure that no student was left behind during remote learning.

Due to the altruistic nature of teachers, the 2020 academic year proceeded and our students continued to learn. However, let us not ignore the fact that although the State Government has acknowledged the work of teachers during a time when it really needed them to step up, it has done nothing to address the disparity and inequity teachers face due to the increased expectations placed upon them during the pandemic. The challenges facing teachers in professional development and training, the delivery of new curriculum and the ongoing time constraints placed upon them have been well documented. The Government's expectations of a new curriculum for students by 2024 are unrealistic, to say the least. Teachers are faced with less preparation time than ever before, ever-burgeoning class sizes due to increasing population, and inadequate resourcing. Yet they are expected to implement curriculum change at the behest of the Government.

In an ideal world, teachers would just teach. However, let us be frank, teachers do not just teach. They nurture, mentor and coach the students under their direct care, all while trying to keep up with rapidly evolving technological advancements and the higher demands on their time, even after hours. High school educators are increasingly answering late-night emails from students. Why? That is because they care. They care about not only the delivery of curriculum but also being there for their students, as much as they can, as part of the holistic method of education. If one were to compare the workload and remuneration of a teacher to those of an individual in the corporate sector, the combined figures would be frightening. What really comes out is that teachers are overworked and underpaid—end of story.

Following my meeting with the Fairfield branch of the NSW Teachers Federation, I was left perplexed by the lack of support that the Government provides to the hardworking teachers of this State. The members of the NSW Teachers Federation and other associations simply call on the State Government to reset salaries and to support teachers by providing them realistic preparation time. They are also calling on the State Government to provide adequate resourcing and to address the issue of ever-growing class sizes. Following the handing down of the Gallop report entitled *Valuing the teaching profession—an independent inquiry*, it is evident that teachers' dedication and commitment to teaching in public schools remains high. What is needed now is action, before the multitude of young teachers reach burnout in their formative years, before the profession loses its best to the corporate world and students in this great State subsequently miss out.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:10): I acknowledge that teachers had to learn in a rush last year to provide remote learning. As an older teacher, I would not have envied the task of being in that classroom at the time. I struggled with Zoom meetings and so on and had to learn my way through that, so I certainly acknowledge the task. I would add that New South Wales was the first State to sign up to Gonski and as a result there has been record funding of public schools over the period that we have been in government. We are undertaking record levels of construction of new and refurbished schools right across New South Wales through the provision of far more money than has ever been the case before. Things may never be perfect, but I suggest that we have a strong record on which to build and we certainly want to do that in partnership with teachers who did their part last year.

LACHLAN RIVER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:11): The Lachlan River passes through my electorate of Orange and is part of the Murrumbidgee catchment within the Murray-Darling Basin. Along its length, the Lachlan River is joined by 37 tributaries and terminates at the Great Cumbung Swamp, which flows into the Murrumbidgee River. With more than 12 per cent of the State's agricultural businesses and 100,000 people living within the catchment, it is fair to say that the Lachlan River is a valuable and important resource that should be invested in and maintained for its health and long-term viability. An apparent failure of investment into the management of the long-term health of this river, and many other inland rivers, is evidenced by the absence of fishways at impoundments and weirs that are required for native fish to bypass the passage obstruction.

Weirs and other man-made obstructions along the river's length have been constructed and installed since white settlement. Weirs and impoundments are necessary infrastructure that help to deliver a more reliable source of water for domestic and agricultural supplies, but fishways have been an overlooked element of the design of the infrastructure. Fishways, also known as fish ladders, allow native fish to circumnavigate weirs and other obstructions so that they can migrate to spawn, feed and seek refuge. Seven kinds of fishways are used in New South Wales: pool-type, denil, lock, trap and transport, rock ramp, bypass and eel. Pool-type fishways were the first type to be developed and consist of a series of interconnected pools bypassing the obstruction. Many different types of pool fishways have been designed in Australia. However, the vertical slot design is reportedly the only one that has proven effective with native fish.

Most fishways follow a similar concept, allowing fish to pass around the barrier by swimming through a series of gaps or slots that control the speed of water flow. The type of fishway installed depends on the physical characteristics of the obstruction and is designed to cater for the physical characteristics of the prevailing fish community. Golden perch, more commonly referred to as yellowbelly, and called binyin by some of the First Australians, is a native fish of cultural significance. Yellowbelly has great eating qualities and is therefore desired by fishers for both sport and sustenance. Anecdotal evidence indicates a decline of yellowbelly habitation in much of the Lachlan River. In fact, there appears to be a complete absence of yellowbelly in the Lachlan River within the Orange electorate.

Restocking the river with fingerlings is just a cheap bandaid. True species recovery will be possible only if we give yellowbelly and other native fish the riverine environment that will enable them to do their own thing. Recently I asked the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales if there had been a recent study or any assessment to determine the number of existing obstructions to native fish passages and, if so, where they had been identified and whether it was necessary to install fish ladders. I also asked when the fish ladders would be installed. The Minister responded by naming just two locations where fishways had been installed. The Minister further responded that audits of fish passages in the Lachlan catchment had occurred in the late 2000s.

Regarding my query to Minister Marshall about when fish ladders will be installed at the mapped obstructions, the Minister replied, "This is currently under consideration." The Government has had over 10 years; for how much longer does it want to consider? The Government has yet to install fishways at the Forbes, Condobolin, Kiacatoo, Booberoi and Jemalong weirs, which are obstructive barriers having a detrimental impact on native fish populations and river health. The NSW Department of Primary Industries reportedly has a memorandum of understanding with the State Water Corporation to provide technical advice on fish passage

improvements and other aquatic habitats, and requires DPI to provide all necessary fish passage advice associated with the structural upgrades and fishway-related works at State Water dams, weirs and regulators in New South Wales.

The State Water Corporation has constructed one fishway in my electorate, at Bumbuggan Creek. I visited the Bumbuggan fishway recently; it is a good model that should be replicated at other weirs. It is my hope for swift collaboration among government departments and agencies to design and install fishways for all of the mapped obstructions along the Lachlan. Native yellowbelly travel hundreds of kilometres upstream to breed, yet weirs that are absent of fishways occur numerously over such distances in the Lachlan and many other inland rivers. Information published in 2007 by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission in a golden perch fish species fact sheet stated:

Adult and immature fish are migratory and extensive upstream movements of more than 1000 kilometres have been recorded for some adult fish ...

This is an important issue too big to mention in one short speech. I will have more to say on this in my next private member's statement.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (19:16): I have mentioned in the House before that since returning to government in 2011 the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has had to deal with the infrastructure neglect of the Carr, Iemma, Rees and Keneally Labor governments. The Coalition has done an outstanding job. In my electorate, following a \$68.7 million upgrade, we now have a modern hospital in Bowral. Later this month I will welcome the education Minister to Picton to open the \$112 million redeveloped Picton High School. It looks absolutely amazing and challenges the best-resourced private schools in the State. They are just two examples in my electorate of long-overdue infrastructure that the Coalition Government is delivering.

For many years, a common local complaint has been the state of our roads. Recently, the issue was brought into sharper focus with the release of the annual NRMA Rate Your Road survey, which identified Wollondilly Shire Council as having the worst roads in Greater Sydney. To be honest, it is a fair rap. Many of the roads in the shire almost require a monster truck to navigate the many potholes. Wollondilly Shire Council is responsible for maintaining approximately 825 kilometres of road. The question might be asked: How has the council allowed its roads to deteriorate to the appalling state that many of them are now in? By council's own estimates, it would require \$50 million, which it simply does not have, to bring the three main arterial routes—Menangle Road, which stretches 14 kilometres; Remembrance Drive, 39 kilometres; and Silverdale Road, 37 kilometres—to a satisfactory standard.

Poorly maintained roads cause accidents and cost lives. The three roads I identified have had a collective 110 accidents in the five years to 2019. That statistic is unacceptable. Members in this Chamber know that I am no shrinking violet when it comes to criticising and getting stuck into local councils in my electorate. If anyone doubts that, speak to some of the suspended Wingecarribee shire councillors. But it is not entirely fair to blame Wollondilly Shire Council for the current predicament of its roads. When the member for Maroubra was the responsible Minister, he transferred a number of State-owned roads to the council. Let there be no mistake: It was a blatant act to remove liabilities from the then Labor Government balance sheet and shift them to the hardworking mum-and-dad ratepayers in Wollondilly shire. I refer members to the NSW Road Classification Review, which outlines the definition of a State road. The three roads I have identified clearly satisfy that definition and should never have been transferred to council.

Menangle Road links Picton, Tahmoor and Thirlmere with Campbelltown and provides a pivotal corridor to the rail network. It also serves as an alternative route for the Hume Motorway when it is closed or during periods of disruption, like bushfires. It handles 5,674 vehicles a day, almost 10 per cent being heavy vehicles. Remembrance Drive links Picton, Tahmoor and Thirlmere to Campbelltown and Camden. Like Menangle Road, it serves as an alternative route for the Hume Motorway and is used as a major inter-shire freight route. It handles 17,407 vehicles a day, with more than 9 per cent being heavy vehicles. Silverdale Road links eight of the shire's towns and villages with Penrith and the emerging aerotropolis. It will serve as a future freight route for agribusiness. It handles 12,034 vehicles a day and almost 11 per cent are heavy vehicles.

This map, which I hold up, shows the inequity of the current road classification. Remembrance Drive is the best example of this point. Heading north to the Wollondilly shire border, the road is State owned. It is then classified as a regional road, with Wollondilly Shire Council responsible for its maintenance. When the road hits the Camden local government area it reverts to State ownership again; that is hardly fair. Today I appeal to the Treasurer and the roads Minister to commit to undoing the wrongs of the member for Maroubra and the previous Labor Government. Transferring Menangle Road, Remembrance Drive and Silverdale Road back to State

ownership will improve safety and restore equality to Wollondilly ratepayers. This is a legacy issue from the hard Labor years in Government, and now it is time to make things right again.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:20): I will talk about the privatisation of assets by the Government. The October 2016 report by Property NSW entitled *Asset Recycling Insight Report* discussed the reasoning behind asset recycling. It stated:

Asset Recycling (or Capital Recycling) is the sale of underperforming or surplus assets to return the capital to invest in new assets or revitalise existing assets. Governments are increasingly looking to asset recycling as a means of alleviating budget pressure ...

Over the past 10 years the Government has sold off numerous assets. It has sold off many revenue-producing property assets around Darling Harbour and through the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. In November 2015 the New South Wales Government offloaded Vales Point Power Station in Lake Macquarie for \$1 million—local homes sell for more than that. Within two years, that asset was revalued by the new owners as being worth \$730 million. In the first six years of the Liberal-Nationals Government, from 2011 to 2017, it sold something like 20,000 properties, including schools and public housing dwellings, raking in more than \$9.1 billion. Recently there was the sale of the Land Titles Office. All of those revenue-generating assets are being sold for a one-off sugar hit.

The Minister for Water, Property and Housing has stood proudly in this Chamber and happily announced a listing on a Government website regarding all land assets that are available for anyone to come along and make a bid on. The whole of New South Wales is on sale, sale, sale! I almost feel like I am on the channel 75 openshop, which has nonstop, 24-hour sales of anything and everything—or I am channelling Big Kev, who used to say, "I'm excited!" It makes an uncanny parallel with the Liberal-Nationals Government that Big Kev listed his company in the early 2000s on the Australian Stock Exchange and described it as "the people's float". The Liberal-Nationals Government also makes itself out to be a friend of the people whilst selling off all the assets.

Let us hone in to Blacktown City, where some 2,590 properties are listed. Approximately 13 square kilometres of land have been listed, which is almost 5 per cent of the Blacktown City Council area. That is larger than the Hunters Hill and Mosman councils put together, and larger than seven other council areas: Burwood, Waverley, Lane Cove, North Sydney and Woollahra. It is a disgrace that the Government wants to sell off so much in the Blacktown City Council area. Seven electorates each cover part of the Blacktown City Council area. I am sure the member for Prospect will be worried about some 252,000 square metres of land along Flushcombe Road, adjacent to Prospect Reservoir, opposite Raging Waters Sydney, being up for any offers. I am sure the Australian Racing Drivers' Club, in Western Sydney Motorsport Precinct, which has just been upgraded by the State Government for \$30 million, will be a little bit worried. That is on the list to be sold. Sydney Dragway is on the list. The Minister is shaking his head. So was I when I was looking at this. They just spent some money to do the speedway.

I hope the member for Riverstone is a bit worried about Nirimba Education Precinct. It houses Western Sydney University, the TAFE and the school, and is also up for sale. The member for Mount Druitt may be worried—I know Blacktown City Council is—about Federation Forest's sports ground, the home of Minchinbury's Rugby League team, where we just spent about \$8 million, being now listed for sale. Plenty of land around Plumpton High School has also been identified for sale. The member for Londonderry would see that in Shanes Park something like 107,000 square metres of land is for sale and that Riverstone Cemetery has just been put up for sale. I know the sports Minister is in the Chamber. The Hills Sports High School is putting its pool up for sale, which is the only pool for water polo in the area. In Blacktown we have for sale the Doonside high school and Nurragingy Reserve, which Blacktown City Council has held onto and put about \$50 million into. What is happening is ridiculous. The Government should be held to account and stop the angst for the people.

LOCAL SPORT GRANT PROGRAM

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:26): I note that our sports Minister is in the ministerial chair. I thank him for all his hard work and support for sport in New South Wales. That is particularly appropriate because tonight I acknowledge the latest recipients of the Local Sport Grant Program in my electorate of Davidson. The \$4.6 million Local Sport Grant Program is one of the New South Wales Government's many initiatives to encourage healthy physical activity and community connection in our local areas. Lindfield Rollers Bowling Club has been granted \$15,000 to upgrade and replace sunshades. The Lindfield Rollers are keen bowlers, and the existing sunshades were badly worn after years of duty in the Australian sun. The club's president, Roger Parks, and its grants officer, Arnold Green, were delighted. They and their members will be able to continue to pursue their favourite sport while staying safe from the sun.

As some members would be aware, I enjoy playing tennis. I was pleased to see a local sport grant of \$4,448 go to Lindfield Tennis Club to help to resurface the grass courts. I know the club is grateful for the opportunity to improve this local facility, which I look forward to experiencing at some stage in the future. I am a member of a different club. It was smiles all round when Roseville District Cricket Club's members heard about their success in securing a \$15,000 grant for facility development. The club's secretary, Isaac Williams, was incredibly pleased, as the money will allow a long-overdue upgrade of the cricket nets at heavily used Roseville Chase Oval. Cricket has a wide appeal, and a \$2,000 grant to promote multicultural awareness has also hit the right spot for Sydney United Sports Club.

Rugby Union selectors would be well advised to keep an eye out for future stars from the Davidson electorate, with a number of local junior Rugby clubs awarded funding, which will nurture younger players. Some might say we need them in New South Wales at the moment. The Northern Saints Rugby club in St Ives will be using its \$5,000 grant from the Local Sport Grant Program to upgrade training equipment. Lindfield Junior Rugby Club will target improved participation of girls, with a \$3,900 grant. The club's president, Sandy Basten, is passionate about increasing diversity and was happy to know that the club can now provide jerseys for female teams. Gordon Junior Rugby Club has secured a \$5,000 grant for the Gordon Festival of Rugby. Finally, St Ives Junior Rugby Club is developing the capabilities of coaches with a \$2,000 grant. Other football codes have not been forgotten, with a \$5,000 grant to St Ives Junior Australian Football League Club for the purchase of a mobile scoreboard at St Ives Village Green.

I commend all the program's recipients for their valuable service in my local community with their sporting endeavours, particularly in encouraging individuals to actively participate in sport. I finish with an inspirational quote from someone who may be the greatest basketballer of all time, Michael Jordan. He said:

I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.

TEACHER SALARIES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:30): Last year, as lockdowns designed to combat the spread of COVID-19 changed the face of our State, our teachers were thrown in the deep end. Transitioning to online lesson delivery involved, for many, an enormous learning curve and was incredibly stressful. Our teachers rose to the occasion and did everything they could to ensure that students were able to continue valuable learning. That is not surprising; it is what our teachers do. Under-resourced and underpaid, they have long been accustomed to the art of improvisation when it comes to teaching the children of this State.

Our teachers are used to change. As the report from the Valuing the Teaching Profession inquiry, chaired by Dr Geoff Gallop, noted, despite dramatic organisational and policy change affecting schools and systemic underpayment, the dedication and commitment of teachers in New South Wales has remained high. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has represented merely the latest hurdle teachers across the State have had to clear. This Government chose to repay its commitment and ingenuity by withholding a modest scheduled pay rise. The Gallop report spells out the problem in no uncertain terms:

... we have seen significant (and still ongoing) increases in the volume and complexity of work generated by government decisions and heavily influenced by the social, economic and technological environment.

Many factors are driving the intensity of teachers' work: constant policy changes; significant increases in students' needs; rapid technological changes; an ever-expanding and constantly changing curriculum; new responsibilities for compliance, administration, data collection and reporting; and higher community expectations of what schools and teachers are trained and equipped to do. When I recently met with the Lake Macquarie Teachers Association, the associates brought up a range of issues, but a common theme emerged: Teachers are simply not paid enough for the work they already do, and more and more work is being piled on. What is more, schools and teachers are not resourced enough to help to deal with the challenges confronting their students. The local teachers with whom I met talked about the increasing number of children in out-of-home care over recent years. Those students have often had challenging childhoods and often have complex needs. They have individual education plans, but teachers are not being provided the resources they need to give those students the support they deserve.

The Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, which stripped away specialist support services for teachers, has led to an increase in precarious employment since it was implemented in 2012. On top of that, many teachers are being forced to work outside their specialty. That means we have geography teachers teaching maths, science teachers teaching history, and the result is that students are losing out because of inadequate staffing. Teachers are now expected and want to sit on cross-faculty committees, which are great tools for improving communication and problem-solving within a school. But doing so adds to their already staggering workload and it is extra work for which they are not compensated. The National Education Standards Authority accreditation has become a

burden on teachers, particularly those who work on a casual basis and are responsible for organising and funding the professional development required to keep them working.

All of this, combined with the fundamental underlying issue of salaries—which are declining rapidly when compared with other professions—is driving many away from the teaching profession. No-one becomes a teacher to get rich—and I am sure you know that, Madam Temporary Speaker—but the profession has challenges attracting the best and brightest because the remuneration being offered is nothing short of dismal. Not that long ago there was a 10-year waiting list to secure a permanent teaching position at public schools in the Charlestown electorate. Now schools are struggling to attract and retain qualified teachers.

Our teachers are dedicated and hardworking, but even the most idealistic young people thinking about a career in teaching are facing the cold arithmetic of a high-stress, underappreciated job with inadequate pay. They are reaching an inescapable conclusion: It is just not worth it. As the Gallop report points out, "the scale and intensity of change experienced by the public school teaching profession in NSW ... dwarfs the findings in each of the previous" work value cases, all of which resulted in significant salary increases. I urge this Government to carefully consider all of the recommendations of the Gallop inquiry. Our teachers do so much; they deserve to be fairly compensated for and supported in their vital work.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:35): Seniors in our community often lead the way as role models, carers and volunteers. For over 60 years, New South Wales has held the Seniors Festival, the largest festival for seniors in the Southern Hemisphere. The festival is a chance to celebrate the positive impact our senior population has on our families and wider community. Locally, it was a delight to show respect for and highlight seniors who have made an outstanding contribution to Ku-ring-gai. I acknowledge the following recipients of the 2021 Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. I congratulate Judith Clift, Julie Sing, Christine Pittard, Ann Warr, Frances Forrest and Jacqueline Brooks, all of whom volunteer at KNC, formerly known as Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre. These outstanding women received a Local Achievement Award for their commitment and enthusiasm in providing continued support to KNC's clients. As we are all aware, 2020 was a difficult year and at KNC they had to implement many new and creative ways to keep the community connected to support our vulnerable. From the "shop by list" service to friendly phone calls, these volunteers made a tremendous difference to the lives of many.

Recently I had the opportunity to personally congratulate Ku-ring-gai Netball Association's [KNA] Berwyn Collings and Brenda Williams and present them with their award certificates. After 40 years of service to netball, Berwyn is a life member of the association. She is extremely proactive in all sectors of the sport and, after 26 years as an executive member, was awarded KNA's prestigious Hall of Fame award. Brenda is KNA's patron, a mentor for its umpires and a former Ku-ring-gai Woman of the Year. She tirelessly gives her time to administrative roles and has been integral in ensuring the success of the association's programs and in encouraging young people to play sport.

There has been a real emphasis on online engagement for seniors over the past year, so I congratulate Dorothy Soper, who volunteers at Computer Pals for Seniors in Turrumurra [CPST]. Dorothy's work at CPST is of tremendous help to seniors in our community. Not only does she provide individual sessions but she also teaches clients about computer technology so that they can communicate with their families and friends. Dorothy is a worthy recipient, as staying connected is pivotal to our wellbeing.

Dick Babb and Anita Bruce received awards for their outstanding contribution to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. Dick played an important role in setting up the shelter in an advisory and board capacity and for the past six years has been an active volunteer. More recently Dick has been the shelter's volunteer coordinator for the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic, which donates significant funds to the shelter. Always on call to help, Dick assists with maintenance—regularly changing light bulbs and putting door locks on wardrobes, and he even painted the outdoor deck. His tireless efforts, loyalty and commitment to help others do not go unnoticed. Congratulations to Dick. Anita has been a volunteer at the shelter since it was established in 2015. Since that time she has coordinated lawn mowing groups, maintaining the property as well as coordinating all donation inquiries that are received. Many women who arrive at the shelter often have limited personal and/or financial resources. Anita makes sure their needs are met, turning the shelter from a house into a home. Anita is a deserving recipient, committed to improving the lives of vulnerable women in our community.

I commend Peter Sadler, who has been a volunteer with Easy Care Gardening Inc. [ECG] since 2006, serving the community as a team leader. Peter has clocked up over 651 days of gardening and 2,180 hours, helping the elderly and frail by maintaining their gardens so that they can remain at home, living independently. Peter cares deeply about the welfare of both clients and volunteers and I congratulate him on this well-deserved honour. During a recent meet and greet with volunteers from ECG, I did not get the opportunity to present Peter with his

certificate, but I thank everyone involved in this fantastic local community group. Ku-ring-gai's 12 recipients of the 2021 Local Achievement Awards showcase the qualities of our local seniors and I congratulate and thank them for their generous contributions that benefit our local community on a daily basis.

Additionally, four local organisations were awarded grants under the New South Wales Government's Seniors Festival Grants program. DCaf Connections Social Cafe, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport, Easy Care Gardening and Ku-ring-gai Council shared over \$5,500, which assisted our local organisations to host events that provide opportunities for seniors in our area to get out into the community and be social, happy and active. I dropped by the Warrawee Bowling Club to take part in the DCaf Connections community morning to celebrate the NSW Seniors Festival. It was a beautiful day; we played some croquet and lawn bowls and it was a wonderful day. I thank our wonderful seniors.

WAGE INEQUALITY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:40): In Australia the principle of equal pay for equal work was introduced in 1969, and anti-discrimination on the basis of sex was legislated in 1984. Despite this legislation, the difference between weekly average full-time earnings rose over the past two decades, going from a low of 14.9 per cent in 2004 to a high of 18.9 per cent in 2015. The pay gap has since returned to 14.1 per cent, which is potentially the result of two newer pieces of legislation: the Workplace Gender Equality Act of 2012 and the Fair Work Act of 2009. Some labour organisations and researchers have criticised these Acts for containing significant limitations that hamper their effectiveness. In a 2015 paper in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, two labour market experts argued that the Government's "wavering political commitment to equality legislation generally suggests gender pay inequity will remain a persistent feature of Australian employment".

A report commissioned by the Australian Government in 2016 found that sex discrimination was the leading driver of Australia's gender pay gap, followed by longer interruptions in work-life balance for women, and industry and occupational segregation. Until 1969, legislation allowed employers to pay women a minimum rate of pay that was 25 per cent less than male employees doing the same or similar work. In 1969 the first Federal equal pay cases established the principle that where women perform equal work alongside men they should receive equal pay—referred to as "equal pay for equal work". Importantly, however, equal pay was not applicable "where the work in question is essentially or usually performed by females but is work upon which male employees may also be employed".

By 1972 only 18 per cent of women workers, mostly teachers and nurses, had received the benefit of the decision. In 1972 the second Federal equal pay case widened the 1969 principle to equal pay for work of equal value, in line with the International Labour Organisation's Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951. This meant that women were awarded the same rate of pay as men no matter what work they were doing, as long as it was assessed as comparable in value. Some employers sought to avoid paying equal pay by reclassifying women's jobs onto a lower scale to those of men in similar work—nothing much has changed. New South Wales was the first Australian industrial jurisdiction to legislate for equal pay in the Female Rates (Amendment) Act in 1958. In 2000 the NSW Industrial Relations Commission created Australia's first Equal Remuneration Principle [ERP]. The principle provides an avenue for unions to seek redress where they believe work has been undervalued on a gender basis.

In 2002 the Full Bench of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission fully ratified the Crown Employees (Librarians, Library Assistants, Library Technicians and Archivists) Award 2002, which incorporated pay increases of up to 26 per cent. The Commonwealth Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986 was enacted to improve equity in the Australian workforce and establish the Affirmative Action Agency. It aimed to promote equal opportunity for women in employment and eliminate discrimination by the employer against women. In 1999 the agency was changed to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency to administer the Commonwealth Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999.

In 2009 an Australian House of Representatives pay equity report called on the Commonwealth Government to elevate pay equity to be a clear objective of modern awards and recommended the establishment of a Federal pay equity unit and the conducting of mandatory pay equity audits for companies with 100 employees or more. In 2012, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 was replaced by the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, which included the creation of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. This agency is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

In 2010 Australian females represented 50.2 per cent of the Australian population and 45.3 per cent of the workforce. Trends within the Australian labour force have female workforce participants increasingly more educated than their male counterparts, with more females completing year 12 and going on to university than males. In 2008, females made up 55 per cent of students enrolled in Australian tertiary institutions. Currently Australia's national gender pay gap is 13.4 per cent, a little lower than it was in 2012. At November 2020 women's

average weekly ordinary full-time earnings across all industries and occupations was \$1,562. Despite all that has been done and talked about the gender pay gap persistence in Australia, nothing much has changed.

ROTARY CLUBS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:46): Last week this House congratulated the Rotary Club of Sydney for its centenary. I take this opportunity to also acknowledge all the Rotary clubs across New South Wales for their efforts in humanitarian projects to improve the lives of others in our communities. Their mission is:

To provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through our fellowship of business, professional and community leaders.

On many occasions, I have been invited to attend events of Rotary clubs across my electorate including Goulburn, Yass and Boorowa. Each of those clubs is unique. Although Rotary clubs are grounded in the same values, no two are the same because each community has its own unique needs. I have seen firsthand some of the amazing work those organisations do, particularly in our regional communities that often have differing challenges to those of their metropolitan counterparts. In Boorowa, for example, the Boorowa Community Op Shop is a rare treasure for the town, staffed by volunteers and backed by Boorowa Rotary.

Almost \$60,000 has been given away over the first three years of operating the shop and it appears this fourth year they may be able to share upwards of \$25,000 with the community. Those funds go directly back into the local community, including the early education centre, hospital auxiliary, Lions Club, Rural Fire Service, the Men's Den and St Vincent de Paul. Each volunteer nominates a charity and funds are distributed to their nominated charity based on the percentage of total hours they have worked. It is a great system and has had some great outcomes for the Boorowa community, considering it had been organised through the Rotary champions because a major charity had pulled out of the town, a fantastic result for the community.

In Goulburn, amongst many other local community projects, the Rotary Club of Goulburn is responsible for the infamous Goulburn Rotary Swap Meet. This is one of the largest swap meets in Australia and has been operating for 31 years although, as with most events, was recently delayed due to the pandemic. The group has adapted to the times, including adapting a new booking system to ensure COVID-safe compliance and a successful event. The significance of this event on the Goulburn social calendar is not to be underestimated, bringing many out-of-towners to Goulburn for the day, not to mention the tens of thousands of dollars raised to contribute to the various local charities and projects. Goulburn Rotary is also behind Goulburn Parkside Community Markets, generally held on the second Saturday of every month and much loved by the community.

Rotary started in Goulburn in 1930, only the second inland club after Canberra. In September last year Goulburn merged three local Rotary clubs into one to pool resources and their membership base in order to better serve the needs of the community. The Rotary Club of Goulburn was also to celebrate its ninetieth anniversary last year but, again due to the pandemic, celebrations were delayed. I take the opportunity now to wish them a happy anniversary and to thank them for all their efforts in the Goulburn community. I say to them: The efforts of your volunteers is outstanding and your community thanks you.

The Rotary Club of Yass is no different. Recently I attended one of their meetings to meet with them and talk to them about their many community projects and how we as a government can possibly assist them moving forward. It was great to be able to meet thank them all for the work they do in person. As members of this House, we all support the many Rotary clubs across the State. The New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International group is a testament to this. I publicly thank each of the Rotary club organisations across New South Wales, but particularly those in my electorate. I know the great work that they do for our communities is so very much appreciated.

Community Recognition Statements

ELVA KEENAN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:51): Most people do not spend half a century at high school, but Elva Keenan has achieved that milestone by notching up 50 years of service as cleaner at Newcastle High School. Elva began at the school when she was 26 years old. She has seen it become co-ed and grow to 1,200 students. She even lived on the school grounds for seven years during the nineties. Elva is not just a stalwart of the school community though. As a cleaner she is also a frontline worker who stepped up during the COVID-19 pandemic. The efforts of Elva and her colleagues kept our schools operational and kept the students safe. Congratulations, Elva, on 50 years of dedication and hard work. Your commitment has not gone unnoticed.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): School cleaners are great. My mum was a school cleaner for 30 years and she is very—mum.

COAST SHELTER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:52): Recently Coast Shelter, a not-for-profit accommodation and support service, appointed two new board members, Troy Marchant and Claire Braund. Troy Marchant is a banking and finance executive who shares Coast Shelter's vision of ending homelessness and domestic and family violence on the Central Coast. Troy is a director and chartered accountant at AdviceCo., a leading firm on the Central Coast. He has expertise in small business tax and accounting, including business structuring, tax debt management and accounting technology. He also has expertise in business coaching services including identifying and driving key growth strategies, board engagement and staff motivation. I am sure that this large knowledge base as well as Troy's community mindedness and natural leadership will be highly beneficial to Coast Shelter. Troy also has a vested interest in the local Central Coast area as a born and bred "Coastie" and a desire to use his global experience to bring the best information, systems and opportunities into the local area. I congratulate Troy on his appointment to the board of Coast Shelter and look forward to seeing his refreshing approach, expertise and ideas.

WILSONS RIVER LANDCARE GROUP

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:53): I congratulate the Wilsons River Landcare Group, which has been successful for the third time in gaining NSW Environmental Trust funding to work with six schools to plant 6,000 trees, creating links across the Wilsons River corridor in Lismore and Tucki Tucki Creek in Goonellabah. The project is being delivered in partnership with Wilsons River Landcare; Richmond Landcare Incorporated; Lismore City Council; Rous water; Envite, a team of local bush regenerators; and six schools including Trinity Catholic College, Richmond River High School, Woodlawn College, St Carthage's Primary School and Albert Park Public School. Kadina High School is involved with a planting on Tucki Tucki Creek in Goonellabah. I commend project coordinator Georgina Rose, regional Landcare facilitator Hannah Rice-Hayes, partnerships manager Dr Kristin den Exter and all the school students involved for being active in protecting the health of our river.

MACKILLOP FAMILY SERVICES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:54): I recognise the outstanding commitment and contribution to the Goulburn electorate from MacKillop Family Services and its staff. On Wednesday 3 March I was delighted to host the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services on a visit to the Goulburn electorate. During the Minister's visit we were hosted by MacKillop Family Services to learn about the organisation and the impact it has made locally. MacKillop Family Services provides a suite of evidence-informed programs to support those who have experienced change, loss and trauma. Some highlights include stories from the functional family therapy and intensive therapeutic transitional care programs. We heard and read a number of exceptional stories and heard about the extraordinary achievements of families that have been supported by MacKillop Family Services. I thank everyone in the staff of MacKillop Family Services for everything—their commitment to the families, to the children and to their safety, wellbeing and education. Their roles are pivotal for those many people. I congratulate and thank them.

VESAK DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:55): On Saturday 8 May 2021 the Fairfield community celebrated Vesak Day at Freedom Plaza, Cabramatta. I was joined at this event by my parliamentary colleagues NSW Labor leader Jodi McKay, MP, Tania Mihailuk, MP, and Nick Lalich, MP, and Federal members Chris Hayes, MP, and Anne Stanley, MP. The celebration for Vesak Day is an annual event hosted by the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society [ACBS] and the Prajna Monastery in conjunction with Fairfield City Council. It is an important day for adherents of the Buddhist faith as it marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha. The religious chanting of the ceremony was led by Venerable Thich Phouc Hy, Venerable Shi Bao Yan and Venerable Shi Ming Shang. Guests and community leaders were invited to present the Buddha shrine with gifts of flowers and the traditional bathing of the baby Buddha took place. I acknowledge the President of the ACBS, Mr Vincent Kong, vice-president Mr James Chan, committee members and volunteers for organising this very successful event.

ANDREW AND KATRINA MCINTYRE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:56): I recognise Andrew and Katrina McIntyre of Glen Innes for their participation and prestigious win at the 2021 Royal Easter Show Tentpegging Teams Challenge. As part of the Hunter Valley team, Andrew and Katrina will share the Golden Livermore Lance Perpetual Trophy. Tent-pegging is a highly skilled equestrian competition originating in the military whereby mounted soldiers would ride through the enemy camp removing the tent pegs and confining those within. The modern version is just as fast and precise. It is a pleasure to watch the combined skill of rider and mount. I congratulate Andrew and Katrina on a well-deserved win for the

2021 Royal Easter Show Tentpegging Teams Challenge. I commend Andrew and Katrina for the mammoth effort it took to get themselves and their horses to the show in such a state of preparedness as to win the Golden Livermore Lance Perpetual Trophy.

MARGARET MORGAN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:57): On 20 April Charlestown Caring Group threw a surprise farewell shindig for the amazing Margaret Morgan. Margaret is retiring after many years of service to our community, with 30 years of experience in the aged and disability sectors across a wide variety of roles, including as an assistant in nursing, a dementia unit coordinator, a staff educator and a manager of home and community care. Charlestown Caring Group provides support for the aged, people with a disability and their carers. The staff are supported by dedicated, caring and friendly volunteers, and Margaret has done such a wonderful job heading that team. Margaret has been at Charlestown Caring Group for 11 years and retired on Friday 30 April. She will certainly be missed by staff and clients of Charlestown Caring Group. An example of Margaret's leadership is that even during the height of the pandemic she and her team kept working. They adjusted their model to keep providing the same services with smaller groups of clients over more sessions in order to adhere to social distancing rules. I wish Margaret a long, happy and healthy retirement.

MRS JO HARRIS, OAM

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:58): I congratulate Mrs Jo Harris, OAM, as Ku-ring-gai's Local Woman of the Year for 2021. Jo has made a tremendous contribution to keeping Ku-ring-gai's treasured history alive. Jo has lived in Ku-ring-gai all her life. She grew up in Killara, received her schooling locally in Gordon and raised her children in Wahroonga, where she still resides with her husband, John. In 1999 Jo became a member of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society and for the past 22 years she has actively promoted the local area. More recently, in 2015 she instigated the Exploring Ku-ring-gai Mystery Tour, which I had the pleasure of participating pre-COVID. This is not the first time Jo has been recognised for her community pursuits. In 2005 she was awarded the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's Historian of the Year, in 2008 she was announced Ku-ring-gai Council's Citizen of the Year and in 2017 she received a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Jo has dedicated her time to the community. I congratulate her on her well-deserved honour.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:59): I commend the work of the University of Newcastle in the latest round of QS World University Rankings. The university's standings have improved significantly, particularly in subjects like nursing, which is now ranked thirty-sixth globally. The subject rankings are based on four indicators: academic reputation, employer reputation, citations per paper and the h-index. It is excellent to hear that the thousands of Central Coast residents who undertake studies at the University of Newcastle, whether at the Ourimbah or Callaghan campus, are receiving such an excellent quality of education that places them amongst the best qualified professionals in the world. A total of 1,453 institutions were ranked in the 2021 subject rankings across five broad subjects and 51 specific subject areas. I congratulate all university staff and leadership for this incredible achievement and thank them for their continued efforts in the education sector. I will continue to advocate for State and Federal financial commitment for a University of Newcastle campus in our Gosford town centre.

BRETT SWORDS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:00): I offer a big congratulations to a legend of the Mudgee Wombats Rugby Club, Brett Swords, who recently brought up his 200th game with the club. Brett started playing for the club in the under-13s, but moved away for schooling before returning to the fold in 2001. After apparently retiring in 2012, his games tally sat on 190, but a COVID-shortened season in 2020 inspired him to give it one last crack. As fate would have it, he finished last season stranded on 199 games, so of course he had to go again this year, and he celebrated this big milestone by leading the Batties' second grade side to a last-minute 21-15 win over Parkes. Every sporting club relies on stalwarts like Brett, who has made a major impact on the club over many years. Well done, Brett, on such a major milestone. I hope he can reflect on his career with a smile.

JACK MCBRIDE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:01): Jack McBride is on the ride, cycling from the Central Coast to Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane to raise awareness and funds for brain injury rehabilitation and mental health issues. The trip has been estimated to take under two weeks, travelling approximately 59 kilometres a day. The 23-year-old started the 800 kilometre Ride for Kyle on 28 March in memory of his best mate, whom he sadly lost to suicide in 2019. Jack will also be challenging his own mental health through this journey. A few years back he was injured in a critical accident, leading to six months' rehabilitation. Jack's experience with his carer, Paul, really

made a difference, having a positive impact by improving the quality of Jack's life and allowing him to recognise the confidence to believe in his abilities. Inspired by the quality of care he received by carers, on leaving the Brain Injury Service Unit at Bar Beach, Jack pivoted his career aspirations from construction into mental health caring, completing a Certificate III in Disability Support. I wish Jack all the best on his Ride for Kyle.

QUADRUPLE GIVING DAY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:02): I recognise that Wednesday 19 May is Quadruple Giving Day at the Miracle Babies Foundation, when every donation will be quadrupled for 24 hours. Miracle Babies has its head office in Chipping Norton in the Holsworthy electorate and the organisation is continuing to provide support services and resources to families of premature and sick babies. The quadruple donation day will help the organisation to sustain vital support services for the many families that are impacted by having a premature or sick newborn, not only in my local community but across the State and indeed even across the country. I encourage everyone to save the date and donate on the day to help make a real difference. Each day 132 babies are born requiring specialised care, and these donations will go towards supporting them and their families during this time. I commend Miracle Babies for its continued efforts in providing much-needed support and services to families of premature and sick babies, and I hope Quadruple Giving Day is a success.

CANCER COUNCIL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:03): Recently I met with Ms Denise Daynes and Ms Sinilia Radijevic from the Cancer Council to speak about the Cancer Council's upcoming initiatives of the Biggest Morning Tea and the Fairfield Relay for Life. We also spoke about Cancer Council's new initiative to raise money for men's cancer support services, with the initiative being called the Balls for Balls fundraiser. This particular fundraiser is about getting friends together and playing a ball game. It could be football, baseball or any other game involving a ball. At the same time, teams will be raising money for the Cancer Council to help support men who are affected by cancer. This ball, so to speak, is well and truly rolling in the Fairfield area, with the Marconi Stallions being the frontrunners so far in this project, raising almost \$15,000 to date. Money raised through Balls for Balls will help fund vital research into men's cancer as well as assist to support men with cancer at every stage. The Cancer Council does a fantastic job in raising awareness about cancer prevention as well as providing support services for cancer patients.

RED ROCK MULTI-USE CENTRE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:04): Whatever the weather, Red Rock in my electorate is always a beautiful place to be—just ask the locals. They are enormously proud of their seaside village and the Red Rock Multi-Use Centre in particular. This important facility—a focal point for residents—is in better shape with an \$18,790 State Government grant. The Community Building Partnership program has funded the much-needed repair and replacement of windows, doors and corners of the building damaged by exposure to the elements, and an interior refurbishment. The upgrades will certainly lead to more use of the centre. I know that this is what the leadership team is working to achieve. On behalf of the Red Rock community, I thank the hall committee, president Rose Treilibs, vice-president Mick Johnston, secretary Marilyn Edgar, treasurer Kate Shaw, booking officer John Thompson, community liaison officer Phil Molloy, committee members Teresa Green and Gwyn Austen, OAM, and another passionate local, Tess Wilbe.

GOSFORD UNITING CHURCH

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:05): I congratulate the amazing members of Gosford Uniting Church who have come together to knit clothing for children in war-torn areas. Getting together during morning services, congregants spend time together and knit items made with wool that was donated or purchased by members. Together, church members have knitted over 86 items, including jumpers, cardigans, beanies, mittens, circular scarves and toys. Following a blessing by the lovely Reverend Lorna Martin, these greatly needed items will be donated to the charity Aussies Knitting for War Affected Kids. I encourage community members to get down to Gosford Uniting Church and to learn more about the fantastic volunteering opportunities that are available, including English as a second language groups, playgroups and free community Sunday lunches. It is fantastic to see community members gathering to help individuals in need across our community and the world. I encourage all Coasties to get involved. I also commend everyone involved in the Gosford Uniting family for their absolute commitment to strengthening our community and embracing people from diverse cultural backgrounds who have made the beautiful Central Coast home.

CONNELLS POINT NETBALL CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:06): I congratulate Connells Point Netball Club, which recently received a funding injection thanks to the New South Wales Government. The Local Sport Grant Program has provided Connells Point Netball Club with over \$5,000 in funding to obtain brand new player uniforms. These

new player uniforms are innovative in their design as they provide more inclusive options to accommodate for a broader array of religious, cultural and social preferences. That is fantastic news for players. I thank club president, Julian Finch, and his team for championing these changes and providing greater inclusion for players both on and off the field. This positive change is already being taken up by players as the 2021 season is now underway with high numbers of registrations across all age groups. I thank the entire team for continuing to grow their organisation while promoting inclusion and greater involvement with our local sporting community. Well done to Connells Point Netball Club.

HUNTER VALLEY MARTIAL ARTS CENTRE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:07): Running over four weeks this month, the Hunter Valley Martial Arts Centre Women's Empowerment Program is aiming to help equip local women with the skills they need to stand strong and realise their potential. Aimed at girls aged 14 and over, the program has four key lessons: finding your strength, finding your power and voice, building trust and intuition, and setting and maintaining boundaries. Program leader Kelie Fisher said:

Women's self defence is more than just physical, it's about the way you carry yourself and being able to use your voice ... It's about allowing people to see who they are and to be strong and connect with other people so they can be the best version of themselves. We want to teach the mental and emotional side of self defence.

The program is free this month in celebration of Mother's Day and is being held at five locations across the Hunter, including at the Redhead centre in my electorate. I wish Sensei Fisher and her team all the best in this important work and thank her for providing this program for women.

WEST WYALONG ADVOCATE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:08): The *West Wyalong Advocate* is now back up and running and will be publishing its first edition on Friday 14 May 2021 since closing its doors in December last year. The *West Wyalong Advocate*—previously named *The Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette*—began in the 1900s. Publication ceased in 1928 and it then became the *West Wyalong Advocate*, taking over *The Wyalong Star and Temora and Barmedman Advertiser*. Evolution Mining set up a foundation called the WWA Foundation Ltd, which bought the *West Wyalong Advocate* building and the masthead earlier this year. Evolution Mining then gifted the masthead to the foundation so it could continue the publication of the *West Wyalong Advocate*. It is wonderful that the *West Wyalong Advocate* is back up and running, publishing stories for the citizens of the Cootamundra electorate.

MENAI STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:09): I acknowledge the amazing members of the Menai State Emergency Service Unit, which supported communities impacted by the recent natural disasters in New South Wales and Western Australia. The SES is crucial to our disaster response team. Led by unit commander Peter Carrigan, the Menai unit works hard to protect both our local and national community. From protecting our leafy Sutherland shire to assisting in floodwaters across the regions, the Menai unit works tirelessly to ensure that recovery is possible. In the recent floods members were deployed to the western Sydney river system to provide essential rescue, repair and supplies to isolated communities. I thank Hayden Charles, Hemant Raval, Andrew Short, Bernadete King, Elise Bailley, Michael Holliday and Mark Deacon for their work in responding to the floods and storms around New South Wales. I also acknowledge Anne Davis, who volunteered her time and crucial assistance to the vulnerable communities in Western Australia who were devastated by Cyclone Seroja. I thank the wonderful members of the Menai State Emergency Service Unit for their continued work in protecting our community.

ROTARY CENTENARY TREE PLANTING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:10): On Monday 3 May I attended a Rotary centenary tree-planting initiative open day with representatives from the Rotary Club of Berry. I thank Mr David Brawn and treasurer Bill Seelis for inviting me. In 2021 Rotary clubs in Australia are celebrating 100 years of service to local communities as well as communities around the world. In June 2020 Rotary International announced that it would make supporting the environment one of its main focus areas. The board at the Rotary Club of Berry established an environmental sustainability committee in September 2020.

The club decided to plant 100 trees in the Berry area to commemorate 100 years of service. Schoolchildren from Berry Public School were invited along as well as the Berry preschool to adopt a tree each and have their names on plaques beside their tree. Berry Public School is known for its highly regarded plant propagation unit. I acknowledge its principal, Mr Bob Willetts, and its assistant principal, Jessica Snell, along with driving forces

Lyn and John Clark. I congratulate Berry Rotary on all its outstanding initiatives. I also acknowledge its wonderful president Haseena Tweddle for all her great work, along with her outstanding committee.

BARRY BROOKS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:11): Exhibition of works of local artists is back on in the Fairfield electorate after COVID-19 restrictions put exhibitions on hold for the past year. The current works on display in the Fairfield electorate office are by local artist and naval veteran Mr Barry Brooks. The works' central theme is naval based and the display of these works in the Fairfield electorate office was timed to coincide with recent Anzac Day commemorations. Painted in acrylics, watercolours and with some in oils, the works in this collection reflect naval ships, local scenes, wildlife and the impact of the last bushfires. There is even one of local scenery that is remarkable in its depiction of the finer details and that captures the essence of our local community. The paintings will be displayed in the Fairfield electorate office until the end of May, and I commend Mr Barry Brooks for his skill and dedication to his craft.

LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:12): I congratulate and thank the seven recipients of the Local Achievement Award for their lifelong contributions, remarkable skills and extensive knowledge, which continues to benefit the Central Coast community. Each recipient of the Local Achievement Award was carefully selected from a list of high-calibre nominees and highlights the diverse ways that seniors support their families and the wider community. The seven Local Achievement Award recipients were Donald Anderson, who volunteers at a number of community events and as a Rural Fire Service member; Hazel Atkinson, who provides transport for elderly people to and from doctors' appointments; Ray Crawley, who coordinates all the men's sheds on the Central Coast; Sydney Fabri, who helps other seniors learn to get online; Eric Flood, who visits, supports and cares for widows and children of deceased veterans, and who I point out is well in his 90s now; Jennifer Hartich, who performs a variety of acts of kindness towards animals, the environment and community members on the Central Coast; and John Quigley, who maintains gardens for less mobile seniors.

MASON COLWELL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:13): I congratulate local Woy Woy resident, Mason Colwell, who has won the Young Coach/Official of the Year award from Sport Central Coast. Mason is an exceptional community leader and is fulfilling his duties as director of referees at Peninsula Touch Association diligently—not to mention that he is only 20 years old. Mason also represents the Peninsula Touch Association at regional and State tournaments as a referee. He has earned his level six referee badge, which allows him to officiate at regional, State, national and even international tournaments. That is a tremendous achievement. In June Mason will be officiating the New South Wales State of Origin touch football squad as they go up against the Queensland team. I wish him good luck and I am confident he will deliver fair and reasonable assessments. I encourage any young person considering getting involved in local sport to do it. You never know the opportunities that will come from it. I look forward to watching Mason Colwell's flourishing career over the coming years. Well done and I thank Mason ever so much.

MOOREBANK SQUADRON AIR LEAGUE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:14): I recognise the Australian Air League Moorebank Squadron for performing and marching at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. They rehearsed and practised for months in the lead-up to the show and I know the members put in a lot of effort and hard work to ensure the performance went smoothly. I give credit to their dedication as they also took time out from their school holidays to rehearse. They played some iconic Australian songs such as *I Am Australian* and *Waltzing Matilda* during their parade, which was in front of the largest crowd they had ever performed for. I know it would have been enjoyed by all. The Moorebank Squadron is a youth organisation that promotes good citizenship and encourages boys aged eight and upwards to get involved in some great opportunities. I have had a lot to do with the Moorebank Squadron over the years, so it is always fabulous to see their success at events like this. Once again I congratulate the Australian Air League Moorebank Squadron on their successful Sydney Royal Easter Show performance this year.

ALKESAA ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:15): The Alkesaa Association of NSW held its 2021 Iftar dinner at Damas Restaurant at Fairfield Heights with its committee members and community leaders on Thursday 29 April. The event was hosted by youth comperes from the association, and I was delighted to join in with local religious leaders and officers from the Fairfield City Police Area Command to break the fast. The Alkesaa Association of NSW works towards social harmony, interfaith dialogue and support for local businesses. I commend President

Mr Maher Alhassany and the committee for organising the Iftar dinner and congratulate them on a very successful event.

MOREE CLAY TARGET CLUB

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (20:16): I recognise the Moree Clay Target Club for hosting the NSW Clay Target Association Western Zone Ball Trap Championship at the Black Soil Plains Easter Trap Carnival. The very successful three-day event brought tourists from 23 clubs from as far as Cobar and the Gold Coast. Clay target shooting is a popular sporting activity. Those who participate also assist in the safe handling and use of firearms and provide an outlet for healthy community interaction. After a year of COVID restrictions, the club members went all out to provide a well-organised three full days that everyone will remember as a great event. I congratulate Moree participants Brian Kneipp, Richard Shelton, Blake Schwartz, Andrew Vanderstok, David Lemmon, Anne Johnston, Grant Lowien, Dimity Hook and Theresa Montgomery. I congratulate Guyra participants Jeff Richardson, Tom Piddington, John Reid, Jodie Henshall and Brad Henshall. I commend the Moree Clay Target Club for its contribution to the Moree Plains community and to sport.

OYSTER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:16): I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Oyster Bay Public School on their appointment. Oyster Bay Public School, established in 1944, is a wonderful community. Its students and staff pride themselves on their core values of respect, acceptance, compassion, happiness, a fair go and loyalty. It is home to over 430 students, and the exceptional staff nurture the talents and unique voice of each child through their student programs. There is no better example of this unique voice than the stand-out student-led parliament, which encourages students to participate in and vote on policy motions and caucus meetings. The 2021 leadership team is a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Oyster Bay Public School. I congratulate Prime Minister Owen Fulton, Deputy Prime Minister Brook Carroll and Speaker of the House Bradley Daniels on their successful appointments. Those 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 the student leaders at Oyster Bay Public School and look forward to seeing them excel.

MYLES DIXON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:17): I extend my congratulations to Hennessy Catholic College student Myles Dixon. Myles has been accepted to sail on the *Young Endeavour*, under a program known as the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme. Over the course of an 11-day voyage, youth aged between 16 and 23 learn the skills necessary to sail a ship. The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme is structured in three phases: a crisis phase, a transition phase and an arrival phase. Myles is one of 24 young citizens to embark on this voyage. The young citizens are joined by the Youth Crew and nine specially trained Royal Australian Navy crew members. It is a wonderful achievement for Myles to be accepted into this program where he will learn valuable interpersonal, leadership and teamwork skills. I congratulate Myles and wish him all the very best of luck on his voyage.

LIVE LIFE GET ACTIVE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:18): I recently announced funding for Live Life Get Active, which is supporting a healthier, happier and more connected Shoalhaven community. I was pleased to secure funding under round three of the New South Wales Government's Stronger Communities Fund for the initiative, which brings people together to promote healthy lifestyles, to improve diets and to increase social connection amongst young people. Live Life Get Active is a health promotion charity that addresses chronic health issues facing communities and particularly young people, an important part of which is improving mental health.

Live Life Get Active encourages social connection by bringing people together, building confidence and providing a sense of belonging in a welcoming environment. The aim is to get people moving and having fun in a group in a local park or reserve, as well as helping them to better understand their health issues and lifestyle behaviours and to review how they eat. The organisation is soon to launch a mental health offering that will tie into its health and fitness programs. I acknowledge and thank Live Life Get Active CEO Amanda King for inviting me to the official launch at Thurgate Oval in Bomaderry, as well as her amazing team of locals who are making this happen.

*Community Recognition Notices***ICPA ANNUAL RAMADAN DINNER**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I had the pleasure of attending the Islamic Charity Projects Association's [ICPA] 27th Annual Ramadan Dinner on 16 April 2021 at Al Amanah College. The ICPA was established in 1989, with the mission to unite diverse communities and facilitate a voice for Australian Muslims. The organisation provides valuable support and essential services to individuals of the Islamic faith, and the wider community. The organisation has helped create several respectable educational and media institutions in our local community, along with opening welfare groups for women and youth. Throughout its 32-year history, the ICPA has organised several monumental cultural and religious events for its many members. I have enjoyed attending its Annual Ramadan Dinners throughout the years, which commemorate the holy month of fasting and praying for individuals of the Islamic Faith. This month is a wonderful time for those practising to deepen their connection to their faith while connecting with their family and friends. I take this opportunity to thank ICPA President Mohammed Mehio, Manager Mohamad Thams, Treasurer Bilal Homaysi, Secretary Ziad Eldaoud and the entire Executive for their warm hospitality. I wish all those observing Ramadan in my Electorate a happy and blessed Ramadan Kareem.

BANKSTOWN SPORTS ATHLETICS CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It was pleasure to visit the Bankstown Sports Athletics Club [BSAC] on 29 March 2021 at their home ground at The Crest Athletics Complex in Bass Hill, where I had the opportunity to view the Club's newly installed gymnasium. The Bankstown Sports Athletics Club has been a well-respected sporting group in the Bankstown Local Government Area since its formation, with the Club now boasting a membership of close to 500 athletes. In 2019, BSAC successfully applied for a Community Building Partnership [CBP] grant of \$20,000 to refurbish its senior athletics clubhouse and install a strength and conditioning gymnasium to help its athletes with their training. I was pleased to support the Bankstown Sports Athletics Club in securing this funding. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Club's President Colin Whitbread, Vice Presidents Lindsay Watson and Richard Kolodziej, Secretary Matthew Whitbread, and Treasurer Margaret Re, as well as the entire Executive, and commend them for their efforts in securing this grant and overseeing its implementation. I wish all the coaches, players, trainers, and all the volunteers a successful 2021 season!

CRONULLA POLAR BEARS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—The Cronulla Polar Bears Winter Swimming Club recently launched its 2021 winter swimming season with the traditional Bate Bay swim. The club, founded in 1953, has a long history in the Sutherland Shire. 12 times between 1976 and 2015 the Polar Bears have been Australian Winter Swimming Champions. Being involved in sport isn't just about physical wellbeing, but also social and emotional wellbeing. The club gives its members an important sense of community and belonging. They enjoy a laugh, take care of one another, and give back to their community. Cronulla Polar Bears supports organisations like Bears of Hope (which supports families who have experienced the loss of their baby) and Kookaburra Kids. I thank Paul Damkjaer and Club President Scott Simmons for inviting me along for the season kick-off and congratulate all members on their club's fine legacy.

JOY BURNS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Grays Point resident Joy Burns, who was a finalist in the 2021 Cronulla Local Senior of the Year Awards. Joy is an outstanding volunteer, giving up her time each month to work in the canteen at Grays Point Public School – the school her children and grandchildren attended. She has now been a volunteer at the school for more than 15 years. Despite Joy's youngest grandchild having recently graduated from university, she continues to do her little bit to support the school that has been such a big part of her family's lives. In addition, Joy has volunteered her time to assist frail elderly people in need of companionship. She supported two ladies for more than ten years, regularly taking them shopping and visiting them every week when they entered full-time care. Joy is a fine role model whose kindness is admired by many in the community. It was a pleasure to recognise her generous efforts.

INAUGURAL KU-RING-GAI HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge Ku-ring-gai Council for their initiative in creating the inaugural Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival, which runs from 18 April to 19 May across my electorate of Davidson and the neighbouring electorate of Ku-ring-gai. The Heritage Festival contains a diverse range of interesting and informative events encompassing the rich history of the Ku-ring-gai Council area. They include natural history

walks, an indigenous presentation and guided tour of the wonderful Wildflower Garden in St Ives, architectural heritage tours (including the iconic Rose Seidler House), photographic exhibitions and Mother's Day celebrations as well as live music from local musicians at Eryldene Historic House and garden. There is even a parade of fashions from the swinging sixties for those who remember the age of the mini skirt and an online tour of the only cemetery in Ku-ring-gai, where many of the district's founding fathers have their final resting place. I commend Ku-ring-gai Council and all those involved on this initiative.

QUEEN SCOUT RECIPIENTS – 2ND GORDON VENTURER SCOUTS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge the Scouting Movement in Australia for their commitment to developing leadership skills in the young men and women of our community. Specifically, I recognise the 2nd Gordon Venturer Unit in my electorate of Davidson, who are holding their Queen Scout Awards ceremony on 29 May to celebrate the achievements of their 2019 Queen Scout recipients. A Queen Scout has demonstrated outstanding skills in Leadership Development, Personal Growth, Outdoor Activities and Community Involvement and is the highest award given in the Scouting movement. Accordingly, I commend the dedication and efforts of Tim Gibson, Emma Partis, Tim Taylor, Milly Raffle, Justin Du Pre Le Roux and Matt Hargreaves of the 2nd Gordon Venturer Unit, who will be honoured with the Queen Scout Awards this month.

CRAIG SHANAHAN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge St Clair resident, Craig Shanahan who recently opened his own shop, The Blind Chef Café and Dessert Bar on High Street in Penrith. Craig is an outstanding young man who has faced many challenges from a young age. At just two years old, Craig was diagnosed with a malignant tumour behind his left eye. At 15 years old, he went on to study as an apprentice chef and became qualified after completing his studies. At 23 years old, a meningioma brain tumour was found which caused him to lose his sight, deeming him legally blind. Yet, Craig did not let this stop him from achieving his dreams of owning his own shop. He went on to complete several management diplomas, registered his business and opened his own café. Craig officially opened his business in April this year and has had a large wave of support from family, friends and the local community. Congratulations Craig on achieving your lifelong dream, you continue to inspire us all to pursue our goals. I wish you all the best for your business and can't wait to hear of your next big success!

GRACE LEE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to congratulate local resident, Grace Lee on her incredible accomplishments at the Peter O'Malley Junior Masters golf tournament. In March this year, Grace was one of four Western Sydney resident who performed exceptionally well at this tournament held at the Bathurst Golf Club. Grace shot a thirteen-over score of 157 to finish 3rd in the '16 years and over' Girls Division and tied for 9th in the overall competition. Grace is a member of the Glenmore Park Heritage Valley Golf Club and has represented the club in a variety of competitions. Her passion and dedication to the sport has made her a great competitor to other golf clubs across NSW. Well done Grace on all of the hard work you have put into developing your skills in golf. I truly wish you all the best for your future and look forward to hearing of your next great achievement. Congratulations!

ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the work of St Brigid's Catholic College and St Ives Rotary Club in tackling youth fatalities on our roads. After the deaths of four local boys, the St Ives Rotary Club helped create the Road Safety Youth Driver Awareness education program. The program visits local schools and provides practical demonstrations, as well as talks from Police officers and crash survivors. The program recently visited St Brigid's Catholic College to help educate students about road safety. Lessons focused on different factors present in youth car accidents such as speeding, drugs and alcohol, distracted driving, seatbelts and fatigue. Students were also shown live demonstrations of braking distances under different conditions. Tragically, we lose far too many young people on our roads and we must do more to tackle this issue. I thank St Brigid's Catholic College and all those associated with the Road Safety Youth Driver Awareness education program, for the fantastic work they are doing in helping to tackle this problem.

GREATER BANK 75 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the community work of the Greater Bank as part of its 75 year anniversary. The Bank has teamed up with local community members to plant 75,000 trees across its area of operation. This includes in suburbs such as Gwandalan in the Swansea electorate. The tree planting initiative will help restoration efforts after storms and flooding damaged the local environment. A focus has been placed on planting trees, shrubs and grasses local to the area. The Central Coast community is passionate about protecting its local environment, and several local organisations have engaged in environmental restoration

projects. I would like to thank the local community volunteers who have participated in this program and helped preserve our natural environment.

BANKSIA PROJECT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise the Banksia Project, a volunteer-led, community-based mental health program. The Banksia Project provide two key programs; Growth Rooms - supportive mental health community networks, and, Garden Rooms - quarterly events which invite the public to hear from respected profiles and leaders on a range of different mental health topics. The Banksia Project's trained facilitators are local volunteers who put their hand up to support their own community by leading peer-based Growth Rooms. Rather than providing an external professional to facilitate community support, Banksia Project upskill the community to support one another. Facilitators are trained in Mental Health First Aid and to identify risks and mental health challenges in individuals. Facilitators work in pairs to run a dedicated Growth Room, whilst having on-call support from a clinical psychologist to ensure there are clear referral pathways for those in need. I commend the initiatives of volunteer facilitators, Brad Kane and Aidan Keough, who started a Growth Room at Orange in April 2019. 17 men have now participated in the Orange Growth Room. A total of 38 participants from across the Central West have now participated in monthly programs hosted at both Orange and Dubbo. Congratulations, Brad and Aidan.

CANOWINDRA FUNDRAISING

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise the community and sporting groups of Canowindra, who have united to raise funding for the Canowindra Hospital Auxiliary. Canowindra is a traditional country community, and one which comes together for the benefit of the community as a whole. This spirit is exemplified with recent fundraising efforts from the local golf, rugby league and bowling clubs to benefit the Canowindra Hospital's Auxiliary. Social and sporting activities have been curtailed over the past year as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, which have been an impediment to fundraising efforts for Canowindra Hospital's Auxiliary. In spite of these challenges, community activity has returned and is revitalised with sporting and social activity, such as the recent Canowindra Bowls' Health Service Cup fundraising event hosted at the Canowindra Bowling Club. The bowl's effort fundraised \$1,600, which has since been presented to a grateful Canowindra Hospital Auxiliary, will now deliberate on the Hospital's priorities in where this and other locally raised funds will be directed. I congratulate the community of Canowindra for its spirit and generosity, and to the Canowindra Hospital Auxiliary for their ongoing efforts in equipping and improving hospital services. Well done to all of those involved in this fundraising effort.

KOORI MAIL TURNS 30 AS LISMORE HOSTS CONVERGE CONFERENCE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate The Koori Mail newspaper on its 30th anniversary and for last week jointly hosting with First Nations Media Australia the national Converge conference in Lismore. The Koori Mail was established in 1991 by Owen Carriage and other local Aboriginal people. The paper is 100 per cent Aboriginal owned by five co-operatives—Nungera (Maclean), Bundjalung Tribal Society (Lismore), Kurrachee (Coraki), Buyinbin (Casino) and Bunjum (Cabbage Tree Island). Its board members are Chair Trevor Kapeen, Ron Randall, Tracey King, Lawrence Roberts and Janice Kapeen. General Manager Naomi Moran, who at 15 was a Koori Mail trainee, returned as GM in 2016 after numerous roles in media, training and education. She is Deputy Chair of First Nations Media. Other staff include Editor Rudi Maxwell, Chris Costello, Stuart Corlett, Jacki Oliver, Catherine Hunt, Darren Moncrieff, Darren Coyne, Danny Teece-Johnson, Nick Paton, Kirk Page, and school-based trainees Tanayah Harley, Natoka Brown and Aliya King. A record 200-plus delegates from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media organisations around the country attended Converge over four days. Converge's keynote speaker was Rhoda Roberts, whose father Frank Roberts Junior was a driving force behind starting The Koori Mail.

MOUNTAIN BLUE NEW OWNERS OF HISTORIC CHAUVEL PARK HOMESTEAD, TABULAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I am delighted that local blueberry enterprise Mountain Blue, owned by the Bell family, has purchased Tabulam's historic Chauvel Park homestead with a philanthropic view to preserving it for future generations. Chauvel Park is the birthplace of one of Australia's most outstanding military leaders, General Sir Harry Chauvel GCMG KCB, who was born at Tabulam in 1865 and lived at Tabulam Station for 23 years. Sir Harry founded the Australian Light Horse, which won international fame at the Charge of Beersheba during World War One. Andrew Bell tells me his family will undertake improvements to the homestead and its grounds before working with the Tabulam/Jubullum Regional History Association to progress an historical tourism precinct. The Association, whose membership is drawn from Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of Tabulam, has plans for Chauvel Park to become a key tourism attraction on a proposed Australian Light Horse trail across the Northern River and Northern Tablelands regions. Jill Adam, Poppy Harry Walker and others are

keen to establish a Chauvel Museum and an Indigenous Cultural Centre on the property, and for a span of the now dismantled Tabulam Truss Bridge to be relocated there.

MILESTONE OF CAMPBELLTOWN HOSPITAL

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The \$632 million Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment has reached a major construction milestone, with the 12-storey Clinical Services Building reaching its highest point. Towards the end of February, I had the opportunity to visit the new building with Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Health Minister Brad Hazzard. I had the pleasure to meet some of the new nursing and midwife graduates starting at Campbelltown Hospital. I am proud to have seen the new milestone and I believe the new hospital will meet the needs of our growing community.

SEEING EYE DOG GRADUATION

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Last week I had the pleasure to attend the Seeing Eye Dog Graduation Program as a part of Visions Australia here in Parliament. Seeing Eye Dogs develop and maintain innovative, high quality dog guide services valued by people who are blind or have low vision. The program matches a dog that is deemed suitable to their new partner. Seeing Eye Dogs is the only national breeder, trainer and provider of dog guides. I was delighted to meet Ralf and his 4 year old dog Stella. I heard about her training, breeding and witnessed her amazing temperament. I also met a new and upcoming Seeing Eye Dog, 12 week old Freddo. I would like to thank Visions Australia for the wonderful work they do behind the scenes to make this program so successful.

AL AMANAH COLLEGE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—On Friday 23 a careers night was held at Al Amanah College. The event occurred in the College's Liverpool Campus Grand Hall. I acknowledge the presence at the event of Mr Mohamad El Dana, Head Principal of the College, Mr Ayman Alwan, Principal of the Liverpool Campus, Dr Ghayath Al-Shelh previous President of the Islamic Charity Projects Association and Sheikh Ibrahim El-Shafie, the College's religious advisor. The highlight of the night was the presentation by a number of graduates of the school who spoke to current students about the progress they made from the time they left the College to their current careers. Those include a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a teacher and a journalist. They were a very impressive group of graduates and were a powerful demonstration of the success of the school.

ALLIANCE OF PHILIPPINE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, INC.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—On Saturday 24 April a new Board of Management of the Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations Inc. was inducted and sworn in for the period 2021-2023. The President is Jhun Salazar; Senior Vice-President Cora Paras; Junior Vice-President Larry Perez; Secretary Linda Price; Treasurer Edna Voros; Auditor Alma Middlebrook and PRO, Richard Ford. Additionally, the Directors are Violeta Miguel; Pet Storey; Linda Trinidad; Dian Ford; Mars Cavestany; Rita Agostino; Roberto Sacilotto and Joe Agostino. The induction ceremony occurred at the Liverpool Library and I was happy to play a role in the ceremony. I wish the Board of Management well in their future endeavours. Organisations such as this are important. They are important for our civil society and for making connections between people. They are also important in nurturing our multicultural society.

AMBER KELLHER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Taree High School Captain, Amber Kelleher who recently received the 2021 Lions district public speaking award. Claiming this award was far from an easy feat, Amber beating out participants from the Great Lakes to the Northern Rivers and New England area which covers almost 70 lions clubs. Before this competition the young woman had already received widespread praise for her speeches at public events such as Australia day and Anzac Day. Amber regularly employs her public speaking talent on the airways of 2BOB community radio and has aspirations of work in radio in the future. I again commend Amber for her recent achievement at the District Final of the Lions Youth of the year competition and wish her luck with her future ambitions.

FORSTER AQUATIC SWIM CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Forster Aquatic Swim Club for their swimmers spectacular performances across the season. Nash Wilkes was a standout performer taking home three medals at the Australian National Championships including gold for the men's 18/19 100 and 200m Breaststroke and silver in the 50m Breaststroke. Eleven year old Sophie Scislo emerged as a strong competitor claiming silver in the 100m Butterfly at the NSW Country Championships. The young talent also finished in the top 10 of three of her five events at the NSW Junior State Age championships. Twelve year old Harrison Tancred was also a star of the squad this season taking home three medals at the NSW Junior State Age Championships including Gold

for 12years 50m and 100m Breaststroke and Bronze in the 12years 200m Breaststroke. Eva Keen was another strong contender at NSW Junior State Age championships coming home with 5medals including Gold in the 50m backstroke, Silver in the 100m backstroke and 50m freestyle and Bronze in the 100m and 200m Freestyle. I also congratulate Braydan Lee, Emily Rowell, Hannah Carmichael, and Hamish Carmichael for representing the club at a state level.

CHERYL VINES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Cheryl Vines of Curlwaa, a devoted volunteer in the Sunraysia community. Cheryl's volunteering commenced in her mid-teens as a Sunday School Teacher, and continued for more than 20 years. When the Sunday School closed, she became a Religious Instructor at Wentworth Primary School. While working in a solicitor's office and raising three children, Cheryl took on active roles at all of her children's Pre-, Primary and High Schools, and was Treasurer of the P&C committee at Coomealla High School. She also held executive positions over many years with both Curlwaa Scouts and Wentworth Girl Girls. In 1983, Cheryl began assisting at the Wentworth Tennis Club, and held many positions within the club, including Club Captain, and presently is Vice-President, Junior Organizer and Catering Organizer and Treasurer of the Sunraysia District Tennis Association. Her Treasurer roles continue with both Darling Junction CWA and Wentworth Rural Women's Gathering. On top of all of this, Cheryl is a valued Justice of the Peace, freely giving her time to assist the community. I congratulate Cheryl on her community contribution over many years and thank her for her commitment to assist others.

JOSE BROSAS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Jose Brosas and Rola Rifai from CORE Community Services to discuss Jose's exciting new ambition – running the Ultra Trail Australia 100 km race to raise the necessary funds so that CORE Community Services can assist families dealing with domestic violence. Domestic violence is a real concern in our community and is one of the key areas where support organisations like CORE step in to lend assistance. Jose's goal is to raise \$10,000 by taking part in the Ultra Trail Australia 100km race in May. These funds will assist CORE in providing families dealing with domestic violence with accommodation, safety packs and food vouchers. Demand for CORE's domestic violence Support Service quadrupled last year due to COVID and it is hoped that Jose's efforts will go a long way in providing the necessary support. I commend Jose on his efforts and wish him every success in his endeavour.

PROFESSOR ZLATKO SKRBIS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The Australian Catholic University entered into a new era with the recent formal installation of the fourth Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis. It was an honour and a privilege for my wife, Melissa and I to join our Alma Mater to celebrate this historic event at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Professor Skrbis is a proud Slovenian migrant and has worked hard to achieve throughout his academic studies in Australia. He and his wife Marta migrated to Australia thirty years ago to raise a family and pursue their dreams. I offer my congratulations to all who contributed to the installation Mass organisation, particularly Principal Celebrant the Most Rev Mark Coleridge, President of ACU Corporation and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop of Brisbane; Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney; and all the co-celebrants, the Episcopal members of ACU Corporation and members of the clergy. On behalf of the community I wish Professor Zlatko Skrbis well in his endeavours into the future at the Australian Catholic University.

ROBERT BUTLER

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—At 98 years of age, you could forgive Campbelltown Robert Butler for wanting to put his feet up. But that's simply not part of his DNA. The Macarthur Advertiser recently featured a wonderful story about Robert, a World War II veteran, and his hobby that is a gift that keeps on giving. For the past 25 years, Robert has worked tirelessly for hours, days, months and even years constructing model boats to give family, friends and residents at the Glenfield Whiddon Aged Care Facility. In fact, he has donated a dozen boats over the years to the facility. Robert said making the boats "keeps my mind active, which is something I think is important as we age". It's a valuable lesson I think we all should adopt. Robert said the key to making the boats was precision and patience which is a great life lesson because anything worth doing takes time. Robert has been a resident of Campbelltown for almost 70 years and he really does represent what our community is about. His passion, dedication and selflessness is an inspiration to many. Well done Robert and thank you for all you have done.

24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I have spoken about the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer many times in this place. But it would be remiss of me not to talk about the 24 Hour team again. Last year was the first

year since 2005 that the annual 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer walkathon at Campbelltown Sports Stadium's athletics track, was not able to be held. The annual event is the organisation's biggest fundraiser and one of the biggest, if not the biggest, fundraiser in the Macarthur region. Despite COVID-19 preventing last year's event from going ahead, the organisation was still able to raise \$99,000 through other channels. Last year's efforts brought the organisation's total fundraising tally over the past 17 years to \$4.8 million. It is an incredible effort. Those funds have made a huge difference to patients fighting cancer, and their families, in our region. Last year's effort also speaks volumes of the generosity of our community. Helping others out and digging deep into our pockets is what residents in Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur are famous for. Congratulations and well done to everyone involved in last year's fundraising efforts.

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—On Friday 7th May I was privileged to join the Engadine/Heathcote and Surrounds New Mum Village for an early Mother's Day celebration and it was great to see the community come together. I wish to congratulate our Heathcote Woman of the Year, Eliza Clark, who started the Mums group and organised the event. The supportive environment she has created for Mums is fantastic and very well appreciated amongst the community. A local iconic business "Loftus Pies" made a magnificent cake which I was happy to contribute to the celebrations. I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish every Mum in our community the very best for Mother's Day. I hope you were able to put your feet up and be spoilt by your family.

CHRIS SMITH

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Some people just love their job, and Chris Smith certainly loved working around trains. Chris joined the NSW Government Railways in 1972 as a junior clerk. He went on to work in various administrative roles such as HR, financial and logistic duties. In the late 1980's he met Angela and in 1989, they married and moved to Carrington and went on to have 3 kids. Chris was able to transfer to Newcastle in 1990 and began working in the admin area in Newcastle City before transferring to the Cardiff Warehouse. After working in a number of roles around the Hunter and Central Coast, Chris was appointed to the position of Station Manager at Beresfield Station in 2011. He held that position right up until his recent retirement. Chris' plans for retirement include time with his grandchildren and some travel. He is a rugby tragic and dreams of joining the Wallabies on a Spring Tour. He is also a staunch supporter of the Newcastle Jets and will spend some time following them around as well. Thank you Chris for your dedication and 48 years of service to the community. Enjoy your retirement.

MIRIAM ALLAN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Performing on the world stage for millions of people is the ultimate goal for many singers. Former local, Miriam Allan, was one of four singers chosen to perform in Prince Philip's funeral choir as he was laid to rest during a sombre and moving service. Miriam grew up singing at Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral and is a product of the University of Newcastle and the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music. Since leaving Newcastle in 2003, Miriam has toured around the world performing in choirs and operas. She has performed for several of the world's largest opera companies, including Opéra Comique, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Pinchgut Opera. She is now a singing coach at a preparatory school in Westminster and also teaches singing at a boarding school in Oxfordshire. I know her proud father, Chris, was over the moon watching Miriam perform on such a stage. He has fond memories of accompanying her on the piano, as a composer, and singing. Congratulations Miriam on such a great honour.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I wish to acknowledge the International Day of Mourning, recognised on the 28th of April. The International Day of Mourning is a very important to all those who have lost loved ones to work-related incidents or illness. Together we remember and commemorate their lives and share their memories. The Labor movement has been essential in improving the safety of our workplaces, ensuring that working people can go to work with the expectation that they will come home safely. Sadly, despite much improvement and continued dedication to the cause, many hundreds of people are still injured or killed in workplaces every year. The International Day of Mourning also give us an opportunity to highlight ways in which we might continue to improve and prevent workplace incidents as well as to stand in solidarity for those for whom this prevention did not come in time. This year, Unions NSW did a fantastic job creating a hybrid ceremony, with some workers able to attend in person and others able to join the service online. I would like to thank Unions NSW and our Labor movement more broadly, for their good work on this day and every day.

ANZAC SERVICE AT RANDWICK BUS DEPOT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—It was an honour to attend the ANZAC Service at Randwick Bus Depot on the 23rd of April and to lay a wreath in honour of all those that have served their country. I was proud

to join our local bus drivers and STA and depot staff in laying a wreath and remembering the local people who gave of themselves in defence of our country and our ideals. This service is a unique and proud tradition in our local area and is a true reflection on the importance of civic service. I wish to thank the staff at Randwick Depot, the Coogee Randwick Clovelly RSL Sub Branch along with the NSW Railway Band who played brilliantly on the day. Lest we forget.

ADDI ROAD WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2021

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to the volunteers and staff at the Addison Road Community Centre for their successful Addi Road Writers' Festival held on 1 May, and thank you to the wonderful artists, poets, musicians and authors who took part. The Addison Road Community Centre is an enduring and vital community organisation, home to dozens of community organisations, artists collectives and support programs. The Addi Road Writers' Festival provides an important stage for emerging and established poets and authors to share their work and perspectives. This year, we heard songs and stories from a diverse range of voices that were funny, educational and evocative, with panels on rock'n'roll biographies, bush medicine and cultural heritage, song writing, art, literature and the law, and more. A panel specifically highlighted the voices of people experiencing unemployment, poverty, racism and the struggle for workers' rights, the perfect way to mark May Day. Congratulations to the Addison Road Community Centre on the 2021 Addi Road Writers' Festival and thank you for your continuing commitment to connecting our community through place, art and music.

3BRIDGES KYEEMAGH COMMUNITY HUB

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—It was my privilege to attend the opening of 3Bridges Kyeemagh Community Hub last week. The fantastic new space will provide support and service programs for disability, community and ageing – and includes an award-winning Dutch program for dementia. This program – the first of its kind in Australia - provides care and support to people living with mild to moderate dementia and their families and carers alongside a structured activity program that has been shown to improve quality of life and cognition through activities including exercise, word games and puzzles, and social interactions like cooking, card, immersive art and sing-a-longs. The work that 3Bridges does in our community is vital and I was so proud to be able to assist them with the development of their new location at Kyeemagh. I wish 3Bridges every success with this project and new facility, and I thank them for all they do for the Rockdale community. Thank you to CEO Raj Nair for inviting me to attend such a fantastic event.

MARIST COLLEGE KOGARAH

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—I recently had the pleasure of celebrating the success of some outstanding Rockdale students at Marist College Kogarah's 2020 High Achievers Assembly. To achieve these results is an incredible accomplishment in any year, but even more so given the exceptional challenges faced by these students in 2020. Congratulations to the College Dux, Johnie Carino, who gave a fantastic address to the assembly, and to every student who was recognised for their hard work, commitment, and excellent results. Thank you to new Principal Simon Ghantous, staff and students for a great morning, it was an honour to present the awards to the students.

JOHN TYLER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I honour John Tyler who has been working alongside St John's Ambulance for over 35 years. This is a remarkable achievement and I thank John for all of his service to our community. Within his role, John helps provide health services within the community which involves providing medical assistance and training to individuals. As a divisional officer, he also co-ordinates the training of other volunteers and in 2010 he played a crucial role in providing a youth program for the local region. Last year I was able to present John with an Individual Volunteer Achievement Award as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. This was the 10th Anniversary of these awards and they honour some of the many hard working individuals, groups and businesses who go above and beyond to make our community even better. This is an outstanding achievement and it was fantastic to hear about all of his selfless work over the past 35 years. Well done John. All the best for the year ahead.

KEVIN KELLY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I recognise Kevin Kelly from the Penshurst RSL Sub-Branch for all of his hard work within the organisation for over 21 years. Kevin is a committee member of the organisation and he and his wife Pam run the social committee which does a fantastic job at organising outings and events to promote inclusion and reduce social isolation. Kevin is also a former RAAF Serviceman and a former Vice-President of the Sub-Branch. His commitment and his eye for detail was so important within his role of monitoring construction of the Penshurst War Memorial. President John Hoban, Secretary Graham Grant and the entire team are proud of everything that Kevin has achieved over the past 21 years and it is an honour to recognise

him in Parliament here today. Last year I was also able to present Kevin with a Senior Achievement Award as part of the St George Community Awards. These awards acknowledge men, women and youth across a range of categories who go above and beyond every day to help their local community. Well done Kevin and the Penshurst RSL Sub-Branch.

NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Northern NSW Football is kicking goals by encouraging women and girls to get involved in the sport, and 2021 is shaping up to be its biggest season yet. A lot of this growth was set to be driven by female participation after the challenges posed by COVID-19, but the organisation has seen even their most optimistic expectations exceeded, with a higher percentage of female players taking to the field than ever before. This comes on the heels of Kick-On for Women, a program aimed to help women get out and discover the basics of football in a supportive and inclusive environment. I would like to acknowledge the leadership of NUNS Football CEO David Eland, who has led the code to greater and greater heights in the region. I would also like to give a special shout out to Kick-On for Women Project Officer Michelle Forbes and to Female Participation and Inclusion Officer Annelise Rosnell. Their work has done so much to bring local women into the fun and friendship offered by the beautiful game. I wish NNSW Football all the best for this season.

LAKE MACQUARIE MUSIC SOCIETY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—2020 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Lake Macquarie Music Society, and while the pandemic might have marred those celebrations, the Society has been hitting the ground running in 2021. Established in 1980 when former Lake Macquarie mayor Geoff Pasterfield called a public meeting, the Society has been led president and Charlestown Electorate local Mercia Buck OAM ever since. On 1 May, Mercia joined with accomplished violinist Catherine Sheng-Cooper to perform Beethoven's Spring Sonata, Debussy's Violin Sonata, Kreisler's Prelude and Allegro and some Gershwin at the Adamstown Uniting Church. Catherine earned her Master of Music at the University of Newcastle, is the concert master of the Lake Macquarie Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera Hunter Orchestra, and runs a teaching practice in Charlestown. Mercia is a graduate of Sydney Conservatorium, has a Master's Degree from the University of New South Wales and an Arts Degree from the Open University in the UK. She has studied in Vienna and London, and has had a lifetime of performance, teaching, lecturing and arts administration experience. My thanks to Mercia for her leadership of the Lake Macquarie Music Society, and to both Mercia and Catherine for the music they share with us.

CHRISTYNE CALUB – ANZAC WRITING COMPETITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Christyne Calub, from St Patrick's Primary School, Gundagai who won the primary schools east division of the 11th annual Anzac writing competition organised by the Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack. Christyne who is 8, was recognised for her creative writing piece called 'On Anzac Day'. The story reflects Christyne's appreciation and understanding of our important day of remembrance. Well done Christyne and to the teachers at St Patrick's who encouraged, supported and guided her to write such an impressive and thoughtful story. Keep up the great work and interest in creative writing.

COOTAMUNDRA RED CROSS FOOD BANK

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to acknowledge Cootamundra Red Cross Branch which has recently opened a Food Bank service. The service will operate three days a week and provide grocery items which can be purchased for a small cost. Congratulations to shop coordinator, Helen Eccleston and the amazing team of volunteers who provide support to people in and around Cootamundra and identified the need for a Food Bank service in town. Seventy percent of the funds raised in Cootamundra stay in the town to assist people in need and this new service will add to the clothing, furniture and household items which are sold at the Red Cross shop. Well done Cootamundra Red Cross Branch for your support, care and compassion to our communities and keep up the great work.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Sutherland Shire State Emergency Service Cluster who recently held their Awards Evening on 17 April 2021. The 2020 Sutherland Unit Commander Award was presented to Sue Nilon of Jannali for her ongoing contribution to the volunteer organisation. As a registered nurse, Sue worked with Indigenous communities and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Now retired, Sue volunteers her time to each of the Sutherland Shire units to teach first aid four nights a week, and has completed more than 80 different SES courses in her 13 years of service. Since joining in 2008, Sue has assisted in various operations and is an asset to both her unit and our community. Finally, I acknowledge Miranda constituents Stephen Brown of the Menai Unit, John Curtis of the Sutherland Unit and Ivan Pavlenko of the Heathcote Unit who were awarded with NSW SES Long Service Awards. I also commend the outstanding

Cronulla Unit Commander Peter Rozea who was awarded the NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation. I commend all members of the Sutherland Shire State Emergency Service Cluster for their outstanding work and especially congratulate the award recipients.

MIRANDA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Miranda Public School on their appointment. Established in 1893, Miranda Public School has served as a cornerstone of education in the Sutherland Shire for over 125 years. The 2021 leadership team are a group of wonderful students who embody the school motto of "a school built on strong relationships." I congratulate School Captains Daniel Simic and Emily Zhang, Vice Captains Amelia Johnson Griffiths and Samuel Parslow and Prefects Sterling Graves and Imogen Olson on their successful appointment. I also commend House Captains Alecia-Jade Russell, Brock Farrow, James Cole, Gianna Famador, Anar Bulgan, Leo Boottakul, Blake McDougall, Bryden Balagot, Harlem Schwenke, Kelly Connolly, Justin Oyagi, Kody Williams, Noah Kirk, Flora Dobras-Vincze, Ngamiri Hughes, Levi Palmer-Scott and Special Education Leaders Abbie Crossling, Levi Norton, Paige Ritchie, Tiia Roberts, Ava Rollo and Charlotte Wood. 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 the student leaders from Miranda Public School and look forward to seeing them excel.

SENIORS IN THE STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—As part of Seniors Week, I was delighted to host a morning tea for our seniors in the Strathfield electorate. We recognised those that have made notable contributions to our community through the 2021 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards. Many of our local seniors are volunteers who dedicate their time selflessly to make our community a better place. I am pleased to commend to the House the following recipients of the Award: Angela Barducci, Eurella Community Services; Viena Chan, CASS Burwood Activity Group; Jack He, from the local Burwood Chinese community; Quang Lam, Homebush West Chamber of Commerce; Meriel Mansfield, Strathfield West Seniors; Margaret Mulvaney, Eurella Community Services; Jung Hyun Park, Korean Senior Citizens Association; Dennis Quinlan, Burwood RSL Sub Branch; Loganayakie Sebaratnam, Strathfield West Seniors; Arunasalam Sivathondan, Tamil Seniors; Peter Smith, Strathfield Rotary; Chris Syrios, St Nectarios Burwood; Deidre Tung, Strathfield School for Seniors; and Anna Logan, a 'walking school bus' and Pets of Older Persons volunteer. I thank all the seniors of the Strathfield electorate for their profound contributions and acknowledge their vital role in our community.

HUMAN MART

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to congratulate Anti-Slavery Australia for opening the world's first one-of-a-kind 'Human Mart' near Taylor Square in Darlinghurst. The opening coincided with International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on 25 March. The store aimed to drive awareness about modern slavery and human trafficking, which affects approximately 15,000 people in Australia today. Anti-Slavery Australia's Human Mart shed light on the frighteningly straightforward and transactional process of modern human trafficking and slavery. The store showcased over 70 physical items carrying a name and story of individuals who have been subjected to slavery. Donations raised at Human Mart will be used to support of victims and survivors of slavery. I understand organisers hope to host another Human Mart to continue raising community awareness about the confronting realities of modern slavery. I congratulate this creative education approach on a very serious matter and encourage constituents to support Human Mart and Anti-Slavery Australia in their vital advocacy work.

DIGNITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I commend the innovative homelessness service Dignity, who provide temporary accommodation with personalised wrap-around support to people experiencing or facing homelessness. Dignity treats people who need a home as guests, giving them safe, comfortable, homely accommodation where their autonomy and self-determination is fostered. Guests are given access to new clothing, personal items, nutritious home-cooked meals and support tailored to their specific needs. Dignity has no prerequisites or limitations on access, but welcomes all people including rough sleepers, those escaping domestic violence and those leaving prison. Onsite support workers help guests with immediate needs, day to day support and early help before issues escalate. I was inspired by Dignity's evidence based approach to supporting individuals and families on my recent visit. I saw volunteers cooking delicious Dignity Dishes and learned about their community education and engagement programs. Guests from the inner city, suburbs and regional areas were all warmly welcomed and respected. The success of Dignity's model of trust and empowerment is evident in their ability to transition people on to stable housing. I congratulate and thank the Dignity team for their extraordinary work.

UNCLE PHILLIP MCLEOD GARDEN

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Last week, Vincentia High School officially opened a garden to remember and pay respect to our Indigenous returned service personnel, which has been aptly named the Uncle Phillip McLeod Garden. This project demonstrates the great relationship our local schools have with the broader community, working with the Booderee National Park, Booderee Botanical Gardens and Bay and Basin Community Resource to make the garden a reality. The prominent placement of the Uncle Phillip McLeod Garden outside the entry of the front office will allow the school community to acknowledge and remember all of our Indigenous returned service personnel. I would like to commend everyone who was involved in seeing this project come to fruition, in particular Defence School Mentor Jacqui Copeland, Aboriginal Education Officer Gai Brown and Gumbari Unit students Caleb, Brock, Taye, Jai, Jayden, Jaiden and Seayn and their teacher Harry Sawkins.

ST MARYS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, MAYS HILL - EASTER 2021

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was delighted to celebrate Easter Sunday at Mass at St Marys Antiochian Orthodox Church, Mays Hill on Sunday 2 May 2021. I was pleased to see so many families able to come along especially after the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The Easter Sunday mass were led by Fr George Saad and Fr John Daher. The youth committee and young children joined in the prayer precisions - which was most enjoyable. Easter is a very significant date within Christianity and is the foundation of the Christian faith. Numerous church services celebrate these important occasions and include the Palm Sunday and Good Friday masses to mark the death and resurrection of Jesus. There were lots of homemade Easter eggs and Holy Bread at the Church to mark the occasion and I am sure that parish members continued their Easter celebrations afterwards with family members and friends eating traditional Lebanese foods. Thank you to Father George Saad, Parish Priest Fr John Daher, Assistant Priest and committee members, Khalil Mansour and Georges Karam for their lovely welcome at the Church.

OUR LADY OF LEBANON CO-CATHEDRAL - STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 2nd of April, I joined parishioners at Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral in Harris Park for the Good Friday Way of the Cross, followed by the Rite of Adoration of the Cross. The Way of the Cross consists of the 14 stations of Jesus Christ's passion and death. The procession takes place annually and has been traditionally conducted through the streets of Harris Park, however, this was not possible this year due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the procession continued on carpark roof. As we stopped at each station, prayers were offered for a different group of people, in the same manner different members of the community were dedicated to carry the cross together from one station to the next. It is always a touching experience to witness and take part in. The Rite of Adoration of the Cross took place within the Cathedral. I was pleased to attend and witness parishioners being able to attend church on this special occasion. Thank you to Father Tony Sarkis, Dean of the Co-Cathedral and the clergy for their lovely welcome.

DENIS MCKEON OF WINSTON HILLS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I seek to acknowledge Denis McKeon of Winston Hills for his service to the local school community and the environment. Since retiring last year, Denis has grown 400 pot plants in his backyard and has recently donated those to St Paul the Apostle Primary School at Winston Hills. Many of the pot plants were available for students to take home to their mum or carer for Mother's Day. I am informed Denis took 10 days taking the pot plants from his home to the school and he would often stop for many conversations with locals talking about gardening and the community. All of the pots are recycled and the soil is mostly compost and homemade. The Winston Hills and Northmead communities in the Seven Hills electorate are keen gardeners and are always looking to be sustainable and grow the greenery of the area. I thank Denis for his community work and I hope he continues his terrific gardening ideas in his well-deserved retirement.

GALLERY GARDENS UPGRADE OPENING

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—On 15 April, I joined the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr Bob Dwyer, in the civic opening of the upgrades to Gallery Gardens in Old Toongabbie. Upgrades included: resurfaced tennis courts and upgraded tennis amenities buildings; a new playground, fitness station and seating; and, enhanced bus regeneration area and signage. The project cost City of Parramatta Council a total of \$830,000, and I am pleased the New South Wales Government assisted with a \$181,000 grant via the Department of Customer Service. I thank the Parramatta Ward councillors for their advocacy for the Gallery Gardens upgrade and their attendance at the opening, including: Councillor Martin Zaiter, Councillor Sameer Pandey and Councillor Phil Bradley. It was great to see the civic opening sold out, and so many local families from across wider Toongabbie join in the celebrations and movie night. I thank the Toongabbie-Seven Hills Lions Club for cooking a free sausage sizzle to all the families and continuing their mighty support for our local community.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge the 35th Anniversary of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay. The anniversary was marked with a Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral in Waitara led by Bishop Anthony Randazzo. The diocese is led by Bishop Anthony Randazzo and assisted by Vicar Very Rev Dr David Ranson and runs from the Northern Beaches along the North Shore and up to the Central Coast. It includes 44 schools with nearly 1900 teachers. They also oversee aged care facilities and help those families in need through CatholicCare and St Vincent de Paul. Most important they spread the word of God and I am proud to have them as part of my electorate. There are too many individuals to mention today but I would like to thank both past and present staff who have contributed so much to this organisation. Thank you for 35 years of wonderful work in our community. From teaching our next generation, helping those who need a hand or helping older members of our community. May you look forward to a bright future with many more wonderful years ahead for the Diocese of Broken Bay.

THORNLEIGH BASEBALL

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to congratulate Thornleigh Baseball Club on 11 years of fundraisers for the Crown Princess Mary Cancer Centre. Liz McKewin Pink Day is held each year in memory of Liz who passed away from breast cancer. Liz was an important member of the club along with her husband Gary who spent many years as President and son Josh who played A Grade. What was the clubs Ladies Day turned into a fundraiser and 11 years later the club has raised \$43,000 for the hospital which looked after Liz during her treatment. The day sees the entire club getting involved. Both Senior and Junior players switch their regular blue jerseys and hats for a pink version and come to watch the A Grade game on Saturday. Due to COVID restrictions in 2021 the club switched to a live stream, complete with expert commentary from Josh McKewin and President of the Club Ash Harrigan. In 2020 the club raised \$6,736, with the help of sponsor Selleys who have supported the event for the past two years. Thank you Thornleigh Baseball for your continued support of the Crown Princess Mary Cancer Centre and those battling cancer.

MOJOSURF

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the vision and corporate responsibility of Byron Bay tourism operator Mojosurf. Like many businesses in the Ballina electorate and across the state, Mojosurf has taken a hit from the absence of international visitors signing up for their services, yet it has reached out to others even worse hit in a gesture that reveals their generosity and global consciousness. Mojosurf has launched a campaign to help the people at its surf locations in Indonesia who have suffered badly as a result of the downturn in international tourism. The company is finding ways to make sure that families are fed, children educated and the environment kept clean by continuing to engage and support its teams in a range of ongoing community projects. For six years, Mojosurf has funded community development and environmental programs such as an orphanages, education programs, beach clean-ups, sustainable businesses and housing for locals. They are currently providing 96 families with food packs to help alleviate the negative impacts of Covid-19. Despite suffering from the Covid-19 fall-off itself, the company is working hard to support their colleagues and community across the Arafura Sea, and I congratulate them for their charitable works.

BYRON SHIRE ECHO 35TH BIRTHDAY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I congratulate the Byron Shire Echo on the occasion of its 35th birthday. The Echo was founded by the late Nicholas Shand as an independent voice and objective news source for a famously free-thinking community. It has survived all the challenges faced by print media – the internet, fierce competition from corporate rivals and, most recently, the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, to become an institution in the Northern Rivers, comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. With the disappearance into the digital void of the stable of community newspapers acquired by Rupert Murdoch, the Echo is easily the oldest of the papers in the region and, if not always loved by all, is read by most in the region. It has a well-established reputation of asking the difficult questions and going into local stories more deeply than any other media in the Northern Rivers, and is not afraid of making enemies in the process. As a result The Echo, and its digital offspring, Echonetdaily, are the 'go-to' media sites providing the widest coverage and range of community opinion available within the Ballina electorate. I thank the journalists and support staff for maintaining such a free forum.

LEICHHARDT AND ANNANDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Leichhardt and Annandale Chamber of Commerce for their outstanding support of small businesses in the Balmain Electorate. Locals treasure the vibrant array of small and locally owned businesses operating in our community. The Chamber is essential to making sure businesses and our local area thrives. On Wednesday 21 April 2021 I had the pleasure

of speaking to one of the Chamber's meetings to share some ideas with members about how we can work together to revitalise our high street and promote local business. I would particularly like to acknowledge Gina Bortolin-Papa from La Gardenia, Karlah van Arend from Tribe Leichhardt, Jen O'Brien from Billy Lou Shoes, Vera Nadile from Euro Espresso, Hilary Dwyer from Titian Consulting, Justin McTiernan from Fion Wine Bar, Caroline Lowther from Bendigo Bank, Blair Lennon from Snacky Chans, Christine Elbakht from Peanut Butter Bar, Baz Compton from Leichhardt Bowlo, Christine Moran from Three Green Fish, Penny Clarke from Flowers on Norton, Koreen Huda from Waynes Place, Emma Barbuto from Switch & Pivot, Mitch Davis from Great Meats Co, Mark Gavagna from City to Surf Property and Georgia Koutouki from Koutouki.

MARY HOLLINGWORTH – NAMED EASTER SHOW'S TOP VOLUNTEER

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Mary Hollingworth on being recognised as the 2021 Sydney Royal Easter Show's Top Volunteer. Mary was selected from around 500 other volunteers. It all started when Mary completed a five year stint as President of the Glen Innes Show Society's Ladies Auxiliary and was invited to apply for a steward's position in the Easter Show's Fine Arts section to when Mary became a member of the Fine Arts Auxiliary Committee. While the title comes with a great responsibility and all of it is on a volunteer basis, Mary considers the Easter Show "her little treat for the year". I congratulate Mary on her passion, spirit and dedication to both the Glen Innes Show Society's Ladies Auxiliary and the Sydney Royal Easter Show. I commend Mary on volunteering for 13 years at the Royal Easter Show and the love she has for it. Well done Mary!

LOCAL ROAD UPGRADES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise those members of my community who continue to reach out to me regarding local road upgrades. Feedback from my community is of great assistance to the NSW Government in deciding how to distribute infrastructure funds. As the primary users of these roads, they have a keen understanding of how they can be improved and what needs to occur in order for them to get to work seamlessly. Two roads that my community have been writing to me about recently include Terry Rd and Annangrove Rd. Both of these are roads that link outer-suburban areas of my electorate with Windsor Road. My community will be delighted to hear that the NSW Government is committing \$1.4 million into Annangrove Road and half a million dollars into Terry Road. This will help to alleviate the traffic on these arterial Roads, and I would like to once again thank my community for their assistance, and encourage them to continue to contact my office with any issues they are having on local roads.

GLENHAVEN MOBILE PHONE TOWER

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Glenhaven Community for their continued advocacy regarding the proposed Telstra tower at 2 Glenhaven Road. Whilst communications are at the heart of everything we do these days, and everyone deserves the best possible coverage, it is important that towers are placed in suitable locations. These towers need to be placed in areas that are in line with both the State Government and The Hills Shire Council's guidelines, which unfortunately the Glenhaven proposal did not. This development was within 25 metres of the Kindalin Early Learning Centre, and the 22 metre tall tower would have been out of place with the surrounding streetscape. It was on these bases that The Hills Shire Council have decided to block the proposal. I would like to thank those members of the community who organised the public response, including a Community Meeting with MP's and planning and telecommunications experts.

BRONTE MARSHALL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Bronte Marshall for using her experience as a finalist for The Land Sydney Royal Showgirl to expand that experience into a pursuit to inspire other women to motivate themselves to become the best version of themselves. Bronte has returned from Sydney planning a podcast to showcase the stories and diversity of the Showgirl program to advertise the impact that the movement makes on personal development. Bronte has come away from the Showgirl experience aiming to create a mentoring program to assist women in meeting their personal and professional goals. I congratulate Bronte on achieving a place in The Land Sydney Royal Showgirl finals. I commend Bronte for her insight into the possibilities the Showgirl experience unlocks.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—During May 2021, Rotary International celebrates its Centenary in Australia. I would like to thank Rotary International for 100 years of impeccable community service. With the core value 'service above self' Rotary International have consistently lead humanitarian projects that have improved many lives throughout Australia and the international community. Key foundational features of fellowship, goodwill, high ethical standards and concern for others have carried throughout all Rotary projects

throughout the centenary. Rotary International are currently engaged in hundreds of projects. These vary from individualised projects that financially assist individuals experiencing hardship to large scale overseas operations, for example providing sanitation, improving access to water and establishing food security in some of the world's poorest communities. I would like to thank all involved in Rotary International throughout Australia including District Governors and Area Governors. I would especially like to thank Cathy Tait, Interim President, Rotary Club of Sydney for her persistent work in furthering the Rotarian cause. I have had the pleasure of working closely with Cathy as a Joint Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Rotary International. It was been a pleasure to see first-hand the hard work of Rotarians throughout NSW.

SMITHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Friday 30th April 2021, I had the pleasure of attending Smithfield Public School and address at their weekly school assembly. It was a special occasion for Smithfield Public School as we celebrated the achievements of two wonderful women who have worked for the school. I was proud to present Jodi Baker with Prospect Local Women of the Year Award and Bernadette Topalian with Prospect Community Hero Award. Jodi acted as the Smithfield Public School P&C President from 2018-2020 and Bernadette is the Smithfield Public School P&C Treasurer. During the last few years, Jodi and Bernadette have organised a variety of programs and events that created a better learning environment for the children of Smithfield Public School. Examples include the Working Bee program, which organised volunteers to clean, paint and improve the aesthetic of the school, School Fetes and Summer Festivals. Jodi and Bernadette have organised numerous fundraisers which have provided a variety of learning resources for students. It is heart-warming to see members of our Prospect community work passionately and diligently to support our children's education. Thank you to Jodi and Bernadette for your incredible efforts to create the best learning environments for our children.

TORONTO ADVENTIST SCHOOL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—It's important that children grow up to appreciate the value of a dollar, so I was pleased to learn about the entrepreneurial efforts of some budding young green thumbs at Toronto Adventist School. Each student from pre-kindergarten all the way through to year six has been digging deep to help the school's market garden bloom. The market garden program has become an integral part of students' nature-based learning. Through the program they learn about the life-cycle of plants and the art of maintaining a garden, and they're responsible for weeding the beds, planting seeds, watering and nurturing plants including seasonable vegetables. The program also teaches students about financial literacy. Once their produce is ripe for picking, students harvest, weigh and bundle it for sale, filling orders placed by their parents. Students are responsible for collecting money, calculating change, working to a budget, recording sales and journaling their activities. Another admirable aspect of this program is that students are required to work as a team, with older pupils mentoring younger ones. I congratulate the staff and students at Toronto Adventist School on the creation of this innovative and fun approach to learning.

JONATHON POWER

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Every now and then an extraordinary person comes along who is determined to make a difference in the lives of people who need it most. Jonathon Power from Cardiff is one such person. His valiant efforts were recently recognised when he was named the 2021 Lake Mac Ambassador for his selfless and extensive work with people who have a disability, as well as with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Jonathon's parents both have lifelong disabilities so it's not surprising that he decided on a career in the disability sector. During his time as a disability support worker, Jonathon realised that many of the people he cared for were not getting access to the programs or support they needed to thrive so he decided to do something about it. In 2017, he along with a roommate formed Empowered Community Services. Since then the service has rapidly grown from a two-man band into a business with 70 employees, with a focus on providing mental health support services for clients with complex needs and linking them in with appropriate programs. I congratulate Jonathon on his excellent work and vision.

CAN ASSIST WAGGA WAGGA

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Receiving a cancer diagnosis is never easy. But for people who live in regional and rural NSW, there is often the added burden of worrying about being able to get to treatment, making an already traumatic period much worse. Thankfully, organisations like Can Assist stand ready to help. Can Assist is committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of where they live, have access to cancer treatment and care by providing accommodation, financial assistance and practical support. In Wagga Wagga, we have Lilier Lodge, a not-for-profit self-care accommodation facility for people who need to travel to Wagga Wagga for cancer treatment. This wonderful facility is co-owned by Can Assist and the Cancer Council of NSW. A mix of dedicated staff members and volunteers work extremely hard to help ease the burden of people staying there. Many of the volunteers have personal stories of their own and have chosen to use their own experiences with

cancer to help others. The feedback I have received from people who have stayed at Lilier Lodge is always positive. I commend the staff and volunteers of Lilier Lodge, Can Assist Wagga and the Cancer Council for their hard work and dedication.

SYDNEY MARKETS FOUNDATION

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—In January 2020, as the Dunns Road bushfire devastated the Snowy Valleys, the community of Batlow lay in its path. Residents were told their community was "undefendable". But a brave group of people, members of the Batlow Rural Fire Service, along with a small group of 'civilian' volunteers, stood up to defend their community. The bravery and determination of this group - led by Batlow RFS captain Darryl Watkin - has been inspirational. The scenes of devastation across the Snowy Valleys stayed with Carlo Trimboli, chairperson of the Sydney Markets Foundation, which recently donated a Category 7 fire truck to the Batlow RFS. The foundation also provided eight rapid spray slip-on tank and pump units to help Batlow and Bilpin landholders fight future fires. Batlow is a major supplier of apples to Australia and about 60 per cent of them go through the Sydney Markets. The Sydney Markets Foundation's bushfire appeal raised \$239,600, which included a \$150,000 from Sydney Markets Limited. I commend the generosity of the Sydney Markets Foundation. As the 2020 bushfires demonstrated, the RFS fills an essential role in regional and rural NSW. I also commend those who "defended the undefendable" and saved Batlow.

HASTINGS SECONDARY COLLEGE – OPEN FUTSAL COMPETITION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the victors of the Mid North Coast Open Futsal Competition held on the 27th April 2021. Style and technique was on display during the Open Futsal Competition as Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus dominated the court in a jaw dropping performance, losing only one game out of eight to clinch victory from Camden Haven High School in the final. Witnesses said the talent on display and determination was unmatched throughout the day's tournament, thanks to the superior coaching skills and mentorship by the School's coaching team which led the side to a clear win in the grand final 2-1. I applaud the magnificent seven consisting of Callum Barlow, Oliver Barry, Ross Charles, Darnell Scott, Holden O'Brien, Frederick Morris and Daniel Harris for their commitment to the training and fitness regime which were clearly factors in the convincing win. Standout performers on the day of the final were Frederick Morris shooting two goals assisted by the talented footwork of Oliver Barry. Congratulations again to the team for securing a well-fought win and I wish them all the best for the next upcoming match.

ST COLUMBA DEBATING TEAM

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the dominant performance of our St Columba Anglican School debating teams who recently secured seven out of eight wins at the Heads of Independent Co-Educational Schools (HICES) debating tournament against fierce competitors Clarence Valley Anglican School, Emmanuel Anglican College and Bishop Druitt College. Springing back into action after a year away from competition were Years 5 to 12 students from St Columba Anglican College sensationally securing wins in seven of the eight debates across Stages 3 to 6 in confident style. I applaud the following debating competitors who performed spectacularly throughout the tournament;

- Years 5 and 6: Hamish Conaghan, Charlie Finnecey, Rosie Ferguson, Arielle Reid, Nina Alexandrova and Jasmin Morgan.
- Years 7 and 8: Annabelle Pollitt, Amelia Stanfield-Gates, Adam Hemsell and Zalia Rose.
- Years 9 to 10: Adam Winter, Aarohi Deshmukh, Gabrielle Tittel, Georgia Stanfield-Gates and Annelise Turner.
- Year 11: Benji Fitzpatrick and Chelsea Taylor
- Year 12: Nicola Awad.

The HICES comprises more than 40 independent co-educational schools across NSW and ACT delivering academic, sporting, spiritual growth and culture to the more than 32,000 students represented. Congratulations again to our talented team of debaters.

MOSMAN CROQUET CLUB SECURES FUNDING FOR PLAYER PATHWAY WORKSHOP

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Mosman Croquet Club has been an iconic sporting landmark in my local community for almost 100 years and holds the largest playing membership in New South Wales. Today I congratulate the Club for securing funding through the 2020-2021 Local Sport Grant Program which will help deliver a Player Pathway to Excellence workshop facilitated by Croquet NSW. Croquet is a sport that many people within my community hold dearly. I have had the pleasure of building a close relationship with Club President Mary Gibson who has championed the Club for many years, pouring her heart and soul into making it

the warm and welcoming environment that it is today. With breathtaking views of Sydney Harbour, it is no wonder the club attracts new members every year. This month, the Club will be hosting their annual Open AC Tournament with other croquet clubs across Sydney and New South Wales. It is another event to celebrate since coming out of COVID-19 restrictions. Good luck to all participants involved and an extended thank you to the army of volunteers and members who actively help maintain the grounds of the Club every year.

MOSMAN JUNIOR RUGBY CLUB RECEIVES FUNDING FOR STORAGE SHED

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I would like to congratulate the Mosman Junior Rugby Club for securing funding that will allow the construction of a storage shed at Rawson Oval. This major funding boost is made possible through the 2020-2021 Local Sport Grant Program that is providing vital funds to help build and restore our local clubs for the benefit of the community. Last month, the Club embarked on a Wild West country tour with under 11 and under 15 teams to play against other rugby clubs in Orange, Wellington, and Cowra. Known locally as 'The Whales', the Mosman Junior teams toughed it out in the bush, doing the community proud and playing fairly against all teams. Well done to all players for your efforts and achievements. I would also like to acknowledge the Club's victory in the annual Battle of the Bridge against neighbourhood rivals the Seaforth Raiders. The match was played down to the wire with the Mosman Club coming out on top. Congratulations again to Club President Paul Bellantonio, Club members, and volunteers for securing this funding that will provide for much needed space to store vital sports equipment.

ALBURY THURGOONA MEN'S SHED

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I wish to acknowledge the following members of the Thurgoona Men's Shed, Roger Matheson, Bob Walker, Peter Prewett, Bruce Dyce & Alistair Rooke and all the other members that make up this exceptional team. The Thurgoona Men's Shed started 9 years ago with just a concrete slab and a big shed. This was to become a place to bring men together to share in social activities, and it is living up to this commitment. On my last visit I was given a poem which speaks to the importance of having a place to gather: "Just who were these blokes who worked here long ago? How did they get on with things and how did the banter flow?" Men come together with a cuppa, to chat and socialise while undertaking hands-on projects for local organisations in need. Thurgoona Men's Shed members are also actively involved with the health and wellbeing of men. The shed keeps hands and minds active. It has become a special place for talking about lives and families. I say "thank you" to Thurgoona Men's Shed for your outstanding contribution to your community.

LIBBY WAKEFIELD

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I congratulate Bowral local painter and drawer, Libby Wakefield, who recently took out this year's \$3,000 Veolia Creative Arts Practice Scholarship. Now in its 14th year and having supported more than 50 local artists during that time, the Veolia scholarship will now allow Libby to fund supplies for her next project. Local spots such as the Wingecarribee River, near Cecil Hoskin Reserve at the southern tip of my electorate, and the ancient Peat Swamp at Kangaloon in the neighbouring electorate of my good friend, the Member for Goulburn, serve as inspiration for her paintings. Borrowing from the Romanticism in style, Libby works with layers of subtle glazed colour to achieve her dreamy results. Her Southern Highlands wetlands collection will be exhibited at the Whitewall Art Projects Gallery in Berrima next year, and can be presently seen at her studio in Bowral. I strongly urge my colleagues and the community to come visit the Southern Highlands to enjoy its natural beauty and to check out the wonderful paintings of Libby Wakefield.

COLIN GRAY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I recognise the service of Colin Gray from Thirlmere, in my electorate of Wollondilly. Now approaching 90, Colin has for the past thirty years dedicated much of his retirement to volunteering with Picton Meals on Wheels. Members of this place are well aware and appreciate the enormous work of Meals on Wheels organisations throughout the state. I understand that in recent years Colin has defied the biological clock and has done anything but slow down. The number of meal runs he undertakes each month has actually increased. And to provide those that may be unfamiliar with my electorate, some meal runs involve trips of up to 100 kilometres to visit a handful of clients. Whilst people like Colin do not seek praise, it is important to highlight achievements like his, particularly when it makes my electorate of Wollondilly an even greater place to live. On behalf of a grateful community, I thank Colin for giving so selflessly to those in need.

SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY MULTICULTURAL FOOD FESTIVAL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Today I would like to recognise the success of this year's South-West Sydney Multicultural Food Festival, 'Liverpool On A Roll', which was held at Black Muscat Park in Chipping Norton. The food festival saw local businesses and food vendors come together, after what has been such a difficult year, and showcase their amazing cuisines and food for the community to enjoy. The festival had

everything from delicious desserts to incredible savoury dishes from all cultures. All treats were served "on a roll" consistent with this year's theme which meant that the dishes were creative as well as tasty. It's fantastic that this festival was able to be held this year in line with COVID-19 restrictions. I am happy that our community can come together and celebrate our unique multicultural diversity through events like "Liverpool On A Roll". I'd like to thank Liverpool Council for their support of this event and congratulate all who took part in this festival as it was a huge success, and I look forward to many more festivals like this one being held in the Holsworthy electorate. Thank you.

GWS GIANTS AND WATTLE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Today I acknowledge GWS Giants Players and their recent community engagement program with Wattle Grove Public School. The Giants have had to adopt new ways to engage with the local community due to COVID-19. They have utilised digital tools to interact with people across the State. In March, four GWS players spent time virtually connecting with students from Wattle Grove Public School. They discussed all things AFL and gave the students an opportunity to ask the players questions and get to know them. It's such a fantastic program and initiative, and well done to the Giants for coming up with a COVID-safe way to interact with students in the local community. It's rewarding for both the players and the students. Once again, I commend the GWS Giants for interacting with students from Wattle Grove Public School, and wish them the best of luck with the upcoming season. Thank you.

MARRICKVILLE PORK ROLL EXPANSION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I acknowledge the extraordinary success of Marrickville Pork Roll Shop, who have just expanded their business, moving to a new shop front on Illawarra Road. When people think of Marrickville, they think of Marrickville Pork Roll, and it's no understatement to say people from all across Sydney flock to Marrickville Pork Roll to grab Sydney's very best bánh mì. In fact, customers are usually lined up around the block from morning to night. The business was started in 2008 by Khiem and Nga Du in its original hole in the wall premises on Illawarra Road, which was once a toilet block. The move to a bigger, brand new shop front next door comes as the family has expanded over time, with a second location in Marrickville and other stores across Sydney. When asked recently what made Marrickville Pork Roll so special, a member of the family said: "We wouldn't say it's anything particular. It has just been a hit since day one." Whatever the secret, Marrickville Pork Roll is a Marrickville institution and like so many Marrickvilleans, I am excited for this new chapter and wish the Du family all the best in their new location.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:21 until
Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 9:30.**