



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 12 May 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 12 May 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT (CERTIFICATES OF TITLE) BILL 2021

Returned

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

Announcements

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING

The SPEAKER: I remind members, electoral office staff, House department staff and ministerial staff that a professional development briefing will be held in the Preston Stanley Room or online from 12.30 p.m. today. I encourage everyone to attend to find out about professional development opportunities available to all.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members to not interject during the giving of notices of motions.

Later,

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown has gone over time in giving notice of her motion. I will stop her now.

Bills

BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (09:46):
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. This bill makes miscellaneous amendments to 14 principal Acts across the Better Regulation portfolio. The bill will ensure these legislative schemes can continue to operate as Parliament intended, by making minor but important amendments to modernise regulatory provisions and administrative processes, ensure the laws remain relevant and fit for purpose, strengthen consumer protection, clarify legal requirements and improve customer outcomes. The amendments contained in this bill are mainly administrative and non-contentious but will implement real and positive changes to the way the people of New South Wales interact with laws and government processes. These proposed reforms have been identified through consultation with industry stakeholders, the development of supporting regulations and the day-to-day functions of the various agencies involved. Other amendments have arisen as a result of taking a stewardship approach to the legislation across the Better Regulation portfolio to ensure our legislation remains fit for purpose.

This Government has already made significant inroads in modernising legislation, reducing red tape and removing unnecessary regulatory burden. For instance, in the past two years the Parliament has passed the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019, the Racing Legislation Amendment Act 2019 and the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020, which sought to improve the operation of a wide range of legislation in this portfolio. Almost all of the amendments contained in those Acts have commenced and are

already improving the effectiveness of the law. These amendment Acts are a testament to my expectations for this bill to further deliver on this Government's commitment to the people and businesses in New South Wales.

I will now turn to the amendments in the bill. First, I turn to the amendments in the bill relating to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. The bill introduces a number of amendments seeking to provide greater flexibility, clarity and certainty for incorporated associations in New South Wales. Associations represent a diverse range of activities, from sporting clubs and music groups to charities, childcare services and migrant support services. By bringing people together for a shared purpose, associations are pivotal in weaving the social and cultural threads of the community, particularly in rural and regional areas. The Associations Incorporation Act regulates the conduct of affairs by associations. That includes the requirement to establish a committee that oversees the management of the affairs of the association. Committee members are elected or appointed by the association and hold office according to the association's constitution. These members are volunteers who offer up their time to contribute to the value of associations in bringing positive outcomes for the local community.

Schedule 1.1 to the bill introduces a new provision into the Act that will enable incorporated associations to fill vacancies on their committee if the number of members is less than the number required to establish a quorum. At present, there is a level of uncertainty regarding the validity of actions taken by committee members where there are insufficient numbers to maintain a quorum. The new section 28A will address this concern by clarifying the legal capacity of committees to appoint additional members, where needed. This will strengthen members' confidence in the governance framework and enable them to carry out their day-to-day functions and responsibilities without disruption. When an association ends, the bill also provides members with greater autonomy and choice in the management of leftover assets that have been accumulated over the years using member funds.

Section 65 of the Act currently requires surplus property to be distributed in accordance with a special resolution passed by members of the association. However, in many cases a special resolution is not achievable, particularly where an association has dissolved or has had its registration cancelled. The bill will amend section 65 to allow any surplus to be distributed in accordance with the association's constitution or, where the constitution does not include relevant provisions, in accordance with a special resolution or, where a special resolution cannot be passed, in accordance with a direction of the secretary. The bill also will provide greater flexibility for associations to distribute surplus funds or property upon voluntary cancellation of their registration. The Act will be amended to enable surplus funds to be distributed to members or former members of an association where those members are, at the time of distribution, an entity that is prohibited from distributing property to its members.

Further, the bill will remove existing penalties in the Act that apply to former committee members or public officers who fail to hand over documents within 14 days after vacating office. The current maximum penalty of \$110 does not serve as an effective deterrent against non-compliance with these provisions. Disputes arising from a breach of these requirements are also not capable of resolution by NSW Fair Trading and associations are encouraged to take civil action. By removing the inconsequential penalties, the bill will afford greater clarity to the role of Fair Trading and reduce delays for parties seeking the appropriate dispute resolution pathway.

The bill also makes important amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to strengthen the rights and safeguards for more than 60,000 retirement village residents in New South Wales, while reducing operational uncertainty for the industry. Schedule 1.13 to the bill will insert a new offence provision for operators who fail to comply with current requirements to provide residents with prescribed marketing information. This includes the requirement for operators to notify residents of all offers to purchase their premises and to provide a monthly marketing report upon residents' request. There is, however, no straightforward mechanism currently under the Act to enforce these obligations. As a result, residents must resort to formal dispute resolution pathways in seeking justice, which can be administratively complex and costly. To ensure proper remedy is provided without unnecessary delay, the bill introduces a new offence provision, which will enable NSW Fair Trading to take appropriate enforcement action for non-compliance.

The bill will insert also a new regulation-making power, which will provide flexibility for the agency to mandate certain matters that must be contained in a valuer's determination. The particulars will be prescribed on a case-by-case basis following the necessary regulatory impact assessment and stakeholder consultation. The bill also addresses the existing ambiguity in the Act governing the way a former retirement village occupant may apply for an exit entitlement order for the same residential premises. The bill will amend section 182AB (8) of the Act to clarify that only one application may be made following the prescribed period, not within the prescribed period, and only one further application may be made in the following six- or 12-month period.

Lastly, the bill will clarify the legal requirements around the distribution of surplus funds in a retirement village's annual account. Current industry practice indicates that residents are typically charged a recurring fee per residence, and not per resident, to cover the village's general expenses. However, the Act currently provides that

surplus funds are to be distributed to each resident. The amendment in this bill will secure a fair and equitable distribution of surplus funds by requiring payments to each residence in a retirement village.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill relating to the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020. The Act was enacted to deliver on the Government's promise to provide New South Wales with a built environment where safety, quality and accountability are prioritised. Indeed, the Act already supports sector compliance with legal duties and obligations and provides disciplinary measures against registered practitioners. Disciplinary proceedings provide an efficient mechanism to suspend or cancel a registration where an individual is found to be in breach of the Act. However, individual directors are currently not subject to any disciplinary proceedings, leaving prosecution as the only means to prevent entities from phoenixing and rendering the same individuals unaccountable for personal breaches of the law. The bill ensures that individual wrongdoers are held to account by allowing disciplinary action to be taken against individual directors of a registered body corporate. These amendments reflect the Government commitment to increase accountability and compliance in the building and construction industry.

The bill also makes a minor amendment to substitute references to "relevant authorisation" in the Act and Regulation with "equivalent authorisation". There is currently no comparable scheme in other jurisdictions, and this amendment will remove ambiguity and ensure that the law operates as intended. To further deliver on the Government's commitment to the residential building sector, schedule 1.12 makes a number of minor but important amendments to address regulatory gaps in the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement) Act 2020. Section 28 of the Act currently provides the use of undertakings as a response to misconduct by developers. The bill inserts an additional power for the secretary to enter into written undertakings with a developer to claim a rectification bond that may be applied to meet the costs of eliminating, minimising or remediating a serious defect in a residential apartment building. If the bond is not provided, the bill will also enable the secretary to make an order prohibiting the issue of an occupation certificate and, if relevant, the registration of a strata plan for a strata scheme in relation to a residential apartment building.

As a result of these amendments, NSW Fair Trading and the Office of the Building Commissioner will be empowered to undertake swift and cost-effective responses to misconduct to protect consumers and uphold public confidence in the sector. Further, the bill will allow the secretary to issue a building work rectification order if the secretary has a reasonable belief that a residential apartment building has a serious defect. This will give consumers peace of mind that there is a proper recourse available in the event of a serious building defect. The bill also ensures that rectification measures commence as soon as possible by no longer requiring the secretary to notify the Registrar General in respect of a proposed building work rectification order. The department has been advised that the Registrar General does not need to make representations in response to notification of a proposed rectification order served on a third party. By simplifying the process, the bill will enable rectification work to commence as early as possible to address the identified risks of harm.

Finally, the use and power of media outlets, including newspapers, social media and the internet, have become vast and information is more widely shared, disseminated, and updated at a rate faster than ever before. While legally sensitive information, such as that relating to criminal proceedings, is subject to privacy and confidential laws for the protection of integrity and procedural fairness, a court-made publication order in the context of consumer protection can greatly benefit the public. For example, the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 specifies that the court may make an order directing the defendant to make public details of their conviction. Recently, in *Environment Protection Authority v Sydney Water Corporation*, the court relied upon this provision to order the defendant to publicise their conviction, the penalty and the judgement on their social media accounts.

The bill inserts a similar publication order as a power of the court into the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. The new section 56A will enable the court to issue a publication order compelling a developer to publicly release information relating to an offence or the issue of orders made against them. This amendment will enhance industry standards and strengthen consumer protection in the sector by adding a further deterrent to secure the highest possible level of compliance with the requirements under this Act.

I now move to schedule 1.11 to the bill, which amends the Home Building Act 1989 to better reflect and clarify the intent of the law. The Act currently provides that a member of a partnership and an officer of a corporation may be subject to disciplinary action for improper conduct. However, the Act does not provide the process for how disciplinary action may be taken. The bill will insert standalone provisions to clarify that disciplinary action can be taken against these individuals to increase accountability in the building sector. As I have noted earlier, it is imperative that the Government secures the ongoing compliance and enforcement capabilities of local regulatory bodies in this State such as NSW Fair Trading to allow investigative and enforcement actions to be carried out expeditiously. To that end, the bill will also amend the Home Building Act

to allow the regulator to take disciplinary action against a licence holder who fails in the future to comply with the requirements of a building rectification order.

I now move to schedule 1.16 to the bill, which deals with legislation governing the tow truck industry in New South Wales. The bill will make several amendments to the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998 to clarify the obligations of tow truck operators dealing with vehicles in holding yards and to broaden the circumstances in which payments can be made from the Tow Truck Industry Fund. Currently, section 20 of the Act imposes conditions on operators' licences, including to provide vehicle owners with reasonable access to holding yards to collect items from the vehicles. This does not extend to providing access for owners to remove their motor vehicles from the holding yard. NSW Fair Trading has identified issues where rival companies refuse to provide access to vehicles that have been towed to a holding yard. If a consumer wishes to have their vehicle moved to allow for repairs or a quotation for repairs from their preferred repairer, they can face barriers to access and end up paying longer holding fees while the dispute continues.

The bill will create additional licence conditions for tow truck operators requiring them to release vehicles from holding yards after the owner, or their agent, has paid the requisite fees. Operators will also be prevented from removing vehicles from their holding yards for the purpose of repair or for obtaining a quote for repair, unless authorised to do so by the owner of the motor vehicle or their agent. These amendments will strengthen the rights of consumers and restore the balance of power between individual owners and tow truck companies. The bill will also make amendments to section 91 of the Act to allow monies to be paid from the Tow Truck Industry Fund to cover expenses incurred in the prosecution of tow truck operators under the Act, the Crimes Act or the Australian Consumer Law. These amendments, together, send a clear message to the towing industry that this Government does not tolerate misconduct by persons who have been licensed to undertake work and provide services to the people of New South Wales.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill relating to the regulatory functions of the Long Service Corporation. The Long Service Corporation administers portable long service schemes for employees in the building and construction and contract cleaning industries in New South Wales. The key legislative instruments for administration of these schemes are the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Scheme) Act 2010. These two Acts were recently brought into the Better Regulation portfolio. Unlike other legislation administered by NSW Fair Trading and SafeWork NSW, these two Acts currently do not contain any penalty notice provisions. Schedules 1.3 and 1.5 to the bill will introduce penalty notices to these schemes, enabling authorised officers to issue a notice to any person found guilty of a penalty notice offence. This will act as a stronger deterrent against noncompliance by strengthening the corporation's compliance and enforcement powers.

In addition, the bill will expand the powers of inspectors under the contract cleaning industry Act to authorise them to compel production of employee records and to take possession of records to be used as evidence. These are appropriate and reasonable compliance and enforcement powers for the corporation's officers to have and are consistent with other laws within the portfolio. Sharing information will also be made easier by the new section 114A, which will create an information sharing arrangement between the Long Service Corporation and relevant agencies. These amendments will ensure that the Long Service Corporation can perform all of its regulatory functions more effectively.

I now turn to the suite of reforms in the bill that seek to modernise regulatory schemes and government processes. Firstly, I move to the amendments in the bill which remove the requirement for physical inspection of registers of records in the Fair Trading Act 1987, the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017 and the Funeral Funds Act 1979. These Acts currently impose outdated requirements for persons to visit an office of the department to inspect physical registers of records. For example, the Fair Trading Act contains a provision requiring the department to maintain a register of undertakings accepted under the Australian Consumer Law and to make this available for inspection during ordinary business hours. This register is already available on the NSW Fair Trading website for public access. The current provision is therefore rarely, if ever, used and places unnecessary administrative burden and costs on the public.

Similarly, the register maintained under the Building Products (Safety) Act is already publicly available on the Fair Trading website free of charge, so a provision enabling in-person inspection is superfluous. The Funeral Funds Act 1979 also imposes a requirement for physical inspection of annual returns. While these records are not publicly available, the location of the registry at Bathurst where the records are held makes physical inspection largely impracticable. The bill will amend section 49I of the Act to provide the secretary with the power to make relevant information in annual returns available for public access on the internet. Where an annual return record has not been made publicly available, a person will be able to make a request to the secretary to provide a copy of that record in a manner determined by the secretary, which could include email or other electronic means.

The amendments to these provisions are minor but are necessary to ensure government processes remain relevant and up to date with technological developments.

I now move to schedule 1.14 to the bill, which makes minor amendments to the Storage Liens Act 1935. Last year, as part of the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020, the Government improved the way unclaimed proceeds were dealt with from the sale of goods in storage liens situations. This was achieved by bringing the process under the Unclaimed Money Act 1995, consistent with other Acts that require compliance with the Unclaimed Money Act for any leftover unclaimed sale proceeds. This amendment simplified and streamlined the process, allowing consumers who had their stored goods sold to search for any unclaimed money in New South Wales using a single database administered by Revenue NSW.

The bill before this House today seeks to further modernise the legislative scheme by incorporating the remaining provision of the Storage Liens Regulation 2019 into the parent Act. At present, the only substantive provision in the regulation is clause 4, which sets out the requirements of a "prescribed notice". However, there are only two occasions in the Act where the term "prescribed notice" is used. Sections 5 and 6 require that a prescribed notice be served on a storer by a person claiming to be the owner of the stored goods or having some interest therein. The bill effectively rolls clause 4 from the regulation into the Act, enabling the regulation to be repealed. This will reduce regulatory burden and red tape without compromising the original intent of the legislation, by ensuring appropriate notice, in writing, is still provided to storers.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill amending the definition of "qualified auditors" in the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and the Funeral Funds Act 1979. Currently, only registered company auditors or persons approved by the secretary are authorised to undertake audit work for incorporated associations. For audits under the Funeral Funds Act, only registered company auditors can undertake this work. In other laws within the portfolio such as the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003 and the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, qualified auditors include registered company auditors and authorised audit companies within the meaning of the Corporations Act; members of a professional accounting body within the meaning of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 of the Commonwealth; and any persons approved by the secretary.

To provide greater flexibility and consistency across the laws, the bill will expand the scope of "qualified auditors" in the associations Act and the Funeral Funds Act to automatically include authorised audit companies within the meaning of the Corporations Act. A qualified auditor under the associations Act will also include a member of a professional accounting body within the meaning of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission law who holds a public practice certificate. This reform, though minor and largely administrative, will assist community groups running associations and funeral fund businesses to access a broader range of qualified auditors. This may result in savings in both time and cost. The amendments will also contribute to the local economy and increase opportunities for skills development by expanding the range of recognised qualifications for audit work.

Finally, I turn to amendments in the bill that seek to correct outdated and inaccurate references in the law. Schedule 1.2 to the bill amends the Biofuels Act 2007 to update references to the departments represented on the Biofuels Expert Panel following recent machinery-of-government changes. Another amendment to the Biofuels Act seeks to futureproof the panel membership by providing the Minister with discretionary power to appoint an additional industry representative to the panel as needed. This amendment will achieve one of the recommendations arising from the recent statutory review of the Act to increase collaboration between government and industry in the expert panel's deliberations.

The bill also makes minor drafting amendments to the Electricity Supply Act 1995 to provide better alignment with the national electricity laws. Schedule 1.7 to the bill will replace a number of references to "metering providers" in the Act with "metering co-ordinators", which is the more accurate terminology. The Act will adopt the existing definition of "metering co-ordinators" in the national laws to clearly distinguish between these two paths and parties. Although this amendment is largely technical in nature, it will provide practical improvements to the way the New South Wales legal framework is understood and applied across Australia, and will minimise occurrences of misunderstanding and disputes. The bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. The amendments in the bill strengthen consumer protection, support businesses and improve the community's experience with government services. I am confident that these reforms will drive positive outcomes in the community and improve public confidence in the law. They address emerging issues, close gaps in the law, improve industry compliance, clarify roles and responsibilities and correct drafting errors. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Condolences***HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHILIP THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH****Debate resumed from 11 May 2021.****Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (10:13):**

The engagement of Prince Philip and Elizabeth was announced to the public on 10 July 1947 and they were married the same year in a ceremony broadcast across the world, bringing much-needed joy to the streets of England, where the devastation of war was still apparent. Following their marriage and in the years before Elizabeth became queen, the couple held a royal residence in Malta. They spent several years on the Mediterranean island, living a relatively normal life as a naval family before returning to London in 1952, due to the passing of King George VI. The marriage between Prince Philip and Her Majesty the Queen welcomed four children: His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales; the Princess Royal, Princess Anne; Prince Andrew, Duke of York; and Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex.

One of the hardest working members of the royal family, Prince Philip remained Her Majesty's loyal consort for more than six decades. He stood by her side, travelled the globe and completed over 22,000 solo engagements representing the Crown. Additionally, he participated in the work of many organisations, particularly favouring those focused on the environment, education and sport. A talented polo player, Prince Philip won the Gold Cup at the British Open championship in 1957 and 1966. Most notably, Prince Philip launched the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the 1950s, a life-changing program that works with organisations across the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth to help young people gain essential skills, experience and confidence and build resilience to successfully navigate adult life. However, when touching upon Prince Philip's achievements today, I would argue that his greatest achievement was his unwavering dedication to Her Majesty the Queen and the people of our great Commonwealth.

Any tribute to the late Prince Philip cannot exclude the loss that must be felt by Her Majesty the Queen. In a world inflicted with the COVID pandemic and restrictions on the number of attendees at funerals, it was truly heartbreaking to see Her Majesty sitting alone whilst honouring his memory at the funeral. Sadly, the pandemic did not discriminate. One can only imagine the grief all families must go through at funerals while having to socially distance from others. The world mourns the loss of an extraordinary man and a truly great individual who dedicated his life to selfless public duty and his family. I thank Prince Philip for his loyalty and service. May his memory remain in our hearts and minds forever. On behalf of the State and the New South Wales Government, I give my deepest condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the royal family on the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:16): On behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, I make a contribution to debate on the condolence motion on the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. It is therefore appropriate that I deliver this most sincere and heartfelt condolence with recognition of Prince Philip's full title: His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Earl of Merioneth, Baron Greenwich, Royal Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Extra Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, Member of the Order of Merit, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Grand Master and First and Principal Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Knight of the Order of Australia, Additional Member of the Order of the Order of New Zealand, Extra Companion of the Queen's Service Order, Royal Chief of the Order of Logohu, Extraordinary Companion of the Order of Canada, Extraordinary Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Lord of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Privy Councillor of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Personal Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty, Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom.

I support the comments of members who have thus far contributed to the condolence motion, recognising the many accomplishments of Prince Philip and the many lives he has positively influenced and enriched throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. I highlight something of Prince Philip's life that may not have been raised in previous contributions: his love of hunting and shooting—a passion that was, and remains, a family tradition that Prince Philip has proudly passed on to his children, his grandchildren, and more recently his great-grandchildren. In 2018 the then five-year-old Prince George accompanied his great-grandfather, Prince Philip, on a grouse hunt. Prince Philip developed the Sandringham shoot, which is one of the premier wild bird shoots in the United Kingdom and which is recognised as a model of sustainable hunting conservation.

The 20,000-acre estate is best known for its Boxing Day shoot, where members of the royal family enjoying Christmas at Sandringham House go out for a driven pheasant day of shooting. Prince Philip's wing shooting interests also included wildfowling. Prince Philip often spoke in defence of shooting sports and throughout his life made the point that environmental activists and shooters often have the same aims. Prince Philip had a love

and a passion for deerstalking at Balmoral as well as grouse shooting and big game hunting abroad. One of his most recent hunting excursions abroad was in Spain, where he hunted deer and wild boar.

Prince Philip also worked hard to promote shooting as the UK's premier model for conservation. He was a patron of the shooting organisation the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, which he last visited in 2010 when he officially opened the new Duke of Edinburgh Building at the Marford Mill headquarters. His work for the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and his promotion of a living, working countryside often made him a target for animal rights activists. In 2019 the Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Charles jointly validated the 1868 Royal Warrant of Appointment to London-based gun maker James Purdey and Sons Ltd, maintaining the royal support for firearms and shooting. Prince Philip was resolutely pro shooting and pro gun ownership. In 1996, amid national calls to ban firearms after the tragic Dunblane shooting, he caused controversy when he said:

If a cricketer, for instance, suddenly decided to go into a school and batter a lot of people to death with a cricket bat, which he could do very easily, I mean, are you going to ban cricket bats?

Prince Philip didn't mince his words; he delivered it straight. He leaves heirs who will continue his traditions of a love of shooting, hunting and the outdoors. We celebrate His Royal Highness Prince Philip's life and his steadfast and loyal service to the Queen and the Commonwealth. Prince Philip will be fondly remembered by his fellow shooters, hunters and outdoors men and women, for whom he advocated. May he rest in peace.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021

Debate resumed from 6 May 2021.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (10:21): It seems so long ago that I started this speech. This is my third attempt to finish it so hopefully today we will do it—cross your fingers. I left off talking about Dine & Discover vouchers, which are fantastic for the community and are an easy way to encourage people to get out and about. Previously the Minister was present in the Chamber. The idea, which has been very well taken up, is that people get four vouchers: two for food and two for experiences. I said previously that Symbio, which is a zoo in my electorate, has had a very big uptake of Dine & Discover. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday over the past couple of weeks since Dine & Discover has started the car park has been full. There is also some anecdotal evidence. I went to a restaurant that has been taking Dine & Discover vouchers and was one of the first to sign up. The owner said his income is up by six grand a month from the previous 12 months, obviously during COVID, so he is very pleased.

Some other upgrades to note in the budget last year include the Mount Ousley Interchange, which is not necessarily in my electorate but does take in part of my electorate. The interchange will be near the University of Wollongong and will make that area a little bit safer and easier to get through. It will be a loop road into the university and around onto side roads, which will make it a lot easier to get through and will mean that heavy traffic can go straight through without being slowed down by traffic either merging or trying to exit. There has also been a significant budget increase for the Princes Highway upgrades.

Part of that is the Gateway to the South Pinch Point Program, which has now been going for a couple of years. There has been additional funding for the progression of the Princes Highway upgrades. In my electorate that includes making more clearway on the Princes Highway and side roads to make it easier for people to get to work and home again. The pinch point program is nearly coming to an end. There is still a little bit of work to be done, but the work that has been done in my electorate has been welcomed by the public as a great way of improving their drive around the Sutherland shire and further afield.

I note the support for families within last year's budget. Childcare support was part of that. Service NSW opened at Engadine and many people have had a cost-of-living assessment, where people make an appointment and see what rebates are available for families and single people from the State Government and further afield. One of my constituents reported that she went in as a bit of a folly just to check it all out and see what it was all about. She ended up getting back \$1,200 a year. She was a single pensioner and she made it quite clear that that means a holiday for her. She would not have been able to take holidays without getting those rebates back. It put money back in her pocket and she was very pleased about that. I may have reported this but I cannot remember because this is the third time I have tried to finish off this speech: About 3,000 learner drivers have got their P-plates through that Service NSW centre since it was opened in the middle of last year. Because there was a backlog during COVID, it is a great thing that people are taking advantage of it and moving onto their P-plates.

The budget also provides support for families and childcare support, as I said. I have many childcare centres in my electorate and the support from the New South Wales Government has been greatly welcomed. All in all Heathcote has done well out of the budget and I thank the Premier and the Treasurer for their steady hand on the tiller. For more than a year during this crisis our communities in New South Wales have been under strain. We are all a little bit tired and defeated from all the natural disasters we have had, and of course COVID on top of that. All members in this place would understand how hard it has been for the past 12 months to 18 months. I thank the Government for supporting our people in each individual electorate. New South Wales is travelling reasonably well through the COVID crisis compared to the rest of the States and the Commonwealth. I thank the Premier and the Treasurer for all their work and for the hard decisions they have had to make through that period.

I finish by thanking all members of Parliament over the past 18 months. As I said, it has been very hard for everybody. We all have our individual issues within our electorates but we are in this place to make a difference. I think all of us have worked together reasonably over the past 18 months. New South Wales is a good place for people to live and bring up families, with the possibility of future jobs that we will be able to offer people because of the way the State has dealt with the crises of the past 18 months. I again thank the Premier, all Ministers and the Opposition for all their assistance through the period of 2020 and 2021.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:28): I appreciate the opportunity to speak yet again in this House on the New South Wales budget. My speech this year will not be too different to my speech in previous years because, quite frankly, nothing has changed. The budget has a massive structural problem, which has been built into the budget since 2011 under the then Treasurer Mike Baird and has been perpetuated by every single Treasurer since. If members think I am some Johnny-come-lately to this conversation, I encourage them to have a look at all my previous speeches on this issue. Look at the comments I have made in the media and my commentary and opinion pieces over the years. They all say exactly the same thing, whether they are on this year's budget papers, last year's budget papers or the budget papers in previous years. That is, we have a massive problem in this State because this Government is racking up intergenerational debt. It is racking up debt at a rate that is jeopardising our triple-A credit rating. It is getting rid of our income streams. At the same time, it is maxing out the credit card. There is no way out of this. We are in a death spiral to the bottom without a significant change in ideology.

What we have seen and heard in recent weeks is a Premier who clearly went to an election with a lie and has completely backflipped on a commitment she made. I knew, when she made the commitment that she was not going to privatise anything else, that her budget and Treasury position would not be sustainable without continuing to privatise. That structural problem is built into the budget and it will require a massive ideological shift to get us out of the intergenerational hole of debt and the intergenerational hole of poor credit ratings, which means higher borrowing costs. That is where we are headed. I have been saying this for years. I have been telling this Chamber the same thing for years, and members who do not read the budget come in here and make comments to the contrary that are ill informed.

I would suggest that many members of this Parliament, particularly those on the Government benches who have their speeches about the budget scripted for them by Treasury, do not even realise that the budget papers consist of generally five books, and on one occasion six books, and that the budget is more than just the headlines that we are given by the Treasurer in a speech. That lack of knowledge about the New South Wales budget underpins the lack of quality of debate in this House about where we are headed. So I encourage members of this House who want to critique the comments I am about to make to simply go to Budget Paper No. 1, go to the tables and appendices at the back and look at pages D-2 and D-3. If you have a sinew of financial and mathematical ability, read what is in there and you will see what I am saying is 100 per cent true.

I want to start with debt. I congratulate this Government on its very tricky, sneaky language around debt. I refer to the phrase "net debt". This Government has been prosecuting—very sneakily but very cleverly—an issue around net debt in recent years. When those opposite say "zero net debt"—and sometimes many of them forget to say "net" debt—technically at that moment in time or snapshot they are correct. But also, in their heart and in their mind, they know that that is not going to be the long-term position of the State—that it is only very temporary and short term. What the Government has been doing is taking out tens of billions of dollars in new borrowings at the same time as selling tens of billion dollars' worth of public assets. The money from the sales is temporarily in the bank and sits beside the borrowings, and you go, "Wow, put them on a seesaw and it is kind of zero". Yes, it is. But those opposite also know that in relation to that bucket of money from all those assets that the Government has sold and that weighs down one end of the seesaw, the Government is committed to spending that money on projects. That means that the bucket might start with tens of billions of dollars in it, but it is eventually going to be zero. When I say "eventually", I do not mean on the far, far off; I mean in the coming year or two or three years. And those opposite have always known that.

That bucket of money on one end of the financial seesaw, giving us net debt, was always meant to be emptied. So now the only thing that this State has on the seesaw is the other bucket, which is our borrowings.

Those borrowings are weighing down the seesaw of the financial status of this State and those borrowings are going to be left to be paid off by future generations. Those opposite know that. So the clever, sneaky language about net debt is just that: clever, sneaky language. The Government has been racking up the debt. Here is a fact: When the Government came to power, the credit card of this State—the borrowings or the debt of this State—had \$22 billion on it. I acknowledge that just three years prior to that it had \$16 billion on it. Why did it jump from \$16 billion to \$22 billion in that reasonably short time? That is a jump of about 20 per cent or 25 per cent.

Well, we had a thing called the global financial crisis and the then Labor Government had to make some really hard decisions. There were some cuts to some services, there were some projects that were cancelled, there were other projects that went ahead and there were some borrowings made. We increased the debt by 25 per cent. Let us cast our minds back to some of the language that was used around the global financial crisis. It was the greatest financial crisis facing the modern world. It was the biggest turn on the head of the economies of many countries of this globe. During that period Labor increased our borrowings by 25 per cent, which in actual terms meant we went from a debt of \$16 billion to a debt of \$22 billion. Remember those numbers because they are really important. Labor cancelled some projects, we pushed through with some other projects, we cut some services and we kept our finances in good shape.

In fact, New South Wales was the only economy in Australia during the financial crisis that had its credit rating go from "at jeopardy" triple-A to "strong", "strengthened". That is what Labor did during the global financial crisis—\$16 billion out to \$22 billion. We are currently going through a crisis, which is the COVID pandemic. The Government, in the period from when it first came to office up to the COVID pandemic, not only had sold more than \$60 billion worth of assets but it also had managed to increase the borrowings of this State on top of the \$60 billion worth of sales. It also had managed to increase the borrowings of this State by \$40 billion—a 300 per cent increase in borrowings—when there was no financial crisis. The Government turned our triple-A credit rating from "strong" to "weak"—with no crisis. Compare that to Labor in government. Labor steered the State through a crisis, increased borrowings by 25 per cent and strengthened our credit rating. The Government, with no crisis at the time, was responsible for a 300 per cent increase in our borrowings. The State went from a debt of \$22 billion to a debt of \$66 billion, or \$64 billion, and the Coalition Government weakened our credit rating. That is pre-COVID. What journey are we on now?

The journey we are now on means that our borrowings will go from \$64 billion out to \$157 billion—another 250 per cent increase on top of the 300 per cent increase that the Government has already imposed on this State. Plus the Government has continued to sell billions of dollars' worth of the State's assets. At the end of the New South Wales budget's forward projections, what does the State have? It has a \$160 billion debt—borrowings—that is racked up on our credit card. The Government will have sold more of the State's profit-generating assets—profits that would have come back into revenue. So our revenue is diminished. The Government has made other ideological tax changes that have led to \$5 billion less income from taxation sources. So it has cut that stream as well. We no longer own the assets that used to bring the money in, nor do we charge some of the taxes that used to bring the money in, and at the same time the Government has racked up \$160 billion on the credit card.

When the Coalition came to government the debt was \$22 billion. By that measure, the Government is 800 per cent more in debt, with less income to pay for it. Who is going to pay? On their watch, it certainly will not be that lot over there. The debt is so large now, it will not be payable by the current generation of taxpayers. It will be an anchor weighing down not only future generations who have to pay it back but also the State, which will have extremely restricted borrowings going forward; will lose its triple-A credit rating, essentially, by the time the debt reaches \$160 billion; and will be borrowing future monies at a higher rate. That means that future budgets will be extremely constrained. That is the model that you lot, who have been in government since 2011, have set up.

Not only that, by legislation the Government has prevented us from paying down debt. The State is not allowed to pay down the debt. We are not allowed to pay back any of the money borrowed. The Government has not paid back any of the money it borrowed since coming to government; it has only paid interest. The Restart NSW legislation, which then Treasurer Mike Bard put in place, stops us from paying back the debt. That money, any excess funds, any funds from the sale of assets, any windfall gains must go into the Restart NSW Fund to be spent on more projects—projects which from the moment they are built or even before they are opened are costing the State money to maintain. They are not income-generating assets. The Government has not built a single income-generating asset since coming to government. It has privatised some that will make income and that income will go to those private entities.

So the Government is racking up the debt, getting rid of our income and preventing us from paying down the debt. That is the model it has created. It does not end there because a lot of the assets that the Government has sold were buildings and assets that we used to own and that used to go up in value. The Government sold them.

Instead of us owning an asset that is going up in value and against which we could borrow, the Government has sold those buildings and then rented them back because we still need them for the purpose of providing services to the people. We are now renting. The Government has put us on an eternal cycle, a recurrent budget problem, which is to rent the buildings back that we used to own. That is massively impacting our recurrent budget in two ways: First, we are renting buildings that we used to own because we still need to provide services and, secondly, we are building assets that cost money to maintain.

The Government is jamming up the balance in this State between recurrent and capital funding. We cannot borrow more money because eventually the banks will say no and/or the interest charged on the debt will be so high that it will cripple the State's economy. We will lose our credit rating. That is at the capital end. At the recurrent end, the Government is loading us up massively. What do you lot over there do? Every single time you create a financial crisis. They always create a financial crisis; it is what they do. Every time Coalition governments are in power, they create a financial crisis and the reason is because they actually want to attack public services. Whenever there is a financial crisis in this State, and we have seen it three times in this current Government over the past 10 years—

Ms Robyn Preston: Just give them all a pay rise. Keep throwing pay rises out there. We can't afford it, but you do that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. Members will make all comments through the Chair.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Hawkesbury because she just proved my theory. This is what the Government does. This is what conservative governments across the globe do. They create a financial crisis and they immediately attack the public services, which are there to serve the public by providing services that people need. Anyone in regional New South Wales will have seen our services attacked wilfully over the past 10 years. We all know that we have fewer services now. Census data backs that up. Regional areas have lost hundreds and hundreds of public service jobs. Interestingly, they have grown in the city but have been lost from regional areas. We have fewer services. This is the New South Wales budget. I know that some members will criticise me in the House or publicly. But guess what? I have been reading the New South Wales budgets for 10 years. Have you?

I am open to criticism. I am very open to being proved incorrect. I invite members to come and see me with budget books and documents and say, "Mate, you said this; that's not right. Here is where it is not right." Come and see me because I have put nothing on the record that I cannot back up with New South Wales budget papers. I do not write them. The Treasurer writes them every year and has full control over them. I do not make it up. They are the Government's facts and figures. I issue an open invitation to anyone who wants to bring any budget document to me and say, "You were wrong when you said this, and this is why." Bring it on. I issue that invitation every time I make a speech on a budget, and not one Government member has ever come to see me to say, "You're wrong. This is where you got it wrong." That is where their criticisms of me fall over. That is where they die an immediate death because they have nothing, no fact with which to unpick these truths.

Yes, the New South Wales budget has a structural problem. Yes, that problem has been brought on by this Government. Yes, it is underpinned by their ideology. Yes, we have intergenerational debt that is 800 per cent higher than when they came to office. Yes, they have sold tens of billions of dollars' worth of assets. Yes, they have built new assets that will cost us money every day. Yes, they have turned us from property owners to property renters. That is their legacy which will haunt this State for decades to come. The Government never expected a third term and they are stuck with these landmines now. The Government is using COVID to cover up the massive debt that they have racked up and pretending it was unavoidable. It was avoidable; they chose not to do it.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:49): I contribute to debate on the 2020-21 New South Wales budget, which has delivered an economic rebound from the challenges of 2020 and has kept the people of New South Wales COVID safe through continued support for NSW Health. It is fitting that I speak on the budget the morning after the Federal budget was handed down. That budget also aims to support the economic rebound across our country and continues to invest in New South Wales. Throughout 2020 the people of New South Wales weathered the significant storm that was the global pandemic. The consequences of the pandemic particularly affected the movement of people and trade, which impacted the State's ability to generate the necessary revenue to continue investing in and providing the quality of life that our citizens expect and deserve.

The budget lays the foundation for the Government to deliver a stronger future for New South Wales. Our record of strong economic management meant that New South Wales was ready when the crisis came. Now we are using our fiscal firepower to get households and businesses back on the road to recovery and to chart a steady course back to surplus so that we are ready for the next challenge. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier on a budget that was designed to build New South Wales back better and stronger by supporting families, businesses

and our local communities, including within my electorate of North Shore. The budget includes \$29 billion for the largest health and economic support package of any State. Safeguarding the health of the community has been the number one priority in the New South Wales Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why we have committed more than \$3 billion to facilitate our COVID-19 health response and enhance our world-leading health system.

The Government is focused on keeping our community safe while maintaining an open economy by delivering a COVID-19 recovery plan that will create jobs across New South Wales. Through strong fiscal management, the Berejiklian Government has provided an unprecedented support package that has reignited our economy and delivered for our local communities. The budget will support people who are doing it tough by easing the strain of the economic and health crisis, including through the provision of tutors for schoolchildren and record mental health support. The Government has committed \$169.4 million over four years to provide vital mental health support so that more people can access the help they need both now and into the future. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may continue for some people in our community, which is why it is more important than ever before to invest in a strong, well-rounded and responsive mental health system.

The Government is kickstarting the economy with a blitz of small, local, shovel-ready projects to generate tens of thousands of jobs in every corner of the State. To further support job creation and economic growth, the Government has created the \$1 billion Working for NSW fund, which will sustain businesses, create cash flow and retain employees. Looking ahead to the post-pandemic recovery, we are investing in our people and their future by upskilling the New South Wales workforce. That will help jobseekers get back to work and also secure the skills that will power our economy into the future. The Skilling for Recovery training package will be supported by a Government investment of \$318.6 million over two years. The program will support school leavers who are entering the workforce by offering more than 100,000 low-cost or fee-free training places.

The budget is delivering where it matters: in health, education, roads and transport. It provides support for families and for those who need it most, and it creates the right conditions for businesses to grow. The budget will provide support to the hospitality and tourism industries, which have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, through Dine & Discover vouchers that are available to every adult resident to get out and enjoy the best of New South Wales. I am pleased that my community has supported our local businesses through the program and I have enjoyed visiting the businesses that are involved in it. In my geographically constrained electorate there are far more dine options than there are discover options. However, one of the most exciting discover options is the singalong for the films *Frozen* and *Frozen 2* at the Hayden Orpheum theatre. My daughter and I will join with our fellow constituents by singing along to *Frozen* in support of that cinema.

The Government is also reducing taxes through a \$2.1 billion payroll tax cut that will make New South Wales the most attractive State in which to run a business and will encourage businesses to hire and retain employees. We are also backing small businesses that do not pay payroll tax with \$1,500 digital vouchers to be used for State and local government fees and charges. The budget will build a better New South Wales through a record \$107 billion infrastructure pipeline to continue building the roads, rail, schools, hospitals and energy infrastructure for our future. My electorate of North Shore will benefit significantly from that, with continued investment in the game-changing Sydney Metro infrastructure program. Recently I had the opportunity to go down into the tunnels at Blues Point and walk underneath Sydney Harbour as the tracks begin to be laid for the Sydney Metro project that is coming to my community.

Investment also continues for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project. All members know that Warringah Freeway is the busiest road with the most users of any road in our country. That corridor must be improved for accessibility into and beyond the CBD. The Western Harbour Tunnel is one of our most needed projects. In the past week Infrastructure Australia gave independent advice stating that tackling the congestion through that project is one of the key priorities for the entire country. The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project is progressing through continued government investment. Early works have started on the Warringah Freeway Upgrade by enabling the delivery of both of those tunnels as well as the portals to enter and exit from them.

The Beaches Link project has been sought by my community since before I was alive, let alone since I have been a member of this place. Military Road and Spit Road form one of the most congested corridors in the country. That has an impact on people who are going about their daily lives. It reduces the time that people have to spend on leisure and with their families. Even more importantly, as a local community member I know the impact rat-running has had on our local streets. When Military Road and Spit Road are over capacity, the excess traffic spills onto our local streets, which means more congestion and less road safety, particularly for schoolchildren going to and from school during peak hour. It is important for us to reclaim our local streets, where our homes are, so that they feel safer and less congested. Diverting a lot of the traffic on our local streets—which are used as

downstream access points to the CBD—through the tunnel will be a significant change for our community and will offer new opportunities to revitalise some of the villages along the Military Road and Spit Road corridor.

While my community loves and enjoys the villages of Mosman, Cremorne and Neutral Bay, which form the heart of those communities, they have a major arterial road running through their centre. The tunnel will open up significant opportunities to invest in the beautification, enhancement and improved amenity of those villages. I am working with the Minister and his team on options for those villages. The budget also provides funding to upgrade local schools in my community, which I will speak about in a moment. Three of our ferry wharves are being upgraded, along with train stations, including at Wollstonecraft, which I visited this morning. I had a look at the work that is being undertaken to upgrade Wollstonecraft station through improved accessibility including new lifts and ramps.

A new wildlife hospital has been funded for Taronga Zoo. Fifteen months ago Taronga Zoo worked throughout the bushfire season to protect and preserve our most crucial native animals and wildlife. A number of koalas in particular were saved from bushfire regions and then nurtured back to health and life at Taronga Zoo. The work of the zoo benefits the entire State and country as well as the future of our wildlife. The Government is investing in that institution in my own backyard. We have the great fortune to be able to support Taronga Zoo in its work. The investments that have been made in our local community and throughout the entire State are vital to ensure that we keep growing jobs, investing in businesses and supporting local families.

The Berejiklian Government is continuing to roll out the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. We are providing for our students, who will be our future mechanics, doctors, small business owners and leaders, with an injection of more than \$19.7 billion to provide world-class education to students across the State. Those students will reap the benefits of new infrastructure and updated technology as part of the budget. The Government has invested \$6.7 billion over four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools across our State. That ensures local communities have access to modern school facilities, which means our kids will have everything they need to excel.

Local schools in my community have a couple of different investment elements. First, through the Metro Renewal Program the Berejiklian Government is spending an additional \$240 million on more than 790 schools across regional and metropolitan areas of New South Wales. That includes seven schools within my community that will have much-needed upgrades to crucial learning facilities, amenities, administration buildings and recreational areas. Beauty Point Public School and Cammeraygal High School's junior campus will receive significant upgrades to their play areas, to encourage outdoor learning and provide adequate weather protection for students. Significant improvements will be made to the science labs at both Mosman High School and North Sydney Girls High School, to deliver first-class equipment and technology. North Sydney Boys High School will receive a makeover to its kitchen, prep room and store room for food technology classes.

Major refurbishments will be made to the toilets at Middle Harbour Public School and North Sydney Demonstration School. The program forms an essential part of the Berejiklian Government's commitment to education and also its economic response to the pandemic, because these are shovel-ready projects which our local schools have identified as priorities that are ready to go and that they have the capacity to deliver. It ensures that we can continue quality education for our students and it is set to support more than 1,300 jobs in the process by encouraging local contractors and suppliers to get involved and help build our schools for the future. The disruption to the 2020 school year has taken its toll on teachers, students and families. We will see 100 new school-based nurses and more trained, qualified school counsellors supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students and their families.

The Government is investing \$120 million to extend the existing program to provide free preschool for more than 44,000 three- to five-year-olds attending community and mobile preschools. It is providing free extra tuition for all public school students who need it to help re-engage with their education. In addition, as part of their on-the-job training, every teacher in New South Wales will be trained to better understand students' mental health to prevent vulnerable kids falling through the cracks. Success in education is about more than just how much money is spent. Further to the additional resourcing, the New South Wales Government will drive quality outcomes for all students. This includes a \$337 million investment over the 2021 school year to deliver intensive tutoring for up to 290,000 students in New South Wales schools, supporting students to recover lost learning time as a result of the COVID shutdowns.

After the challenges presented by COVID-19 throughout 2020, I am excited that local families and school staff will soon see work underway on major upgrades at two of my local schools, Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School. Members would know that my predecessor Jillian Skinner and I have a unified voice in calling for investment in our local schools. Our schools have capacity constraints, but they have done work to maximise their ability to use their land and classrooms to continue to give excellent education to students. Neutral Bay Public School cut a number of its classrooms in half to create two classrooms. They are challenging

environments, but the schools have done everything they can; it is our job to take the next step. For instance, the last major upgrade Mosman High School had was in 1991, under a previous Liberal Government.

When they form government, those opposite do not invest in communities across New South Wales, whereas the Liberal-Nationals Government always invests in every community because it believes that every student deserves the best chance in life and the best educational opportunities. My electorate misses out under Labor Governments. Planning is continuing for an upgrade to Neutral Bay Public School and I am eager to hear more about that in this year's budget. I once again express to the Treasurer and the education Minister my great desire for an upgrade of Neutral Bay Public School; they have heard it from me many times. We have worked with the communities at Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School to co-design state-of-the-art new buildings and facilities to meet the learning needs of our students and support school staff. That means getting rid of demountable classrooms while ensuring that we can accommodate future growth.

The much-awaited upgrade to Mosman High School is progressing, with the State significant development application for the project already lodged and an early contract awarded. At the moment, the designs are out for the community to observe and give feedback on, and people are really excited. Mosman High is in the centre of the village of Mosman, which has significant character and history. People are so excited to see this investment for our students. We will have a modern educational facility with the latest technologies and equipment nestled in the heart of Mosman; this will give our local students the latest facilities and increase the capacity to support the growing school community. The upgrade includes 16 new classrooms, new administration and staff facilities, a new library and a multipurpose gym and hall, along with outdoor and rooftop play spaces and new canteen facilities. Locally, there is strong demand to attend Mosman High. It is a high-performing school that has an excellent culture. It is known for its creative skills development, academic rigour and inclusion.

I thank principal Susan Wyatt, current P&C president Richard Fechner, past P&C presidents Evan Predavec and Gerhard Beukes, and the entire school community for their input and commitment to getting the design right. We are re-envisioning Mosman High as a modern place of learning for generations to come. It is an exciting project which will deliver modern resources to local students and I thank the New South Wales Government for its investment in public education infrastructure in this budget. The upgrade to North Sydney Demonstration School will benefit local families now and into the future. An overhaul of the school's facilities includes replacing old demountable classrooms with 16 new and refurbished classrooms, the addition of a school hall, an upgrade to administration facilities and improved outdoor learning spaces. We are wasting no time getting the planning and tender process underway so that construction can start this year.

The state-of-the-art upgrade will ensure that the school can continue to offer excellent teaching and learning facilities to the significant numbers of new families moving into the apartment developments across North Sydney. Historically, planners thought that people did not raise families in apartments, but that is not the nature of living in dense cities across the globe and it is not the experience of people who choose to live in the vibrant hub of the North Sydney CBD and surrounds. They want and deserve access to the same quality of education they would have in suburbs with more land available. My thanks go to principal Fiona Davis, previous principal Myra Wearne, P&C president Luke McElnea, and former P&C presidents Laurens Liberton and David Bond for their continued perseverance and dedication in getting this project off the ground. I acknowledge the hard work and resolve of the entire school community for working alongside me to secure the funding commitment. [*Extension of time*]

Planning continues for a new Environmental Education Centre at Middle Head, as well as a planned upgrade for Neutral Bay Public School. My electorate is also reaping the benefits of transport infrastructure. The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project has \$356.3 million allocated in this budget for planning and preconstruction. Not only will it benefit our local community, but it will also benefit those who are upstream and utilising the Warringah Freeway, getting from east to west, connecting to WestConnex or going to the beaches. Community feedback on the Western Harbour Tunnel project has been incredibly valuable. The Beaches Link project environmental impact statement has recently closed and we are looking forward to reading the submissions report once it is publicly available. For the Western Harbour Tunnel component, the Government is focusing on delivering more open and green space, such as revitalising Berrys Bay.

I made a commitment when I came into this place that for every tree removed during construction, two will be planted. The project has also investigated the inclusion of more footpaths and cycleways in our local area. The Berrys Bay commitment is very close to my heart. Members may know that the previous Labor Government put Berrys Bay under a lease licence with the developer of a marina. The developer went through the planning process on multiple occasions to try to put a massive marina overdevelopment in a small bay with heritage buildings, located right next to residential areas and directly across the bay from the dense residential areas of McMahon's Point. They were rejected time and again, yet the lease licence was held by the developer and the community had no recourse to try to get back the land for public use, even though it is surrounded by reserves and parkland.

The Government bought back that lease licence and made a commitment to return it to our community as public open space and revitalise the harbourside precinct. We have recently appointed a committee of community members, the Berrys Bay Community and Stakeholder Working Group, which will help facilitate the discussion of community ideas with Transport for NSW. We will work together to ensure that we get the views of our community to shape the design of the future of Berrys Bay. We will make sure that not only is it for the people, it is designed by the people.

The Government is forging ahead with the Sydney Metro. On Monday I was looking over the construction of the metro location at Victoria Cross in North Sydney. The Sydney Metro City and Southwest project has been allocated \$2.7 billion in the 2020-21 budget and \$8.3 billion over the next four years to continue its delivery. Customers will benefit from new, fully air-conditioned Sydney Metro trains every four minutes in the peak in each direction, with lifts, level platforms, platform screen doors for safety, accessibility and increased security. We are excited about the metro coming to our community.

Construction of Crows Nest's metro station is moving forward, with A W Edwards being awarded the contract to build the new station. Excavation of the station box and tunnelling is now complete, and installation of the rail track is underway all the way between Chatswood and Barangaroo. The Crows Nest station site was recently handed over to A W Edwards, and it has started initial work to build the new station's structure. If members are ever in Crows Nest or even driving through or visiting the vicinity, many kilometres away they will see some impressive cranes over Crows Nest and St Leonards. I understand some of the largest cranes in the world are working on this very deep site underneath Crows Nest. This game-changing project is an incredibly exciting opportunity for Crows Nest.

Work also continues at the Victoria Cross metro station. Lendlease will deliver the new Sydney Metro Victoria Cross integrated station development at North Sydney, including the metro station, a commercial building above the station and enhancements to pedestrian connections and retail and public spaces. The imagery that Lendlease has released of the place making in North Sydney between Miller Street and Denison is spectacular. It is exciting to think about what this project will do for the North Sydney CBD—walkability, public art and food and activities on the ground plane. It will ensure that people will want to linger and enjoy the area and they will spend their money and time in North Sydney. The area already has transformed significantly over the past 15 years. The best is yet to come. Sydney Metro really is a city-shaping project and not just a transport infrastructure project.

As I mentioned earlier, the Government is working on the Transport Access Program to upgrade public transport, including at Wollstonecraft station. Many workers were on the site this morning building the new lifts, modifying pedestrian access on the existing road bridge and undertaking platform improvements to make embarking and disembarking safer. I imagine the member for Lane Cove has many constituents who also use Wollstonecraft station. They usually walk through Smoothery Park from Greenwich to come and enjoy Wollstonecraft station. With these improvements, our station will be more accessible and safer. There will be a family-accessible toilet and an upgrade to the pedestrian pathways and stairs.

We on the North Shore are all avid users of public transport. The Government is also investing in the rebuilding of ferry wharves to improve the experience of catching a ferry on our beautiful harbour because there is no better way to commute or spend your time. These projects will deliver modern, more accessible and safer wharves for the benefit of less mobile passengers, parents—like myself—travelling with small children and people with disability. Wharf upgrades currently underway in my electorate include those for North Sydney and South Mosman, with funding allocated to commence planning and design for an upgrade to Taronga Zoo Wharf, about which we are currently receiving feedback. Early last year the community provided their views on the concept design and the environmental review for the North Sydney Wharf upgrade. That is along the foreshore access at High Street. It will include a Kiss and Ride zone, new bicycle parking and a floating pontoon with a covered area and a gangway, in line with the other ferry wharves that have been delivered throughout the Liberal-Nationals Government's term in New South Wales. The existing wharf will be partially retained for recreational use. This budget provides nearly \$3.6 million in funding to continue the planning for this project.

The South Mosman Wharf upgrade includes what has become quite iconic for our ferry wharves, with the floating pontoon and a covered area and seating. It also includes a new lift and stairs. This is a huge change for Musgrave Street wharf in Mosman because to date there has been no ability for people to access the wharf at the bottom of a very sheer wall unless they were able to take a significant number of steps. We are really excited about this change because it means more people will be able to get onto our ferries and the harbour. I look forward to the completion of these two projects and the works progressed on Taronga Zoo Wharf. This budget includes \$1 million in funding for the works on Taronga Zoo Wharf. I thank the community for all the feedback they are continuing to give us because we use it to refine the projects. At Musgrave Street we are taking on a lot of the

feedback about the look of the lift and the way it complements the very green landscape. We take on this feedback to enhance and improve our designs. We really appreciate everybody coming forward and sharing ideas.

The Government also has invested in changing the way we move following the COVID-19 pandemic impacts last year. Through our Active Transport Program, the Government has provided funding for North Sydney Council to deliver a number of cycleways—from the Harbour Bridge to Cremorne, for instance. Mosman Council also has funding for a shared zone in Melaleuca Lane near Spit Junction, to encourage walking and cycling. That is between the B-Line bus interchange and local schools and shops. Anyone who has spent much time in Mosman would know that Clifford Street used to enter out onto Spit Road. When the B-Line bus interchange was built, it completely transformed the use of Spit Junction. With the Beaches Link and the B-Line, there are so many opportunities at the Spit Junction area to improve the public amenity and the beauty of the area, which our community in Mosman deserves.

The budget provides investment in our wildlife, science and jobs through the new Taronga Zoo wildlife hospital. Behind the scenes, Taronga Zoo Sydney Wildlife Hospital cares for injured and orphaned animals. I took the Treasurer, along with the environment Minister, to visit the wildlife hospital. The environment Minister goes to the zoo quite often, and often with me. He is at the zoo quite a bit. I think the Treasurer was wowed by the wildlife hospital, which is why we have this additional funding. I acknowledge the work that is done at the hospital and the range of animals that are housed and cared for—from small bats through to echidnas and puggles, many different turtles and sea life. The community integrates with the hospital's work by people bringing in animals to the zoo and others housing animals to be transitioned back into their habitats.

One of the biggest issues for wildlife and for our marine life in particular is the impact of single-use plastics. Often when a marine animal is brought to the zoo and dies, Taronga's zookeepers undertake an examination to discover why the animal died. They have large jars full of plastics, such as fishing wire and straws, that the animals have ingested. Sometimes they find plastic cutlery within the innards of these animals. They find a range of different materials, some of which would have been in our marine environment for a long time. The old plastic rings that were used to hold cans together, which are no longer being manufactured, are still being found in our sea life. We know that our use of plastics is contributing to the number of marine animals dying, particularly turtles. It is horrific to see these beautiful turtles being killed. Taronga's zookeepers not only work to save wildlife; they also work on educating about the impact of our consumption and behaviour in the world, on conservation and on changing people's habits and behaviour.

As I said at the very beginning of my speech, this is a budget that is contributing to our entire State. It is also a budget contributing to my community. When I was elected four years ago, I focused on a number of priorities, such as school funding, Berrys Bay and the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. The Government is working on seeing these projects through to fruition. I am very proud of this budget and the Government of which I am a member. I commend the budget to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Bills

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN AMENDMENT (CHILD SAFE SCHEME) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Gareth Ward, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(11:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ensuring the care, safety and wellbeing of our children and young people stands central to who we are as a society and as a State. New South Wales was the first jurisdiction in Australia to establish independent oversight of the out-of-home care system. We are the only jurisdiction with an independent accreditation scheme. We have the most robust Working with Children Check scheme in the country and the most extensive reportable conduct scheme, recommended for national adoption by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Notwithstanding this, the public record shows that institutions, including government agencies, entrusted to protect and care for many children and young people failed in that duty of care. It is incumbent upon this House to respond to those failures and ensure that an appropriate and effective child safety scheme is implemented across our State. To that end, I have the great privilege of introducing the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe

Scheme) Bill 2021. The introduction of this bill is a turning point—a watershed moment—in our State's duty of care to children and young people. It underpins the Government's priority to protect children from abuse in organisations and, consequently, further strengthens the Government's ability to improve outcomes for children and young people in New South Wales.

It is not possible to introduce such important legislation without first acknowledging the survivors of institutional abuse, their hurt and the impact of past failures of government and non-government organisations to protect them. We know that failures arose because leaders in those organisations did not put children at the centre of their operation and purpose. Many victims and survivors bravely told their stories to the royal commission to prevent harm to children now and into the future. We honour their courage. We are sorry for the hurt and suffering that abuse has caused and continues to cause. The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill is the culmination of many years of process following the Government's response to the final report of the royal commission on 23 June 2018. The royal commission shone a spotlight on thousands of cases where organisations across Australia failed to protect children in their care from abuse. The New South Wales Government accepted the overwhelming majority of the 409 recommendations made by the royal commission. We committed to working hard and to taking action to keep children safe. The bill is a demonstration of that public commitment.

The royal commission recommended 10 Child Safe Standards to make institutions safer for children, which we accepted. I take the House through those 10 Child Safe Standards. One, child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. What does that mean? It means that the organisation publicly commits to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture; child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the organisation; risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children; staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct that sets clear behavioural standards towards children; and staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

Two, children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. What does that mean? It means children are able to express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives; the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and be less isolated; children can access abuse prevention programs and information; and staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns. Three, families and communities are informed and involved. What does that mean? It means families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting their child; the organisation engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible; families and communities have a say in the organisation's policies and practices; and families and communities are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Four, equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account. What does that mean? It means the organisation actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities; all children have access to information, support and complaints processes; and the organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Five, people working with children are suitable and supported. What does that entail? It entails recruitment, including advertising and screening, which emphasises child safety; relevant staff and volunteers have Working with Children Checks; all staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations; and supervision and people management have a child safety focus.

Six, processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused. How does that work? The organisation has a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families; the organisation has an effective complaint handling policy and procedure which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report; complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly; and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met. Seven, staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training. How does that work? It works by ensuring that relevant staff and volunteers receive training on the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly organisational child abuse; staff and volunteers receive training on the organisation's child safe practices and child protection; and relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

Eight, physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur. What does that entail? It entails risks in the online and physical environments being identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development, and that the online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's code of conduct and relevant policies. Nine, implementation of the Child Safe

Standards is continuously reviewed and improved. How is that achieved? To achieve this, the organisation regularly reviews and improves child safe practices and analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Finally, Child Safe Standard number 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe. How does that work? It works by ensuring the policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards; policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand; best-practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures; leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures; and staff understand and implement the policies and procedures.

We also accept that child-related organisations should be held to account for their implementation of child safe practice through strengthened oversight and regulatory practice. The 10 Child Safe Standards provide a framework for making organisations safer for children. The standards are holistic and interrelated. Each standard is of equal importance. Together, they operate collectively to drive cultural change in organisations. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is mandatory. Organisations will be required to create an organisational culture where the safety and welfare of children is front and centre; where their voices and interests are protected; where abuse of children is prevented, identified, reported and responded to; and where the compromises of the past are not repeated.

Consultation on the approach to regulating the Child Safe Standards in New South Wales has been extensive. In 2019 the Office of the Children's Guardian [OCG] undertook consultation on the policy parameters of the Child Safe Scheme recommended by the royal commission, meeting with representatives from over 50 government agencies, non-government agencies, regulators and peak bodies that represent child-related sectors. The Office of the Children's Guardian released a consultation report in July 2019 that reflected and built on stakeholder feedback around the key elements of the regulatory model. In March 2020 the Office of the Children's Guardian conducted targeted consultation with government stakeholders on the scope of the scheme. Between August and November 2020, 1,500 responses to a child safe survey, aimed at gauging the extent to which organisations were implementing the Child Safe Standards, were received. The responses provided valuable information to inform the development of capability-building resources and supports.

Consultation on the Exposure Draft of the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill, between December 2020 and February this year, was the final part in this comprehensive consultation process. There was overwhelming stakeholder support for the Child Safe Scheme, the objectives of the bill and the various components of the scheme. Indeed, there is an eagerness in the sector to implement these changes to meet our shared objective to improve child safe practice. Our thanks go to the many non-government organisations, peak bodies, New South Wales government agencies and individuals who responded to the invitation and provided valuable feedback. Stakeholder feedback has been critical in determining the best way forward.

I will now outline the provisions of the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill. Schedule 1 contains a suite of amendments to the Children's Guardian Act 2019. The bill introduces a new, overarching framework into the Act, reflected across two new parts—parts 3A, the Child Safe Scheme, and 9A, enforcement measures. Some consequential amendments have also been made to the Act to ensure that the new scheme is seamlessly applied across all functions of the Children's Guardian. The primary object of the bill is to embed the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the royal commission as the primary framework that guides child safe practice in organisations in New South Wales. This is reflected in an amendment to section 6, the main objects provision of the Children's Guardian Act.

The royal commission highlighted that racism and a lack of cultural safety can increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's vulnerability and may prevent them from speaking out. Cultural safety is an important protective factor for Aboriginal children and young people's wellbeing. To address this, the bill includes an amendment to the guiding principles of the Children's Guardian Act. Under the newly drafted section 8E, connection to family and community will be embedded in the Office of the Children's Guardian's decision-making about organisations, with the ultimate goal of the child feeling safe and secure in their identity, culture and community.

Respect for cultural and social difference must be considered in the provision of child-related services under new section 8E (1). During consultation we heard that cultural safety was an important factor that should be included by a prescribed agency in its child safe action plan. The amendment to the guiding principles goes further and will ensure that cultural safety is considered across the full spectrum of the Children's Guardian's functions. Part 3A is arranged into six divisions, together forming the new Child Safe Scheme. Division 1 contains the objects of part 3A and some key definitions in section 8B. The objects reinforce the purpose of the legislation, being to protect children from harm by adopting the Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practice, and to implement the new regulatory approach to the Child Safe Standards.

The two key terms in the bill, "child safe organisation" and "head of a child safe organisation", have been included in the Dictionary of the Children's Guardian Act, in schedule 6. "Child safe organisations" must implement the Child Safe Standards. A child safe organisation is comprised of entities listed in schedule 1 to the Children's Guardian Act, excluding designated agencies and adoption service providers. A child safe organisation covers religious bodies that provide services to children, or in which adults have contact with children; local government authorities; and clubs or other bodies providing programs or services of a recreational or sporting nature for children, where the workers are required to hold a Working with Children Check clearance under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.

There is capacity within the bill to expand the scheme by regulation to align more closely with the broad scope recommended by the royal commission. Any decision to expand the scope of the scheme would be subject to further consultation. Out-of-home care and adoption service providers will continue to be regulated by the Office of the Children's Guardian under the NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care. Those standards are broadly consistent with the Child Safe Standards. The NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care were introduced in 2015 and are subject to review every five years. The review has been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the upcoming review of the accreditation and monitoring framework will address a range of challenges in the out-of-home care and adoption sectors, including implementation of the Child Safe Standards and how the sectors can be regulated within the broader context of the Child Safe Scheme to streamline oversight and reduce unnecessary regulatory burden.

A key message from the royal commission was the need for a consistent approach and framework to organisational child safety. We are committed to working towards that goal. The "head of a child safe organisation" will be defined according to the same sequenced model as a "head" of a relevant entity as defined in sections 17 and 66 of the Children's Guardian Act. Division 2 contains the pillars of the Child Safe Scheme—the 10 Child Safe Standards as recommended by the royal commission—and the requirement for the head of the child safe organisation to ensure the organisation implements the Child Safe Standards through an inclusive list of systems, policies and processes.

The 10 Child Safe Standards set out in new section 8C are principle-based, outcome-focused and flexible enough to be adapted by organisations of varying sizes and characteristics. They operate as a benchmark against which organisations can assess their child safe capability and set performance targets. The list of policies and procedures in new section 8D (1) is intended to set the baseline expectations for systems, policies and procedures that organisations may use to implement the Child Safe Standards. The standards are flexible; they can be implemented by organisations in different ways, depending on the size, resources and workforce of the organisation. New section 8D (1) has been drafted with this flexibility in mind, in keeping with the intention of the royal commission to focus on changing organisational culture as opposed to setting prescriptive rules that must be followed or specific initiatives that must be rigidly implemented.

New section 8D (2) makes it clear that a reportable conduct policy must be implemented to ensure that organisations meet the requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Reportable Conduct Scheme helps keep children safe by monitoring how organisations investigate and report on types of conduct made against their employees, volunteers or certain contractors who provide services to children. It is a key part of the child protection system, and I am proud to have helped to introduce it. New section 8E will allow the Children's Guardian to require the head of a child safe organisation to give the Children's Guardian information about these systems, policies, and processes within a reasonable time, not less than seven days.

The Child Safe Scheme will be buttressed by child safe action plans. Significant public sector agencies, known as "prescribed agencies", that are responsible for the provision of services to children will be required to develop and implement child safe action plans. Division 3 establishes the framework for those action plans. Child safe action plans are intended to promote sector-wide reform and embed child safety across existing regulatory schemes. New section 8F provides that a child safe action plan contains the strategies a prescribed agency will take with related bodies to build awareness about the importance of child safety in organisations, build the capability of organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards and improve the safety of children.

New section 8G sets out the public sector agencies that will be "prescribed agencies" for the purpose of child safe action plans. Those agencies are included because of their influence on the child safe organisations that they regulate and oversight. The Department of Education, Ministry of Health, NSW Education Standards Authority and Inspector of Custodial Services are some examples of the prescribed agencies that are set out in section 8G. Section 8H establishes that a related body, for the purpose of child safe action plans, is a child safe organisation that the prescribed agency funds or regulates.

The expectations around what agencies should include in their plans will be commensurate with what they are reasonably able to achieve within their financial and resource capacity, and the expectations of their stakeholders. Examples of actions could include things like developing a sector-specific child safe organisation

website to provide information about how to protect children, create child-safe environments and identify and report signs of abuse, including existing legislative obligations; including a requirement that child-related organisations implement the Child Safe Standards in contract arrangements; promoting child safe organisations in existing policy frameworks; and distributing child safe tools and resources to organisations through government agencies and their existing relationships with those organisations.

In some cases it will be preferable for a directorate within a prescribed agency to develop its own child safe action plan. For example, the Quality Assurance and Regulatory Services Directorate within the Department of Education is the regulatory authority for early childhood education and out of school hours care services in our State. Given this directorate's regulatory role overseeing early childhood education, it is well placed to develop its own child safe action plan for the child safe organisations that it regulates. Section 8I (2) has been drafted with this flexibility in mind. Division 3 also contains the architecture for child safe action plans, including consultation requirements, the process for submitting plans to the Office of the Children's Guardian for approval, publication of the plans on an agency's website, progress reporting and plan review. Reciprocal information exchange will be available to the Office of the Children's Guardian and prescribed agencies through an amendment to section 180 of the Children's Guardian Act.

Capability building will be the foundation of the child safe scheme. Division 4 establishes a framework through which the Children's Guardian will work collaboratively with child safe organisations, government agencies and the broader community to raise awareness about child safety and build knowledge of the Child Safe Standards and the skills to implement them. The cornerstone of the capability building component of the Scheme will be a self-assessment tool. During the process of monitoring a sector, the Office of the Children's Guardian may require heads of child safe organisations to complete a short self-assessment tool to evaluate the organisation's compliance with the Child Safe Standards. This is akin to a health check for organisations and will provide guidance on how practice can be improved to better protect children.

Division 5 sets out a framework in which the Children's Guardian may monitor the operation of a child safe organisation to ensure the organisation is implementing the Child Safe Standards. The Office of the Children's Guardian will take a strengths-based approach, proactive and preventative, focused on capability building. The new section 8V is the very provision that sets out the monitoring activities that the Children's Guardian can carry out. Some of the activities include reviewing the organisation's systems, processes, policies and information held by the Children's Guardian about the organisation and its employees, and requiring the head of the organisation to complete a self-assessment of the organisation's compliance with the Child Safe Standards. To ensure that organisations complete the self-assessment tool, a small fine will be available to the Office of the Children's Guardian to impose on those organisations that do not comply.

The apex of the monitoring function is the development of a monitoring assessment report in section 8W. This report will provide general guidance to an organisation, in line with the Office of the Children's Guardian's publicly available guidance material, and recommendations for improvement. It is a culmination of the educative process and draws a clear line under the monitoring function. Division 6 establishes the framework for the Office of the Children's Guardian to investigate a child safe organisation's implementation of the Child Safe Standards. An investigation would generally be undertaken where earlier recommendations and guidance have not been accepted or actioned.

Section 8X has been broadly drafted. It provides that the Children's Guardian may conduct an investigation after receiving a complaint if the organisation fails to respond to a recommendation in a monitoring assessment report, or the Children's Guardian is otherwise not satisfied with the way the organisation responds to a recommendation, or for any other reason the Children's Guardian is concerned that the organisation is not implementing the Child Safe Standards. There is also a clear pathway in section 8E (2) to an investigation where an organisation fails to provide the Office of the Children's Guardian information about the organisation's systems, policies and processes.

The Children's Guardian may exercise any of the powers in schedule 2 to the Children's Guardian Act for the purpose of investigating a child safe organisation's implementation of the Child Safe Standards. This might include requiring the head of the organisation to answer questions and provide information, or inspecting the premises of the organisation without the consent of the head of the organisation. The Office of the Children's Guardian must prepare an investigation report at the end of an investigation. The investigation report must include findings, based on a seriousness and risk level, and any recommendations for improvement to the way the organisation implements the Child Safe Standards. Recommendations contained in the investigation report may feed into a compliance notice or form the basis of an enforceable undertaking.

Some consequential amendments will be made to part 4 of the Children's Guardian Act to recognise the ongoing responsibility that organisations not falling within the scope of the child safe scheme have in relation to their reportable conduct systems, policies and processes. Those amendments are directed towards out-of-home

care providers, adoption service providers and public authorities that are not local government authorities. The Children's Guardian will have three broad new primary functions added to section 128. These additional functions arise from the adoption of the Child Safe Standards and the child safe scheme. They include taking action to build the capability of child safe organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards and to prevent harm to children; monitoring, investigating and enforcing the implementation by child safe organisations of the Child Safe Standards; and undertaking functions relating to child safe action plans.

I now turn to the enforcement provisions in part 9A of the bill. The Office of the Children's Guardian will take a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation. The regulatory effort for most organisations will be a light touch, focused on education and building on the strengths of what organisations are already doing. However, the best interests of children and their protection from harm are paramount. In some cases, the Children's Guardian will be required to take enforcement action to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. The safety of children in organisations should not be optional under any circumstances.

Part 9A is made up of two key divisions that provide for two different means of enforcement action. Division 1 relates to compliance notices and division 2 relates to enforceable undertakings. A compliance notice is a formal notice given to an organisation of its failure to implement the Child Safe Standards through its systems, policies or processes. This is formal enforcement action where the organisation is not willing to come to the table with solutions to address risks to children. The notice carries a requirement for an organisation to take certain action specified in the notice and provide evidence to the Children's Guardian that the action has been undertaken. The notice must provide details around why the children are, or may be, at risk and a time frame by which action must be undertaken. The organisation will have 28 days to seek review of the compliance notice unless an alternative time is negotiated with the Office of the Children's Guardian. The notices will be publicly available, and failure to comply with a compliance notice is an offence, attracting a financial penalty.

Enforceable undertakings in division 2 are an alternative enforcement measure to the issue of a compliance notice in division 1. An enforceable undertaking might be used where an organisation is willing to rectify systemic issues in the organisation's approach to child safety, and there is agreement by the head of the child safe organisation about specific action that needs to be taken to address risk to child safety. Publishing the details of an enforceable undertaking ensures compliance. Enforceable undertakings may be used where there are multiple systemic issues to be rectified. The organisation is required to report on compliance in a way that the Office of the Children's Guardian sees fit. Breaches will be agreed between the Office of the Children's Guardian and the organisation, and noncompliance—and prosecution—will be easy to establish. Enforceable undertakings can be amended by agreement. As with compliance notices, enforceable undertakings will be publicly available. Failure to comply with enforceable undertakings is an offence, attracting a significant financial penalty.

The offence provisions in sections 152F and 152J have been drafted with a deeming provision. Sections 152F (2) and 152J (2) do not create separate offences. Where the child safe organisation does not have legal status, the reference to the child safe organisation is to be read as a reference to the head of the child safe organisation. Finally, the royal commission highlighted the importance of information sharing in identifying, preventing, and responding to incidents and risks of child sexual abuse. A new information-sharing provision has been drafted to allow the Children's Guardian to share information obtained for the purposes of the Child Safe Scheme or its enforcement functions with persons undertaking similar child safe functions in another State or Territory or for the Commonwealth.

Providing for these new functions to complement the suite of existing functions of the Children's Guardian builds on the New South Wales Government's strong framework for protecting children and young people—namely, the legislative changes in 2019 that gave the Children's Guardian greater authority and oversight to protect children and young people. This Government is committed to seeing child safe cultures existent in all child-related organisations in our State. We need to ensure that any perceived power or influence differentiation across our institutions does not impede a child safe culture. Child abuse cannot and will not be tolerated. Children's rights must be forefront, understood and respected with clear guidance about how this should play out in practice in terms of organisational practice, leadership and staff interactions with children. Concerns about child safety raised by children and their parents and carers are acted upon; the reporting of abuse is not obstructed or prevented—these are the hallmarks of a child safe culture that are not optional.

Daily, our children engage with a range of institutions critical to their health and happiness. Family and friends have significant impact in moulding their young lives, attitudes and dreams for the future. Our education system, religious institutions, health and sporting groups provide hours of face-to-face contact with our most valuable asset: our State's children. It is our collective responsibility to make decisions for a child safe culture now that will improve outcomes for children and young people across New South Wales into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:51): In talking about the 2020-2021 budget I will start from a first principle, which is that every dollar that a government has in its budget is a dollar that has been earned by a citizen of this State or country. A taxpayer or service user is the ultimate source of every dollar we spend. It flows from that that we have a responsibility to those taxpayers, service users and members of our community to spend their dollars wisely, to be prudent and cautious, and to exercise restraint in spending to make sure that we are doing what needs to be done with their money and that we do not take any more dollars than we need to do so. In that sense, we look at what this Government has been able to do with its spending in the 10 years it has been here. Compared to 2010 or 2011, when we were elected, more people are in work, more homes are being built and country towns are rebounding from long-term declines.

New and upgraded hospitals have been built right throughout the State in almost every town you can name. Services are being provided and infrastructure is being rolled out in growth areas. Clearly Riverstone is in one of those and I will talk about that in more detail. This is what budgets are for. Public funds are for public purposes and for making life better for our citizens. They are not for empire building by bureaucrats or politicians, muscle flexing or recruiting drives for public sector unions, and chest beating and advertising. They are there as a vehicle to serve the needs of our community. If we start with that focus then we can construct a process by which governments can properly use the funds that they have available to make sure that they prioritise the needs of communities. And there is plenty of prioritising to be done to ensure that our dollars are spent to the best effect possible.

The 2020-21 New South Wales State budget continues the work of rebuilding New South Wales that has been going on since 2011. It provides the funding for this year's share of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's massive \$107 billion infrastructure program over four years. This program will provide economic stimulus in every corner of the State and follows the enormous program of delivery that has already occurred under this Government. This year I have had the opportunity to drive through the NorthConnex tunnels linking the Newcastle freeway with the M2, bypassing the whole Pennant Hills Road stretch of the journey between western Sydney and the Central Coast. What a delight that has proved to be! It represents a huge reduction in travel time for those using the road and a huge improvement in local amenity for those living along the Pennant Hills Road corridor. For years that was a pipedream. Under this Government it has become a reality. That is a recurring theme right across New South Wales. Things that have been talked about for years are now happening before our eyes.

This year I also had the opportunity, on my way to the South Coast, to experience the improvements made to the Princes Highway between Wollongong and Nowra, and to see ongoing work happening right now to further improve that highway. I note that the member for Kiama, who spoke in the previous debate, would take credit for single-handedly building the Gerringong bypass on the Princes Highway and delivering that magnificent piece of infrastructure to that community. But, just like NorthConnex, that had been talked about for years before this Government came to power. Lots of projects were planned, wanted, identified and hoped for but not funded and delivered until this Government came to do them. These are but two of the many infrastructure projects that have already been delivered across New South Wales before this budget. They give an indication of the benefits yet to come as the major projects funded this year come to fruition in future.

Whether it be extension of the metro rail network, completion of the WestConnex suite of projects, replacement of timber bridges in country New South Wales, construction of new hospital buildings in both Sydney and the bush, or the rollout of new and upgraded schools, these ongoing projects are transforming New South Wales, building a better future for residents in local communities and providing economic stimulus across the State in the process. The program includes a \$3 billion Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, announced as part of the New South Wales Government's plan for economic recovery from the COVID pandemic economic crisis. The strong position of the New South Wales State budget at the start of this crisis has allowed the Government to do more than any other State government to stimulate the economy and protect local jobs and businesses. Our strong financial management in earlier years has meant that we can help more at this time of emergency.

In the Riverstone electorate the 2020-21 State budget—we know that it was delayed last year due to COVID—provides funding for a wide range of projects. The final funding tranches for the school upgrades completed during this financial year include \$6.3 million for Schofields Public School, \$179,000 for Riverbank Public School, \$817,000 for Riverstone High School and \$293,000 for Quakers Hill East Public School. Each of those schools has new buildings, classrooms and facilities to serve the new and growing population of the region. In the case of Riverstone High School, which I think was built back in the 1960s, it is

a rejuvenation of that site, ready for a new burst of growth in the region, so that it can serve the significant population of high school students who are coming its way. It is the one school in the region that has significant spare capacity to be able to do that. We will no doubt be enhancing that capacity further as the North West Growth Area continues its development.

School upgrades in the planning phase have been allocated \$185,000 at John Palmer Public School and \$190,000 at Glenwood High School. Both schools are going to get more permanent buildings, removing some of the demountables that have been taking up the slack as growth has raced through that region. The planned new "Rouse Farm" primary school near Tallawong station has been allocated \$350,000 for site works. It is anticipated that that school will be constructed during the remainder of this parliamentary term to take up the growth in the area called Tallawong and Rouse Hill, adjacent to that station precinct.

A share of the department's statewide minor works allocation of \$383 million provides planning and development money for the Marsden Park High School. The site of that high school was recently confirmed so that the residents of Marsden Park and Melonba, the new suburb in that part of the world, know where that school is being developed. The site is available now, in the department's hands, and serious planning work can get underway prior to construction. Those school projects follow the completion and opening this school year of Galungara Public School in Schofields, which cost \$55 million, and Northbourne Public School in Marsden Park, which cost \$49 million.

Air conditioning of classrooms in several local schools continues to receive funding within the Cooler Classrooms Program. Riverstone receives a share of the \$196 million allocated for schools across the State under that program. I note that air conditioning installation has already been completed at Wyndham College, Marsden Park Public School, Schofields Public School and Quakers Hill High School as well as in the new buildings at Riverstone High School, Riverbank Public School and Quakers Hill East Public School. The Glenwood High School project is out for tender. Those schools will all be more comfortable for students. As we know, western Sydney is one of those regions where it can get quite hot during the summer months and learning can be a bit difficult in some of those trying conditions.

Just like the western parts of New South Wales, western Sydney is benefiting from this statewide program, rolling out \$500 million over four years to air-condition almost a thousand schools. The design for manufacture and assembly, or DFMA, process will be used for a number of projects rolling out new schools, including the one at Rouse Farm. This methodology was employed at Galungara and at Jordan Springs in the Londonderry electorate. Those schools can be assembled much more quickly so, once we reach the approval stage and press the button for "go", the construction phase in the delivery of the schools is quite quick. That will help in this record program of rolling out new and upgraded schools across New South Wales.

Also in the budget for the Riverstone electorate was \$8 million for the commuter car park at Schofields station. That is the first \$8 million for that project. The 700-space at-grade car park project to the west of the line, which was exhibited last year, has work due to commence in the first part of 2021 and the remaining funds will be included in the 2021-22 budget. This project will ensure that people commuting to work via the Richmond railway line using Schofields station will have adequate parking opportunities—something that has been a pressure point for the community, which the Government has heard loud and clear and to which it is responding. There is also an allocation in the current year's budget for the completion of a 60-space car park on the eastern side of the station, funded via a grant to Blacktown City Council from Transport for NSW. That parking area is now open to the community.

When the larger project is complete, the total number of spaces at the station will exceed 1,000. When that station was opened in 2011, having been designed by the previous Government, there were 230 spaces. We have since added 50 and contribute another 60 here. We have 700 more on the way. It will be over 1,000 spaces to meet the real needs of the district when this is completed. This adds to the number of car parking spaces at local stations. There are over 3,000 spaces at stations along the metro line adjacent to Riverstone at Tallawong, Kellyville and Bella Vista stations. We are doing everything we possibly can to help people access the public transport network, including the metro that this Government has provided.

I am confident that the western car park of Schofields station will also provide an opportunity to enhance bus access to the western side of the station, allowing more people to reach the station by bus rather than car, and that is the other side of the equation. We simply cannot meet the whole demand through car parking spaces, although they are necessary. We also need to provide bus access to stations so that people can use public transport effectively and in large numbers, taking pressure off the road network. Bus services funded in the 2020-21 budget include the new route 748, which runs from Melonba through Marsden Park via Schofields and Tallawong stations to Rouse Hill.

I note I have used the term "Melonba" a couple of times today. This might be the first time that suburb name has been spoken in this place, since it was only named in November last year and officially gazetted as one of the new suburbs in the north-west. Melonba is the Dharug name for a type of wattle found in the area, commonly known as black wattle or early green wattle. The suburb name, along with a number of others, was gazetted in November 2020. There have also been increases in frequency on other services such as the 741, 746 and 747 routes connecting parts of the Riverstone electorate with Box Hill, Rouse Hill, Plumpton and Mount Druitt.

There is also money for Riverstone in the 2020-21 budget for the Rouse Hill Hospital. There is site funding of \$63 million while clinical services planning is being undertaken. The Government's commitment is that construction of stage one is due to commence by the end of this term in 2023. The Rouse Hill project follows the completion last year of the massive \$700 million-plus project, in two stages, which has transformed Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital into a major metropolitan hospital complex. I note that while that work was going on at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital there have also been massive projects right across western Sydney including Westmead Hospital, Nepean Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital and so on.

The region is being transformed by the health infrastructure that has been provided. No government before this has ever undertaken a health infrastructure investment program on this scale and the people of western Sydney are certainly among the winners—not the only ones, because there is a long list of hospital projects across New South Wales, as I am sure Minister Hazzard could recite. But as the member for Riverstone I am certainly appreciative of the huge investment that has gone into Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital and the other hospitals in the region.

In terms of local roads, the Denmark Link Road project has been allocated \$2 million as part of the planning process this year. The property acquisition process is due to occur later in 2021 and construction will commence by the end of the year. This is one of those local road projects designed to cater for growth, traffic, pressure and congestion across the region. The upgrade and extension project at Boundary Road and McCulloch Street has been allocated \$35 million, Hambledon Road has been allocated another \$27 million and Veron Road has been allocated \$200,000. Those projects are funded by the Housing Acceleration Fund, an initiative of the Liberal-Nationals Government that has provided significant infrastructure to support growth in the North West Growth Area. Each of those local roads will improve access for local residents, help them get around the district and support the new housing that is being developed in the region.

It was this Government that built the Metro North West Line. I commenced my comments today by talking about projects that have been talked about for years and that people did not really expect to see, and the Sydney Metro Northwest was a classic. We made that commitment our first and primary priority on election to Government and I well recall Premier Barry O'Farrell saying that both he and transport Minister Berejiklian would resign if they did not have tunnel-boring machines in the ground by the end of the term. He then turned to transport Minister Berejiklian and said, "See? Now you've got a job to do." We on this side did that. That project was completed by this Government in exactly the time frame that we outlined. It was a huge commitment and now we are committed to extending the metro network through the Sydney Metro City & Southwest, linking Tallawong station at the end of the Metro North West Line through the city and then on to Bankstown. There is \$8.3 billion over four years, including \$2.7 billion in this current budget, to continue that network project.

In Sydney Water allocations for upgrading wastewater treatment plants at Quakers Hill and Vineyard there is \$60 million to provide servicing for new residential developments in the area. Some of those commitments are not what you would call sexy or glamorous but they are absolutely essential to ensuring the amenity of the new neighbourhoods we are delivering in the north-west—and ensuring, in fact, their very viability and possibility. It was the Housing Acceleration Fund that allowed the so-called First Ponds Creek wastewater carrier to go ahead, delivering sewerage to the region, which unlocked the potential of much of the Alexandria and Riverstone precincts. They had been rezoned before we came to government but could not proceed because that infrastructure was not yet in place. It was this Government's Housing Acceleration Fund that made it possible to deliver that. I seek a short extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

While these projects are not glamorous, they are fundamental to making these communities livable and sustainable. It is this Government that has done the hard yards to make sure that the infrastructure necessary for those neighbourhoods is provided. Turning to police facilities, the police station at Riverstone was delivered by this Government. It is not the only new police station in the region; one has been delivered at Mount Druitt as well since the one at Riverstone opened in 2016. In this current term and in this budget, we see funding provided for the NSW Police Force to recruit 1,500 extra officers over the three years. At Quakers Hill Police Area Command there have been several intakes of probationary constables this year, with five or six or seven new officers at a time beginning their policing careers in the Riverstone electorate. When the new police station was opened in 2016, it had been designed to cater for future growth—being in a growth area—so these extra numbers are easily accommodated in the building. As the population of the region continues to expand with new housing

precincts released in coming years, I expect to see commensurate increases in resources deployed to the command by the NSW Police Force.

I take the opportunity to thank and commend the officers who serve in the Riverstone Police Area Command and take on all those unattractive sorts of tasks—mundane and sometimes dangerous tasks—on our behalf to keep our community safe. I acknowledge them for doing so. Another less than glamorous but very important funding commitment made to the Riverstone electorate over the years has been the expansion of Parklea prison. We have spare capacity in the prison network at the moment. That is a great thing if it implies that crime is down somewhat. It also is a great thing because it enables good management of the prison system if we have some spare capacity in it. We have delivered some of the capacity at Parklea with a 500-bed extension project that was completed in April 2020 and opened for use.

There is some ongoing funding in the 2021 budget to further improve facilities at Parklea to ensure the facility remains not only fit for purpose but also well-designed and able to meet the needs of the coming period. There is also money in the 2021 budget for improvements in public housing in the Riverstone electorate. Social housing has received \$1.4 million both for asset improvements, upgrades and new supply. It continues on previous years' allocations. There is an incremental increase each year in the housing stock in the area to ensure that we are doing our part to meet the needs of those in the community who rely on social housing. The road projects throughout the region include some significant ones that we committed to for the future and there is planning money for those. The Denmark Link Road project which I may have referred to will bypass the traffic congestion point of the Garfield Road level crossing at Riverstone by providing a light traffic alternative route. There is \$2 million of planning money in the budget for that. Further down the line there are other road projects. Bandon Road will be upgraded to provide a more significant bypass of that intersection in the future.

Some statewide initiatives that have impacted Riverstone in this budget include the changed definition and improved eligibility capacity of schools to get school crossings supervisors outside their front doors. Members may not be aware that in the past it was a fairly difficult hurdle to jump to get a funded school crossing supervisor. Schools had to show a certain number of pedestrians and a certain number of vehicles, making a formula, and they could often fall foul of one leg of the formula or the other and not qualify. It was an initiative of this Government that saw that formula simplified so that schools now have to meet only one leg of the formula or the other to qualify for a school crossing supervisor. That allowed a number of schools in the Riverstone electorate to achieve that outcome.

Having a number of unaccompanied children crossing or having a significant volume of traffic will qualify a school for a crossing supervisor. St Joseph's at Schofields, Schofields Public School, Riverbank Public School and Quakers Hill East Public School are among those in the electorate of Riverstone that are benefiting from that greater eligibility. We all know about the Active Kids and Creative Kids programs that have been introduced by this Government to encourage children to develop their talents and make it easier for family budgets to support that process. I know that the Riverstone electorate was leading the charge with the largest number of kids registered for that scheme. That does not surprise me when I look around the electorate and see the number of children out playing soccer, netball and other sports on a Saturday morning. They are there for the eye to see right across the region and in places like Riverstone. Those programs are especially important for the families and communities I represent. The Dine & Discover program introduced in more recent times and supported by this budget to encourage economic stimulus after the impact of COVID has also been taken up by larger numbers of people in our community. It is especially important for small businesses.

Those \$25 vouchers may not seem like a big ticket item but if it brings extra customers through the door and encourages people to go out just a little more often, many of those small businesses in our communities will be supported. That can help them restore their balance sheets after some tough times due to COVID. Under this Government other projects across the western Sydney region in particular are impossible to ignore. There are projects to support the development of the Nancy-Bird Walton airport and ensure that the infrastructure is in place for that to occur. There are projects that have received initial funding to ensure that western Sydney is well served by this new airport and everyone in the region can benefit from access to it.

The Northern Road project between Narellan and Penrith, the M12 motorway—which recently received approval—and the North-South Rail Link between the airport and the main western line in the St Marys area are either in the planning stage or in some cases the construction stage. This is an important initiative which would not have been possible without the strong financial management of this Government and without the commitment to asset recycling which has underpinned many of the elements of its infrastructure program. It has made possible projects that were talked about and dreamed about—that were hoped for and wished for—but were not delivered until this Government came to power and made them happen.

The completion of the WestConnex project offers will greatly improve the motorway network throughout Sydney. Until this Government was elected, we had effectively disjointed motorways in Sydney that did not

completely hook up. One could travel for a distance on a motorway network but then one had to get off again and back onto the local roads. We have seen NorthConnex open. After the tranche of work that is underway is completed—once WestConnex, the Beaches Link tunnel and the M12 are completed—it will be possible to move around Sydney from one side to the other in almost any direction just on the motorway network. A real achievement and a real legacy that this Government leaves for future generations will be the accessibility and efficiency of this city. It will certainly help businesses in the city to prosper and to work effectively to produce wealth for this State and this nation.

The 2021 budget continues the work that was commenced a decade ago in Riverstone. Residents who have witnessed the changes over those 10 years are only too aware of the contrast with the inaction of the years that came before that. They have seen new roads, new schools, a new police station, massive hospital upgrades, new bus services, new water, sewer and electricity infrastructure and planned neighbourhoods emerging. There is still plenty of work ahead as the development of the north-west growth area continues. The commitments in this year's budget and the planning underlying them indicate how that future challenge will be met. This Government will continue to plan for and deliver the infrastructure and services to support high amenity in the growth area's new neighbourhoods. I commend the budget to the House.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:19): I join my colleague the member for Riverstone in commending the New South Wales 2020-2021 budget. As for most members, the budget confirms to me that this Government is prepared to make some tough decisions to invest in infrastructure, particularly in light of the impact of the incredible events of the past couple of years. Those events—the ongoing drought, then the bushfires and most recently the devastating floods on the mid North Coast—have had a significant impact on local communities in my electorate of Port Macquarie.

The budget's investment, particularly in infrastructure but also in services, sends a strong message to communities in the Port Macquarie electorate: from Harrington in the south to Telegraph Point in the north out to Kings Creek and Sancroix and then all the way out to Lord Howe Island. It sends a very strong message that this Government will continue to support our local communities, invest in infrastructure and create local jobs. My constituents feel confident that this Government is focused on their needs and on providing the services they require to ensure that they continue to prosper and that our communities, particularly our regional communities, are great places to live, work and play.

The investment made by the Liberal-Nationals Government in my local community gives me so much to talk about, starting with education. Of course, one of the things that I have been and remain focused on is ensuring that our local schools are upgraded to meet the needs of not only our students and teachers but also our growing population on the mid North Coast. Not surprisingly, at the top of that list is the ongoing multimillion-dollar upgrade of Lake Cathie Public School, where we are building modern, flexible classrooms that meet the needs of that fast-growing community. Anyone who drives down Ocean Drive between Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills will see hundreds and hundreds of new homes being built. That is great news, but it is even better news when the infrastructure matches the needs of that growing population. The new classrooms have been opened. It was fantastic to visit the school with—

Mr Rob Stokes: Hear, hear!

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: I acknowledge that "hear, hear" from the previous education Minister, who knows Lake Cathie Public School well. I was pleased to visit the school and its great principal, Jock Garvan. Jock is an incredible man and has been a school principal for a long time in our community, previously at North Haven Public School. Members will never see a prouder principal than Jock Garvan. He lives and breathes Lake Cathie Public School and is always there to support students, parents, families and teachers. At the beginning of term one this year it was great to tour the school and to see the new classrooms as well as some very excited kindergarten students in their brand-new spaces. Whenever I run into a student from Lake Cathie Public School, whether at the Woolworths supermarket or at the local cafe while getting a morning coffee, they are always keen to tell me about how great their new classrooms are. I think there was a bit of a bidding war between the kindergarten students and the older students over who would get the upstairs classroom. Obviously, it was novel for them to have two-storey classrooms. They are all excited about it. In the end the senior students in years 5 and 6 won, but some very excited younger students are looking forward to moving into those spaces in the future.

Planning continues for the redevelopment of Hastings Secondary College's Port Macquarie campus. I am pleased that the development application for the Westport campus of the college has been submitted. We look forward to that work commencing in the near future. Again, I give a shout-out to the principal, Ian Ross, who continues to do an incredible job for that local school community. He is excited, as we all are, about the significant changes to be made by the upgrades to the school. Further on education, the New South Wales Government's roof replacement program will make a significant difference to schools in my electorate, many of which will benefit from that investment, including Westport Public School, Port Macquarie Public School and Tacking Point Public

School, as well as schools in small outlying communities, including Herons Creek, Lansdowne, Johns River and Coopernook. It is great that the program is in place because it ensures that we continue to maintain our school assets in addition to the many schools we are building across the State, which even members opposite would have to acknowledge is an incredible, unprecedented investment. Again, I acknowledge the past and present education Ministers who have had input into those new schools.

Last year the Government announced the Regional Renewal Program, under which schools were invited to apply for renewal projects to improve their facilities. I was pleased that 12 of our local public schools will see improvements. One is a bit of an exception. I will talk about that in a moment. Those projects are worth over \$1.35 million, which is quite significant. Those school communities will make varying contributions to ensure that those upgrades take place. Kendall Public School will receive a covered walkway. Westport Public School will get covered outdoor learning areas, shade structures and upgrades to the school entry and administration offices. Upper Lansdowne Public School is pleased that it will be able to start work on resurfacing its sports court, as is Coopernook Public school about its upgraded playground.

I acknowledge the incredible work of local P&Cs in our schools. I know every member in this place takes their hat off to the work that P&Cs do. Many of us have served on P&Cs at some time during our lives. All P&C members are volunteers, but they are always focused on ensuring that they meet the needs of the students—their children—and on working closely with the teaching community. I pay tribute to all P&Cs across my electorate. Camden Haven High School will also get covered walkways and seating areas under the renewal program. I commend the school community for putting that project forward and for its success in obtaining funding.

My final comments in the education area concern Telegraph Point Public School, which is a wonderful local school of about 140 students in a small community. Its numbers are quite stable, which is always pleasing to see. The school was on the list for an upgrade to its playground facilities. It was contributing some funds to that but, sadly, the recent floods interrupted the upgrade process. I give a shout-out to that school community, particularly to the principal, Duncan Evans. When the school was flooded, all of its classrooms and assets were impacted. Immediately, he worked very closely with one of our local high schools—Hastings Secondary College, Westport campus—so that we were able to relocate the school's 140 students to that campus in Port Macquarie. I made sure that we had cooperation from Busways, and I commend it for that. Duncan worked hard to make sure that those students had a new school space to work from for nearly a term while the flood damage was rectified and interim demountables put in place.

Duncan Evans also ensured that the social welfare of those students was very much looked after. He is a wonderful man and he has done an incredible job under the circumstances. I again acknowledge the P&C president, Mary Cas, with whom I have spoken in recent days on the progress of the school upgrade. I will continue to work with her to ensure the best outcome for students and teachers. In last year's budget the Treasurer announced that a HealthOne facility would be built at Laurieton as part of the New South Wales Government's \$100 million HealthOne program, which will deliver integrated health care to local communities, including in the Camden Haven.

Our great community health centre is looking a little tired, so the community is excited to see a new HealthOne centre with expanded facilities and services. In fact, last week I visited the site along with the CEO of the local health district, Stewart Dowrick, to announce the commencement of construction, which has now begun. It will be really exciting to see that work progress. I congratulate all of the health staff down at the current community health facility on their commendable flexibility in working around the construction site. The Government made a number of other announcements relating to health in last year's budget. The community that I live in, Lake Cathie, is excited to see a new ambulance station.

The Liberal-Nationals Government has again responded to our growing community with a welcome upgrade to our health assets. An announcement has been made that the Port Macquarie Base Hospital will receive a new helipad, which will be a significant improvement on our current asset. A new class one ambulance will also be provided to support our paramedics, who respond to emergencies right across those communities. It is quite significant and a little unique, but the Liberal-Nationals Government is working with St Agnes' Parish by investing in a suburban dementia village, which is a first for our regional community. That village was modelled on other incredible villages that have been built overseas—using the Dutch model in particular—in which assets and homes are designed specifically for people who live with dementia. That will also benefit carers as well as the broader community.

The New South Wales Government has committed \$5 million to fund stage one of that specialised facility in Port Macquarie. It was great to have the Premier there last year to make that announcement. We look forward to seeing progress on stage one of the new dementia village, which comprises the community centre. All the people who live in the Port Macquarie electorate would agree that one of the reasons we live there is its stunning natural environment. It is important that it is cared for by the community and with support through government

investment, which the Liberal-Nationals Government has certainly provided. For example, \$2.5 million has been set aside for the upgrade of the Sea Acres Rainforest boardwalk, which is one of the top destinations for people visiting Port Macquarie. That beautiful boardwalk runs through an incredible rainforest and is quite stunning. Not long ago I was pleased to take Minister Kean on a tour of that facility. We look forward to the upgrades to the boardwalk through that significant investment.

As members of this House would know, the Return and Earn reverse vending machines have been incredibly popular in our communities and a number of them are in Port Macquarie. Last year I was pleased to open a new one in the outlying community of Kew. That was warmly welcomed by local residents who are keen to recycle and contribute to the incredible numbers of containers that have been recycled since the commencement of the program in December 2017. The Cowarra State Forest Tourism Precinct is a step closer to reality through an announcement last year worth almost \$2.1 million from the State Government's Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund. Financial contributions for that very exciting precinct were also made from project partners, including Forestry Corporation.

From the very outset there has been a very strong partnership with our local Indigenous population, which is exceptional. They were involved at the very beginning, and I was pleased to be present for the initial cultural burn. I acknowledge all of the local Aboriginal men and women who took part in the fire training, including the dear Uncle Bill O'Brien, who is one of our local Elders. Those men and women participated in the cultural burning and will continue to use those skills in other burning activities across other areas of the mid North Coast. The precinct will become an important facility for the rehabilitation and breeding of wild koalas and, most importantly, it will showcase our local Biripi culture. I also acknowledge the partnership with the local koala hospital. Later I will talk about the investment that the Government has made into that incredible facility.

Last year the Government announced \$100,000 in funding for work at Lake Innis Nature Reserve. Together with Minister Matt Kean, I saw the incredibly intelligent detective hounds. Those sleuths are able to track down koala scat and other wildlife. They make an important addition to the work of tracking koala movements. It was incredible to see the way they worked; their handlers were also very adept. I return now to the Koala Hospital Port Macquarie, which is an iconic tourist attraction and a very important rehabilitation centre for local koalas. That came to the fore during the bushfires a few years ago when many of our koalas were injured or killed. Many koalas were rehabilitated thanks to the work of the incredible volunteers at the koala hospital. I am really excited—and I know that I share the views of everybody across my local community—to announce that the New South Wales Government will support the koala hospital with a \$5 million investment to transform the facility and ensure that Koala Conservation Australia continues its critical work in protecting and supporting koalas on the mid North Coast. [*Extension of time*]

Further, the Government has provided additional land to the koala hospital so that it can continue to provide important support to our Aussie icons. Last year I was pleased to receive the Premier in my electorate to announce that funding. As I said at the outset, the New South Wales Government has also invested in important infrastructure right across our State, particularly in the regions. Over \$205 million has been provided through the maritime stimulus package, which continues to be rolled out right across the State. I was pleased to receive transport Minister Andrew Constance in my electorate to announce the \$5 million allocation to upgrade the Port Macquarie southern breakwater. Anyone who has been to Port Macquarie would know that both tourists and locals enjoy that iconic space. Beautiful painted rocks can be seen along the entire breakwater. The significant upgrade will include the widening of the very popular breakwater to ensure the safety of pedestrians who use it, whether they be runners, people in wheelchairs or children in prams.

As well as that, \$2 million was allocated to replace the Crowdy Head jetty. Crowdy Head provides one of the safest harbours on the mid North Coast. As well as being a scenic space, it is important for our boaties to have access to that safe harbour. By replacing the jetty at Crowdy Head harbour, we will be able to attract new recreational and commercial users to the area. When it comes to roads, I commend the Hon. Paul Toole, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, for the work he has put in and his commitment to ensuring that local and State roads are as safe as possible for motorists. An important funding project is the Fixing Country Bridges program. Eight bridges in the Port Macquarie electorate will be replaced under that program, which will ensure that regional communities are better connected and, importantly, that we can increase the resilience of those assets to natural disasters.

Replacing old timber bridges is really important. Obviously it is an enormous task in regional communities. Whilst our councils do an incredible job at working to improve local roads and bridges, it goes without saying that, because of the number of timber bridges across the regions, they do need our support. Replacing old timber bridges improves community connections to our schools, towns and jobs; allows for easier movement of freight; and delivers better outcomes for road safety. I am glad that in our area alone almost \$6 million will be spent to replace old and outdated bridges under the new round of funding, because I know very well what an incredible

difference that will make. I commend the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation, which worked so hard on making sure that this particular proposal for fixing country bridges was successful. Well done to all of them.

The local bridges to be replaced include the Logans Crossing bridge; three bridges on Munday's Lane, on the north shore; Cutty Creek Bridge at Bobs Creek; Joe's Bridge at Bobs Creek; the Old School Road bridge at Herons Creek; and Sheathers Bridge at Hannam Vale. As well as that, I note that the Minister has been working hard to make sure that journeys are safer for local motorists. The Government recently announced a \$2.9 million investment in safety improvements at the Pacific Highway and Houston Mitchell Drive intersection, which is growing in use because of the housing developments happening between Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills. That is why it is critically important that we continue to invest in safety measures on that intersection. I thank the Minister for coming along to see firsthand some of the concerns about that intersection that have been raised with me by local residents. We will continue to focus on making sure we do whatever we can to make that intersection as safe as possible.

The project was funded through the Community Road Safety Fund and will see the installation of vehicle-activated signs, a left-hand turn deceleration lane from the highway onto Houston Mitchell Drive for traffic coming from the north and a left-hand turn acceleration lane out of Houston Mitchell Drive for traffic heading south along the highway. I also acknowledge the investment in Crown lands. In regional communities in particular, Crown land reserves often accommodate important community facilities like community halls and tennis clubs. It is important that we continue to invest, to make sure that we can maintain those important assets on behalf of our local communities. Often those local organisations are operated and managed by volunteers across the community and it is important that we support them with funding. Local projects that were funded include work at the Port Macquarie Racecourse, where almost \$645,000 will see the construction of new stall stables, new toilets and offices, and upgrades to switchboards and floodlighting.

Debate interrupted.

Committees

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

Reports

Debate resumed from 5 May 2021.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:44): Today is my and my husband's nine-year wedding anniversary. After the overwhelming result of the painful plebiscite, one would think that I would not have to fight for equality on this day—but because of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 and this report, entitled *Inquiry into the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020*, I do. Under the Latham bill and in line with some of the report's recommendations, when Vic and I go to dinner tonight our waiter could say, "I'm not serving two poofs," and be protected under Folau's law. If we decided to go away for the weekend to a boutique hotel, upon our arrival they could say, "We don't welcome your type here." If we decided to have kids, they could be bullied and expelled if their school did not like our "lifestyle", despite the fact that the kids would be star students, like their parents!

Despite the clear and compelling evidence we heard during the inquiry, some committee members tried to say, "This wouldn't happen", "It doesn't happen." As the only gay person on the committee, it was tough to be lectured on discrimination by straight people. It does happen, and LGBTI people see it. We feel it every day, including today, my wedding anniversary. The only comfort I get from this report is that, as a result of absurd amendments, it is so retrograde and disjointed that it is totally unworkable. No government that values fairness and equality for all its citizens could support this, and I expect that of the Government. I expect that the Government could never entertain such a betrayal of its LGBTI citizens. Colleagues, let us get back to helping people, not harming them.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:46): As a member of the joint select committee tasked to consider One Nation's so-called religious freedoms and equality bill, I express my extreme concerns. The manner in which the inquiry process, hearings and deliberative were conducted was an absolute disgrace. This report and the recommendations are so flawed that I do not believe this House should note it at all. That is why I will be calling for a division to that effect. From the beginning, the hypocrisy of One Nation—a party that is overtly Islamophobic and transphobic—proposing to protect people from discrimination and advance equality was laughable. To then have the committee made up in large majority of members of the Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedoms made clear the lack of genuine inquiry that would be taking place.

Throughout the inquiry members showed a complete disregard for committee processes, voting together as a bloc to exclude witnesses who opposed their views, and removing references to evidence they did not agree with from the final report. The debacle of the final deliberative is captured in the minutes. Witnesses who did not agree with the group were treated appallingly in hearings. One law expert was called "disgraceful" for raising concerns about the bill, and a senior medical professional was called a "bigot" for warning of the risks to fair access to medical treatment by women seeking to access terminations. Many witnesses reported to me that they felt bullied and harassed by participating in the process. It was appalling to see One Nation, the member for Wagga Wagga and members of the Liberal, National and Labor parties attempting to rewrite history by altering the evidence and removing analysis drafted carefully by secretariat staff.

The process issues were real, but it is not just that, as the House heard from the member for Sydney. At some point, this Parliament needs to push back on the homophobia spouted by members in this place and the other place. We need to push back on sexism and bigotry, and that starts now. We need to stop caving in to the bullying tactics and parliamentary abuse that occurs under the guise of membership of Parliament and so-called freedom of speech when it comes to attacking and harming vulnerable people in our community. There was broad recognition across witnesses that there is a need to protect people from discrimination on the basis of their religious beliefs.

The Greens support it and the whole committee supported it, but the One Nation bill does not do it; it creates more risk of discrimination than it addresses. It is shameful that members of the Liberal and Labor parties joined with the Independent member for Wagga Wagga to back the One Nation bill. It is crucial that our Anti-Discrimination Act does not give one protected attribute supremacy over another. I urge this Parliament and the Attorney General to disregard the report and recommend that the Government undertake a broad review of the Anti-Discrimination Act, including inserting religious beliefs as a protected attribute, as well as overhauling other aspects to provide adequate protection to the rest of the community.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:49): We are a nation and a State who value tolerance and freedom from discrimination. We also value freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which are internationally recognised as human rights. My community of Wagga Wagga has people from more than a hundred nationalities. For many, religion is important to their community and identity. However, in New South Wales there is a gap because religion is not included in anti-discrimination legislation. The recent Federal Government Religious Freedom Review recommended that New South Wales include religion in the legislation. Such an inclusion, as proposed by the bill, would help ensure that people can practise their faith without fear of discrimination.

An important part of the bill is the inclusion of religious groups and organisations. The contribution of these to our society has been, and continues to be, immense. Belonging to a religious group is a fundamental part of religious belief. I believe the bill recognises that appropriately. But this should not be a bill that protects people of religion if they discriminate against and attack others; it should be a bill that protects from discrimination. We should not tolerate discrimination against members of our community, including discrimination by religious organisations. This legislation should be—and is—a shield, not a sword.

We should also recognise that there can be competition between rights in different situations and between people of different groups. During the COVID pandemic the right to worship had to be balanced with the right of the community to safety. Importantly, the bill recommends the adoption of principles to provide a balance between competing rights. I thank the Chair of the committee, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, and the secretariat for their professional work in a complex and demanding area. I also thank the other members of the joint select committee and all those who made submissions, particularly those who appeared before the committee.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:51): I thank the Chair and fellow committee members. I also thank all the contributors, be they online with a detailed submission or those who gave evidence at the hearings. The notion of anti-discrimination in the form of religious freedom presented us with quite complex issues. At times, the hearings were, as you would expect with such a deeply personal issue from both sides of the argument, emotionally charged. They require specialist skills to navigate the next steps forward. The task is ahead of us now. How do we take the recommendations forward? How do we create an anti-discrimination bill that seeks to value and respect the views put forward by people who require religious freedom and others who feel they may adversely affect them?

This is a take-note debate. The motion, as far as I understand, is that we note the report. The report has already been tabled under the standing orders, which happens without a vote. Noting a report does not mean the House supports or rejects it. We have heard the complexity in the issue. I am sure that we will continue on and find a way forward. As a previous member said, we should not introduce things that will turn the anti-discrimination bill into a weapon but rather use it as a shield. People should be protected. We owe to the people of this State to ensure that everyone has a right to belong and feel protected in the face of discrimination based on belief or practice.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the House take note of the report. A division has been called for. There being four members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of the members voting against the question be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 4

Mr Alex Greenwich
Ms Jenny Leong
Mr Jamie Parker
Ms Tamara Smith

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I move:

That, in accordance with standing order 306 (7), the reports of the Legislation Review Committee, being orders of the day (committee reports) Nos 2 and 3, be considered together.

Motion agreed to.

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

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:05): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 29/57* and *Legislation Review Digest No. 30/57*, tabled on 4 May and 11 May 2021 respectively. In the twenty-ninth digest, the committee examined the three bills introduced in the last sitting week. The committee also commented on eight statutory instruments. I now draw the Parliament's attention to some of the issues raised. The Heavy Vehicle Legislation Amendment (National Regulator) Bill 2021 transfers certain functions under the Heavy Vehicle National Law from Transport for NSW [TfNSW] to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator [NHVR]. The purpose of the bill is to give effect to the transfer of certain functions under the Heavy Vehicle National Law from Transport for NSW to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. It primarily transfers certain members of staff from Transport for NSW to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and safeguards their employment conditions.

In reviewing this bill, the committee identified that the bill permits Transport for NSW to provide the regulator with information in the possession of Transport for NSW, including personal information. The committee noted that this may infringe upon an individual's right to privacy. However, under the bill, personal information has the same definition as under section 4 of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and is subject to certain privacy protections under that Act regarding the retention, use and disclosure of that information. The committee also noted that the transfer of information is for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of employees from TfNSW to the NHVR, including details of their employment, superannuation and leave entitlements. In these circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The committee also reported on eight regulations in this digest, one of which is the Retirement Villages Amendment (Exit Entitlement) Regulation 2021. This regulation inserts provisions to allow residents to apply to the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to make an order for the payment of a former occupant's exit entitlement, where the sale of the premises has been unreasonably delayed by the operator. The committee identified that the amending regulation provides that such an application may be made by the former occupant if the exit entitlement has not been paid within the prescribed period. Under the new schedule 5A to the regulation, the prescribed period for retirement villages in the 28 specified local government areas [LGAs] is six months. For all other LGAs, the prescribed period is 12 months. The committee commented that this may create a barrier for those residents that must wait 12 months, which may impact their economic rights regarding the payment of the exit entitlement where it has been unreasonably delayed by the operator. The committee referred these provisions to the Parliament for consideration.

I now turn to the thirtieth digest, tabled this week, in which the committee examined eight bills and three statutory instruments. In this digest, the committee reviewed the Tax Administration Amendment (Combating Wage Theft) Bill 2021. This bill amends the Taxation Administration Act 1996 to introduce measures to deter the underpayment of wages, including increasing the maximum penalties attached to a number of existing offences and inserting a new offence for tax evasion. The committee identified that the changes significantly increase the monetary penalties applicable to a range of provisions relating to keeping records and providing accurate information to the chief commissioner of taxation. For two existing offences and the new offence, the amendments also insert a custodial penalty of two years' imprisonment.

Many of the amended offences are strict liability offences, meaning that no mental element or intent is required to be proven. Many are also executive liability offences, meaning that a director of a company can be liable if they ought to have known about an offence and failed to take reasonable steps to prevent it. The committee will generally comment where significant penalties can be imposed without requiring intent. This is based on the common law principle that the mental element of an offence is relevant to the imposition of liability. The committee also generally comments where penalties are significantly increased, particularly custodial sentences, as these may impact on the right to liberty.

The committee acknowledged that strict and executive liability offences, with significant penalties attached, are often used in regulatory settings to encourage compliance. Further, the committee acknowledges the object of the bill, which is to deter underpayment of wages by employers. However, given the significant increase in penalties for multiple offences and the inclusion of new custodial sentences, the committee referred these provisions to Parliament for its consideration. That concludes my remarks on the twenty-ninth and the thirtieth digests for this Parliament. I thank my fellow committee members and the committee secretariat for all their work and I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:10): I make a contribution to this take-note debate on the twenty-ninth digest, dated 4 May 2021, and the thirtieth digest, dated 11 May 2021, of the Legislation Review Committee. In the twenty-ninth digest the committee considered three bills and commented on all of them. Those bills are the Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021, the Heavy Vehicle Legislation Amendment (National Regulator) Bill 2021 and the NSW Jobs First Bill 2021. The committee also considered 42 regulations and commented on eight of those. I will come back to two of those in a moment—the Retirement Villages Amendment regulations.

In the thirtieth digest, dated 11 May 2021, the committee considered eight bills and commented on five of them. The committee considered the Coal and Gas Legislation Amendment (Liverpool Plains Prohibition) Bill 2021; the Payroll Tax Amendment (Jobs Plus) Bill 2021; the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Cancellation of Zombie Petroleum Exploration Licences) Bill 2020; the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Clean Air) Bill 2021; the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Reasons for Termination) Bill 2021; the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021; the Tax Administration Amendment (Combating Wage Theft) Bill 2021; and the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Industrial Manslaughter) Bill 2021. The committee also considered 27 regulations and commented on three of those.

There were two Retirement Villages Amendment regulations—one concerning asset management plans and the other concerning exit entitlements. The date for disallowance in this place has expired, but the date for disallowance in the other place is still current. It is my understanding that notice has been given of disallowance of those two regulations. Some members in this place will be aware that the Retirement Village Residents Association was very concerned about the regulations. The association wrote to many members, including to me, particularly in relation to the exit entitlement regulation. The association's concern was that, in its view, the regulation did not correspond with promises made and understandings reached with the Government in relation to the time scale for when exit entitlement was claimable.

Discussions prior to the formulation of the regulation suggested to the Retirement Village Residents Association that in the Sydney metropolitan area, including in Newcastle and Wollongong, residents exiting a retirement village would be able to claim their exit entitlement after six months. When the regulation was released it was found that whilst the six-month period was enacted for the Sydney metropolitan area, Newcastle and Wollongong, left out of the list was the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie area—hence the concern, because retirement village residents in those locations, having read the discussion paper that had been produced prior to the regulation being made, thought that they would be included in that six-month period. Having been left out of the six-month period, they fell back on the other provision in the regulation, which only enabled claiming the exit entitlement after 12 months. I encourage members to read that, particularly if they received a letter from retirement village residents in their area. Again, I thank all my committee members for their hard work in putting this report together, and I note the excellent backup we received from the secretariat. I commend the digests to the House.

Reports noted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I warmly welcome my own guests, Penny and Iain Howell, who are currently watching question time from my office. Penny is the Local Woman of the Year for my electorate of Davidson—

congratulations again, Penny. I also welcome the member for Lake Macquarie's guests, staff and students from Toronto High School, who are watching question time from the theatrette. I also acknowledge Fiona Crawford, dual Olympic medallist, and 11 members of the Australian softball Olympic squad, here today for the parliamentary friends of baseball and softball.

Ms Jodi McKay: Don't say anything about bats and balls.

The SPEAKER: Although I do note, Opposition leader, that in this place at the moment we tend to play hardball.

Announcements

RETIREMENT OF LESLIE ERIC GONYE, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER (14:18): As I foreshadowed in March, this is Les Gönye's last week in the Chamber before he heads off on long service leave—he has a lot of long service leave—prior to his formal retirement on Friday 10 February 2023, which will mark exactly 45 years of service. Les commenced work with the Legislative Assembly on Friday 10 February 1978. When asked when he was available for duty, Les replied, "Tomorrow", which is indicative of the dedication and commitment Les has shown to the Legislative Assembly from the start. Initially taking on various procedure roles in the Table Office—papers, votes, bills—Les then rotated into the position of Clerk to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety. In 1987 Les became Clerk-at-the Table when appointed Second Clerk-Assistant. In 1990 he was made Clerk-Assistant (Procedure). In 1997 he rotated into the position of Clerk-Assistant (Committees). After leading the Committees Office through a number of management reviews and a major restructure in 2010, Les returned to procedure and the position of Clerk-Assistant, Table. From there he became Deputy Clerk in 2017.

Les has developed valuable, lasting networks with colleagues in other jurisdictions and overseas, including through his other role as Serjeant-at-Arms, which he held from 2011 to 2020. I understand that a high point of this period for Les was meeting Sir Robert Rogers, the former Clerk of the UK House of Commons. Since then Les has been sporting a white bow tie on sitting days. Les has always given back to the profession, including serving in recent years as the President of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table. He helped foster the twinning relationship between the Legislative Assembly and the Bougainville House of Representatives, and he has supported and assisted many parliamentary officers in their professional development, giving sage advice and counsel. Les' length of service on the staff of the Assembly is unparalleled. When he started here in 1978, the Hon. Neville Wran was Premier, the Hon. Lawrence Kelly was Speaker, the Hon. Frank Walker was Leader of the House and Ron Ward was the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Les has served under 11 Premiers, 15 Leaders of the Opposition, seven Speakers, 13 Leaders of the House and six Clerks of the Legislative Assembly.

The contribution Les has made to the Legislative Assembly during the span of his career is significant, and warrants our recognition and admiration. He has been involved in many historic proceedings. I will give just three examples. First, in the mid-1980s Les had the privilege of supporting the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege, a joint committee of the Council and Assembly chaired by Rodney Cavalier. Secondly, Clerking the Select Committee on the Tamworth Tourist Information Centre Bill in 1992 was also a highlight. That was the first and only private bill lodged on petition to be considered by the Assembly since 1910. Thirdly, as the member for Wakehurst can attest, while serving at the table during the hung Parliament in the early 1990s, Les often saw the House sitting from the early morning until late at night, on occasion five days a week. In addition to the pressures of workloads and long sittings, the Clerks at Table advised the Government, Opposition and Independents on procedural matters at the time, often on the same subject, whilst maintaining the trust and confidence of all members. As Clerk-Assistant, Procedure, Les performed his duties with a high level of professionalism and discretion.

As a Clerk-at-Table, Les has set a high ideal of political neutrality, professionalism and discretion that befits all good officers of the House. Les, your calm demeanour and knowledge of the practice and procedure of this House have been of great service to many members over a long period of time. On retirement Les will have more time to devote to his interests outside of Parliament. All of us have seen him in his running gear at times. One of those interests will be Masters Athletics, and also the Adelaide Crows in the AFL and the Western Sydney Wanderers in the A-League. On behalf of the House and all members—whether they are in the Chamber or watching remotely and whether they are current or former members—I wish both you and your wife, Judith, all the best in your retirement. Even though it is a little way away from the end of this month, we will not see you around this place on a full-time basis. We hope that you come back to visit us on occasion. We thank you for your tremendous service to this House, Les. You will be missed.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places and applauded.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25): On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I thank Les Gönye for his 4½ decades of service to this place and to the people. I acknowledge the expertise, humility, dignity and integrity with which he has held office. It is a wonderful example to all of us. We sincerely wish him well for the future.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:25): I echo the comments of the Premier. On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I thank Les sincerely. Being in Opposition is not an easy task. Sometimes we have to make decisions based on what may happen in the House at any given time. Les—as well as Helen Minnican—has always been respectful of that. He has always given sage and honest advice that has helped us be better parliamentarians. I was in government during 2007 and 2011. Les has the utmost respect of members whether they are in government or opposition. I am so impressed that he is still running. I encourage him to run each and every day during his retirement. We will still be here but thinking of him. I thank Les.

Question Time

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:27): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier finally be up-front and tell the House what she plans to sell off next, given she has already sold Scone TAFE, Port of Newcastle, Ausgrid, Bayswater Power Station, Liddell Power Station, TransGrid, Port Botany, Port Kembla, Endeavour Energy, the Kooragang Industrial Water Scheme, Eraring Energy, Mount Piper Power Station, Wallerawang Power Station, Green State Power, Colongra Power Station, Vales Point Power Station, Sydney Desalination Plant, Northern Beaches Hospital, Brown Mountain hydro power station, M7 rental payments, Hunter Water's engineering subsidiary, Cochrane Dam, Pillar superannuation administration, Darling Quarter ground lease rental income, Property Exchange Australia, Home Care Service of NSW, WestConnex, Land Titles Office, and \$6 billion of public land, including TAFE campuses as well as parks and public housing?

The SPEAKER: I will allow the question on this occasion, but generally questions should not be so long.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): As usual, the Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated she stands for nothing. When she was asked back in 2008 about her views on privatisation, she said she remained supportive of privatisation as it was in the interest of those in her electorate. She was quoted in a report that said:

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

She said that when she was a Minister. Those comments were about electricity assets, but then we also move onto other assets. She commented on many occasions about electricity privatisation, but—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Very awkward.

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is not awkward at all, Minister. I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. Clearly the question is about what the Premier is going to do.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Leader of the Opposition also had a similar approach to prisons when she was the Minister for the Hunter. In relation to the privatisation of Cessnock and Parklea prisons—Cessnock being in the Hunter region—a report said, "Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay said she supported privatising the jails." So she supports privatising electricity assets. She supports privatising the jails. But it does not stop there. She was also supportive of privatising—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled that the Premier was being relevant and she continues to be relevant to the question. Does the member for Keira have a different point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: No, because I want to know how, when we asked for her view on the next round of privatisations, it is relevant to be talking about another member.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If time permits, I will go through the list of all the assets she was happy to privatise—electricity assets, jails and social housing. She said that she supported the privatisation of social housing in Newcastle's east when she was the member for Newcastle and Minister for the Hunter. The point I am

making is about the absolute hypocrisy of the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition. On this side of the House, we went to the election in 2015 and we had the courage to put to the people of this State—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. My question was this: Will the Premier finally be up-front and tell the House what she plans to sell off next?

The SPEAKER: The nature of the question is such that the Premier's response is relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, the Leader of the Opposition is again demonstrating her hypocrisy and why she is not fit for office. She supports privatisation while seeking to engender a fear campaign on it. It does not exist.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is a touchy subject for the Opposition members because they have nowhere to go. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Unless you stand for something, nobody will support you. Clearly she says one thing in the Chamber—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not only was she prepared to sell social housing, jails and electricity in the Hunter; her language and her words are hollow. Whenever the New South Wales Coalition has had a plan, we have taken it to the people.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is coming back to the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have always been up-front about our plans. The people of New South Wales appreciate that they own more schools, hospitals, roads and rail than any other citizen of any other State because of the work that we have done in managing our balance sheet. That is why we are the party of the workers. We are the party of infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition continues to stand for nothing.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:33): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is driving international investment to ensure our State's economic security?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:33): I thank the member for Terrigal for his question. I know how much he is focused on bringing jobs to the Central Coast. In fact, the member for Terrigal has done a lot of great work with the Greater Sydney Commission and other bodies to make sure there is a plan for jobs and a plan for precincts on the Central Coast. That work is progressing very well. I know the investment and jobs Minister, Mr Ayres, is also very committed to making sure that areas like the Central Coast have those jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford, the member for Newcastle and the member for Canterbury will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But this question gives me the opportunity to talk about the exciting prospects for the New South Wales Government in relation to job creation. Because of the way in which COVID has been dealt with in our State, we have managed to keep the economy going. I recognise the Federal budget delivered last night. It was a very solid budget, demonstrating the gains New South Wales has made. Business confidence and consumer sentiment have given us a bit of a lift in the revenues we can expect over the next four years. This is in large part due to the good work done by both governments in managing the pandemic.

But it is not a secret or a surprise that many companies, both local and overseas, are considering either moving their headquarters to New South Wales or increasing their footprints. That is very positive for New South Wales because it means more jobs and more investment. I commend a number of people in the New South Wales Government who are spearheading those initiatives. Firstly, I am pleased with the response the Government has had so far in relation to our Jobs Plus program. That program was announced by the Treasurer in the last State budget but also spearheaded by the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Minister Ayres, who updated the House yesterday on some medical manufacturing companies that are now expanding their footprints and creating hundreds of jobs in New South Wales.

The examples we were able to share in the House yesterday are just some of several and we anticipate over the medium to long term that thousands of jobs will be created in New South Wales because of those initiatives. I also commend all those in our Government who are really focused on delivering on our precinct strategy. As members know, the Greater Sydney Commission gave us the strategic vision of having three cities in Greater Sydney. Obviously, we are in Eastern Sydney, Parramatta is in Central Sydney and the new airport city of Bradfield is the third city. Each of those areas has a special precinct within it. In Eastern Sydney it is essentially the tech precinct. As members know, Atlassian and other companies have already indicated they will be making their headquarters there. In Parramatta we have the Westmead Health and Education Precinct, which again is attracting global investment. In Bradfield, the western airport city, more than 20 international companies have already signed memorandums of understanding with the Government to create the jobs of the future. That is what this investment is about.

Our investment now and our ability to attract local head offices and overseas investment mean that we can create jobs of the future, especially as other economies around the world are struggling to keep operations going. We are able to benefit from that. In addition to our Jobs Plus program and our response to COVID we are also pleased to have recently announced Investment NSW, a new team within the Department of Premier and Cabinet that will coordinate all of the Government's efforts and will be a one-stop shop for business. If business has an idea, if someone from the community wants to put a proposition to us about increasing their footprint in New South Wales, they will have a one-stop shop. Within Investment NSW is obviously an important arm that is coordinating all of our research and development capacity. I thank Parliamentary Secretary Upton for supporting the Government in this role. She did some amazing work in getting together all the stakeholders and making sure that the R&D capacity of the Government is really enhanced.

We were very pleased last week to announce that Chief Scientist Hugh Durrant-Whyte, an exceptionally bright person whom we are lucky to have as the Chief Scientist, will be undertaking the leadership work in getting mRNA technology—or vaccines—and other pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity in New South Wales. That is but one example of what this arm of government can achieve. In addition to those international investment opportunities and attraction initiatives, our infrastructure pipeline is also attracting a lot of attention. Normally consuls general meet with the Premier and the Deputy Premier and other senior Ministers. Very pleasingly, we are now having ambassadors from Canberra meet with us because they see the opportunities for their nations to do business with New South Wales. We are very pleased to continue that. The infrastructure pipeline as well as the initiatives I have spoken about are really giving people that confidence to deal directly with us. [*Extension of time*]

In particular I share with the House that in the past 10 days alone I was able to have meetings with the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia, the Australian British Chamber of Commerce and the High Commissioner from the United Kingdom, as well as the newly appointed Japanese ambassador in January. I thank all those nations and their representatives for wanting to do business with New South Wales. We are ready; we want to create jobs. We are a good place to live, work and invest and rest assured the New South Wales Government has an eye on creating the jobs of the future. We do not know what future disruptions will be; we do not know what future challenges our State will have to face. What we do know is that we have the plans and programs in place to make sure that we are at the cutting edge, attracting the jobs that may not exist but also attracting all the best talent we have locally and from around the world.

I thank everybody in government who is making those plans a reality. I assure the people of this great State that not only will we keep them safe, we will also make sure our State remains strong through job creation and through investments spurred on by the confidence people have in our Government—whether it is business confidence or consumer confidence. I will end where I started when I was asked a question at the press conference this morning: I want us to be more ambitious about when our borders open. I want us to be more ambitious about when we can reconnect with the rest of the world. That is why the New South Wales Government remains focused on our vaccine rollout and on making sure that we keep our community safe and we keep our community strong.

TRANSPORT PROCUREMENT PROJECTS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:40): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. There is not a single transport procurement project that the Minister has not completely stuffed up. His trains do not fit, his light rail does not work, and his ferries are unsafe, asbestos-riddled tubs that cannot be driven after dark.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128—imputation.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will restrain themselves. I ask the member for Swansea to rephrase the question. In my opinion it does breach Standing Order 128.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. The Minister's trains do not fit the tracks, the light rail does not work, and his ferries are unsafe, asbestos-riddled tubs that cannot be driven after dark. When will the Minister stop buying cheap, imported knock-offs and instead use taxpayer money to buy high-quality, Australian-made transport infrastructure?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:42): I thank Karen from Swansea for her question, and if she wants to complain to my manager, then she is just here. Seriously, what type of question is that? The member for Swansea came into this House and has quite frankly just misled the Parliament. We could use our numbers and get her thrown out—now there is an idea! But I have the best of the best in terms of media material from the member for Swansea over the past month or so. I might just go through it because it does touch on some of her claims. Anyone who knows how ferries operate will know that on occasion one might get a little bit of corrosion in the ferry hulls. That is saltwater.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Not brand-new ones.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have to agree with the member for Swansea. She gets herself onto 2SM on 12 April and says that the Emerald class ferries were bought from overseas and are nothing but rust buckets. I have to agree with her; they were from overseas. Guess what the name of the sea was: Bass Strait. They were built in Tasmania. Anyway, that is a sea! It gets better. I have a press release; I have a cracker. I love this. I do not know who writes this stuff.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister does not need encouragement.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do, Mr Speaker. Talk about stuffing up, I have a fantastic press release that was issued today by the Labor member for Swansea—something about ferries. She says she is going to admonish me. What the hell does that mean? I have been up in my office before question time panicked about being admonished by the member for Swansea. But it gets better. There are a couple of factual inaccuracies. She talks about the cockpit windows in the ferries. Now cockpits are in aeroplanes. Wheelhouses are in ferries. You do not know the difference between a cockpit and a wheelhouse.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was, Minister, whether you are able to get it right. Answer the question. Are you any good?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Our seafaring friend does not know the difference between a cockpit in an aeroplane and a wheelhouse in a boat. In this press release she talks about the offshore shipbuilder. Last time I looked, Birdon was in Port Macquarie. So that is another factual inaccuracy. I love this one—

Mr Ryan Park: I know no-one cares about misleading the Houses anymore but you can't just say what you want in here.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Parky, you'll like this, mate. So she puts out this press release about the ferry window and uses words like "cheap junk from overseas", "blah, blah, blah". So, of course, what do I do? I go to Transport to find out. Guess where they are from? They are made in Australia. You have been misleading the media all day, and now you are misleading the Parliament.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, you have to be reasonable. You started this week by expressing concern about the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition. Surely you can see that after several minutes the Minister is being completely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: I will rule on the point of order. Given the nature of the question, the response is relevant.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Actually, Adrian Piccoli coined the phrase, "It's question time, not answer time." If you are going to mislead the media, don't come in here and mislead the Parliament as well. Quite frankly, the member's attacks on that great workforce in Port Macquarie that has been behind the building of these boats and her attacks on those incredible shipbuilders in Tasmania are just outrageous. I really think she needs to know the difference between cockpit and wheelhouse before she starts issuing press releases like this.

REGIONAL AND RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on how the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are the best placed parties to represent regional communities?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:47): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He is a member who cares about what happens in regional and rural New South Wales. If you look at the electorate of Coffs Harbour,

there has been significant investment, and no greater investment than what has occurred on the Pacific Highway and, most importantly, the tunnels for Coffs Harbour. These works will change that city forever. It will be a destination for holidays and it will be a destination for investment. Coffs Harbour has a great future because of the leadership of the local member and, more importantly, the investment by the New South Wales Government backing in our regional communities.

It has always been the Liberals and Nationals who find a way to invest in regional and rural New South Wales, be it our hospitals, our schools, our road or our rail. In the Upper Hunter, for instance, there is over \$1.5 billion in investment just in road infrastructure like bypasses, local roads and country bridges. That is occurring in the Upper Hunter as we speak. It is investment not just for today but for the future. If you look at Muswellbrook Hospital or at the investment we are seeing right across the Upper Hunter, it is clear that the Liberals and Nationals when in government are solely focused on delivering for regional and rural New South Wales.

It is not something that we do just on the eve of a by-election. We do it every day we are in government. We are so focused on the regions. We fight for funding. We fight for policy. We fight for our communities. That is what the Liberals and Nationals do in government. On the eve of an election, parties often turn up and they forget about their past—and you cannot hide your past in this place because it is recorded in *Hansard*. We know that the shooters party, for instance, has voted with Labor more than 80 per cent of the time, against our farmers, against our regions, against our communities. We know about the unholy alliance between the shooters, Labor and The Greens.

From the start, this campaign was about jobs, and especially jobs in mining. Of course, Labor tried to rewrite the last 10 years and pretend that everything it had said against mining and against the regions did not exist. Those opposite picked a CFMEU representative as their "mining" candidate, and good luck to them. Thank goodness they have picked someone that possibly is connected to the mining sector. But the reality is what they say and what they do are vastly different. They could not even wait for the campaign to finish. We just have to look at the preference deals that they have done behind closed doors, hidden away. Already, once again we see what has occurred: Labor of course has preferred the shooters party because it has that bloc of support—anti regional and rural New South Wales. Those opposite support Malcolm Turnbull's green candidate, the Independent green Kirsty O'Connell.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We are nearly three minutes in, so we have given a fair amount of latitude. Mr Speaker, surely you would say this time that the Minister is being completely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: On reading the question again, it is a comparative question. I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier is being relevant, albeit slightly turning the tack.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The issue here is about regional and rural New South Wales and representing our communities. On the one hand those opposite say, "We back coal jobs in", but then they go and preference Kirsty O'Connell, who spoke about "a moratorium on coal", killing thousands of coal jobs. But wait for it. They could not do a deal with The Greens directly, but The Greens are actually preferencing Labor, and then Labor is preferencing Kirsty.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This is a web of preferences to deceive the voters of the Upper Hunter. Those opposite do not stand for coal jobs, they do not stand for mining, they do not stand for manufacturing, they do not stand for industry, and what they say and what they do are starkly different. So the question to the Leader of the Opposition is: If you are confident in your candidate, if you genuinely back in Jeff Drayton—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. I would like to hear what the Deputy Premier, after 10 years in government, has done for the people of the Upper Hunter and regional and rural New South Wales. Because those opposite have done nothing in Dungog. They have done nothing in Singleton. They have done nothing.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is the \$28 million water treatment plant that we have just opened in Dungog. There is the road investment in Dungog, \$16 million on 23 bridges in Dungog. No, we have done nothing in Dungog! What have the Romans ever done for us? That is what I am hearing from those opposite. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I am granting an extension of time, but I ask the Deputy Premier, who has spent enough time on the topic referring to the other side, to bring the answer back to his own party.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The key here is what you say and what you do in relation to representing the regions. The Liberals and Nationals get elected and we deliver on our land commissioner; we deliver on protecting the rights of farmers; we deliver on drought support; we deliver on infrastructure for regional and rural New South Wales; record investment in roads; record investment in communities; and record investment in hospitals and schools. In this year's budget alone, there is \$650 million for schools, \$950 million for hospitals, and \$7 billion for transport and roads. That is what we do. We do not deceive the electorate by saying one thing and doing something else. They say it is just a preference on their how-to-vote cards. But guess what? The Labor Party volunteers in their bright red shirts are actually putting out Kirsty O'Connell's corflutes and Kirsty O'Connell's A-frames.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: I will not uphold that point of order, but I will remind the Deputy Premier that I now want him to speak about his own party. We have heard enough about the other side.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: With the Liberals and Nationals in government, what we say is what we do. If we promise the Singleton bypass, we will deliver the Singleton bypass. If we promise the Muswellbrook bypass, we will deliver the Muswellbrook bypass. We promised the Scone bypass, and we delivered it.

Mr Ryan Park: What about the hospital?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We delivered stages one and two of Muswellbrook Hospital—thank you member for Keira—and now we have promised stage three. Before we can do stage three, guess what we have to do? Stages one and two. That is what we have committed to, unlike those opposite. They know they cannot stand on their own feet. They do dodgy deals behind closed doors. They have a network of preferences, a web of fraud and a web of spin. I cannot believe that today they have given up on Jeff Drayton. The Labor Party volunteers at pre-poll are handing out leaflets for Kirsty O'Connell, putting out her A-frames and her corflutes and backing in a green Independent.

NSW FARMERS AND THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:55): After that diatribe and after three MPs have left in by-elections and one in disgrace, I am pleased to direct my question to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Does the Deputy Premier agree with the agriculture Minister's attack on NSW Farmers and the Country Women's Association that they are more interested in headlines and public relations stunts than in genuine solutions?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:55): I thank the member for Maitland for her question. This is the point: No party, parties or government have supported farmers more in this State than the Liberals and The Nationals. When we brought the right to farm legislation to this House, members opposite voted against it. Of course, when it comes to private native forestry, they oppose it. When we fight for property rights for farmers, they oppose it. They had no plan for the drought and they went to the last election with a tax on tractors.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We have worked tirelessly with the great organisation that is the Country Women's Association [CWA]. It is a fantastic organisation. I am proud that I have spoken at its conferences. We have delivered on some of the commitments we have made to it, and we have been working in partnership. NSW Farmers have had an open door to Ministers of this Government. I have met with NSW Farmers on a number of occasions and I have been at their conferences. NSW Farmers have my mobile number and have contacted me time after time. Recently they acknowledged and applauded this Government's commitment to finding a way through the Blue Mountains. I received that text from Peter Arkle.

When NSW Farmers asked the agriculture Minister to attend an event on Tuesday of this week, the Minister clearly indicated that he was not available because on that day we had our joint party room meeting, as we have had for the past 10 years. All Government members—50 per cent of the Parliament—would not have been able to attend the event. If NSW Farmers had changed the timeslot, not only the agriculture Minister would have attended but also other members of Parliament, including me. NSW Farmers chose not to. Then Mr Peter Arkle of NSW Farmers gets out in front of a camera and attacks the Minister and the Government. Well, guess what? He is playing politics because he has had an opportunity. He has my mobile number but he has not spoken

to me about that issue. The reality is that NSW Farmers will always be best served by the Liberals and The Nationals because what we say is what we do. If they start trusting those opposite, they are in trouble.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I know that the agriculture Minister, the members of my party and the members of the Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to work with NSW Farmers.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We will work with Fiona Simpson of the National Farmers Federation. We will work with the CWA.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Can I clarify whether the Deputy Premier believes NSW Farmers and the CWA are more interested in headlines and PR stunts? Is that what he is saying? Is that what he believes?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: As I said, Peter Arkle jumped in front of a camera and politicised an issue. That sits on Peter Arkle. He has probably done an injustice to NSW Farmers, its members and the farmers of the communities that we represent. The question really is, why would the farmers of this State sign up with those opposite when for the past 10 years of this Parliament their track record is to destroy the right to farm.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite want to rip up the Biodiversity Conservation Act, under which we once again empowered farmers. Those opposite do not want to see farmers prosper. They want to see protesters run onto farmers' property and in a way terrorise those farmers. Those protesters are terrorists; they terrorise farmers and their families. NSW Farmers needs to decide whether it really will get into bed with those opposite. That would be like leaving the fox in charge of the chook house. Opposition members will say whatever they have to say. They will cuddle up during an election and a by-election. But we know what their agenda will be once they are in government. Their agenda is to appease green votes, appease the shooters party and kill off our farming sector.

COVID-19 AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is getting on with the job of delivering world-class health care while keeping the community safe from COVID-19?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:00): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. It is always a pleasure to work with her. She is an amazing member of Parliament in her local area. Three or four weeks ago I was in the member's electorate when we announced the new Camden Haven HealthOne facility. I met the staff up there. They are all excited, which is great. I think work has already kicked off on that project, which is fantastic. We also announced the new Lake Cathie ambulance station. Planning work on that project is proceeding.

Today is International Nurses Day, which is celebrated around the world on 12 May, the birth date of Florence Nightingale. The nurses across our entire health system do an incredible job. Last week, on 5 May, it was International Day of the Midwife. Over the past week we have had a chance to celebrate the work of nurses and midwives. I thank them. On behalf of the entire community, we appreciate everything they do. There are 54,000 nurses and midwives working across NSW Health. I meet staff regularly when I am out visiting our hospitals and I know that every single one of them is committed to their task.

In 2020 I was delighted to have 2,600 new nursing and midwifery graduates join NSW Health. The Government has continued to increase the number of nurses in our workforce. Since we came to government in 2011, there has been a 23 per cent increase in the nurses who assist us through our hospital and health systems in New South Wales. Of course, nurses and midwives are again at the centre of the latest step forward that the New South Wales Government made on Monday this week. On that day I had the great pleasure of being with the Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, when we visited the new vaccination hub at 1 Figtree Drive, Homebush. More than 200 nurses and midwives are working there every day to ensure that the people of New South Wales are vaccinated against this one-in-100-year pandemic—this terrible virus that has been so destructive across the world.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: To see the nurses and midwives at the hub working so hard was amazing. I also acknowledge the work of the senior NSW Health staff who managed to put that facility together within literally

only 20 working days. Obviously, the builders who responded are part and parcel of that. I thank every one of them as well as the technicians who worked on it. In particular, I thank the Secretary of NSW Health, Elizabeth Koff; Deputy Secretary Susan Pearce; Joanne Edwards, who works with the deputy secretary; and all the other staff. I also thank Rosemary Burke, the chief pharmacist at the Homebush facility. The facility operates six days a week. At this stage, each week we are aiming for about 30,000 vaccinations. But who knows what we can achieve as we proceed? I emphasise that with the support of our nurses, midwives, doctors and other health staff, the New South Wales Government has stepped in to do what the Federal Government originally said it would do. Pfizer vaccinations are being put into people's arms as we speak. I have had reports today that those health staff are doing an amazing job yet again.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I also acknowledge that the Government has done a lot of work across the ambulance network. The Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration program, worth \$130 million, has provided new facilities at Wagga Wagga, Coolamon, Ardlethan, Harden, Molong, Griffith, Kiama, Berry, Bay and Basin, Toukley, Wauchope, Hamlyn Terrace, Bathurst, Pottsville, Yass, Rutherford, Bungendore, Cowra, Grenfell, Goulburn, Birmingham Gardens, Cootamundra, Sawtell and Iluka. If I am given an extension of time, I would be very pleased to identify the stations that the Government is in the process of renewing or building as part of stage two of the Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration program. [*Extension of time*]

In the past few weeks I was pleased to announce a new station in Port Macquarie at Lake Cathie and another at Medowie, which is in the electorate of the member for Port Stephens. An ambulance station will be rebuilt in Tamworth, in the electorate of Kevin Anderson, and another in Casino, which is in the electorate of the member for Clarence. Brand spanking new stations will be built at Old Bar and Forster, in the electorate of the member for Myall Lakes. I also announce a brand-new station in the electorate of Wagga Wagga, which will be co-located on the Tumut hospital grounds. I note that the member for Wagga Wagga looks pretty happy. He joined me on a visit of the current Tumut station, which has a mice problem at the moment.

As I have said, a brand-new station will be built at Tumut hospital. Major refurbishments will begin on a number of other stations including at Gloucester, in the Upper Hunter, which is significant; at Lockhart, which is another station in the electorate of Wagga Wagga; at Stockton, which the member for Newcastle will be pleased to know; at Tea Gardens, which the member for Port Stephens will be happy to know; and at Tenterfield, which the member for Lismore should be happy about because that is a particularly significant area close to the water. Those works are a continuation of the Government's Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration program, which we intend to get on with. That work comes in the same week as the Government's announcement of \$45 million in funding for stage three of the Muswellbrook Hospital. I will correct the misinformation that was shared in the Chamber the other day. Stage one was completed in 2015 and stage two was completed in 2019. Planning for stage three has been ongoing since 2018 and the Government is keen to start that stage as soon as possible.

PORT OF NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:07): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Three years ago the Deputy Premier admitted that the Government's secret deal to restrict container transport through the Port of Newcastle was kneecapping the Hunter's manufacturers, farmers and wine exporters. Two years ago The Nationals conference called for those restrictions to be removed. Why has the Deputy Premier not done anything about it?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:08): I thank the member for Newcastle for his question. The standalone Nationals allow their members to have a say and design policy at conferences. There are no factions, there are no closed-door deals and there is no heavy union pressure. Every member has a vote—

The SPEAKER: That is enough from the member for Prospect.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: —every member has a voice and every grassroots member can decide on policy, direction and membership through preselection without undue pressure. The Nationals will always fight for what is right for the regions and for the bush. The Nationals have a view—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: —on the Port of Newcastle and the opportunities going forward. The Nationals have been in an open dialogue with the Port of Newcastle, which the member for Newcastle would know because he has been present at events with me and representatives from the Port of Newcastle. That dialogue will continue. Many things are happening in that space at a Federal and local level. One has only to go back to my radio interview

last Thursday with Jim Wilson when I defended the Port of Newcastle. I must admit that Mr Minns did not. When the Port of Newcastle was under attack because of China's 50 per cent ownership—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 109. Someone has to fix the dodgy deal that Gladys stitched up. Why not Barra? He's fixing Stockton; he can come and fix this too. Those dodgy deals are all on Gladys' head. Fix it up.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 79. I ask the member for Newcastle to withdraw his remarks.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order 109 is not relevant in the slightest. In relation to the request that the member for Newcastle withdraw his remarks, I put that request to him.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: No.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle has declined. There is no point of order. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the third time for abuse of process.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There might be a mice plague in the Central West but the sewer rats are out here today. To come into this House and use that language against the Premier—there is no bait strong enough to deal with the rats on that side of the House. There is not enough bait in this country to deal with them. How dare the member for Newcastle stand up in this place and attack the Premier in that way. The Premier has stood tall and kept this State safe and strong, protecting jobs and protecting people.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. What does this have to do with the Port of Newcastle? The question from the member for Newcastle was specific.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Deputy Premier.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: As I said earlier, this time last week I spoke in support of the Port of Newcastle on the radio. Members on the other side of the House have a very anti-view of the shareholding of the Port of Newcastle. When it was made public that 50 per cent of the Port of Newcastle was owned by both Australian superannuants and also the largest port operator in the world, a Chinese shareholding, and that it was managed by Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, the Opposition did not stand up in support of the Port of Newcastle.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Deputy Premier is being relevant. Does the member for Prospect have a different point of order?

Dr Hugh McDermott: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. How can that be relevant?

The SPEAKER: No, I have ruled on that.

Dr Hugh McDermott: You have heard further about those dodgy deals.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being relevant.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Do you want the question?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The track record is clear: I have fought publicly for the Port of Newcastle while members opposite have not. I continue to fight for the jobs that are created through the Port of Newcastle and for the support that it provides to the Hunter and the Upper Hunter. The Leader of the Opposition walked away from the Hunter and Newcastle; that is in the public domain. She gave up on Newcastle. I will continue to fight for the Port of Newcastle, as will the Nats in government.

REGIONAL AND RURAL SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:12): My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's investment in housing across regional and rural New South Wales?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:13): I thank the member for Tweed for his question. A couple of weeks ago we visited the CBD at Tweed Heads and put the first shovels in the soil to begin building 40 social housing homes. That project will cost \$13 million and provide jobs to 80 people. There is record spending in housing across the whole of New South Wales and particularly in regional New South Wales. It is an exciting time to be responsible for that portfolio. The Government will utilise its assets in land and housing—

Dr Hugh McDermott: By fobbing it off!

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Prospect to order for the third time and I remind the member for Newcastle that he too is on his third call to order. If I hear further from either member they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I thank the Speaker for his ruling. I will take up the interjection from the member for Prospect in relation to selling off government assets. Strangely, I am on a unity ticket with the Leader of the Opposition. A decision was made to sell the boatmen's houses on Nobbys Road at Newcastle—magnificent heritage-listed terraces—and the member for Newcastle at the time supported the sale of those terraces. The difference between what we are doing in recycling assets and building more social housing—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This significant policy was supported by the Leader of the Opposition when she was the member for Newcastle. The difference between us and what the Labor Party said and the way it acted is that we are reinvesting the money into more social housing, which is why we have been able—

Ms Jodi McKay: You are selling 250,000 pieces of land.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Is that acceptable?

The SPEAKER: The member for Prospect is close to being removed from the Chamber.

Ms Jodi McKay: That was me.

The SPEAKER: Both of you.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The point is that it is the right policy to recycle old, heritage terraces so that the Land and Housing Corporation is not wasting money and assets maintaining old terraces that are not fit for purpose. I support that, and that is what we are doing. But the difference between us and Labor is that we are reinvesting that money into increasing the stock. That is why we are able to put shovels in the ground at Tweed Heads for 40 new fit-for-purpose units, particularly for aged people within that community. I might also reflect on an opportunity that the then member for Newcastle had when she went to Tony Kelly and said, "Please buy the Newcastle post office"—from a developer. What a mess that was—\$4.5 million of taxpayers' money for a complete failure in policy!

Mr Andrew Constance: It was not Cabinet approved.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As the member for Bega has just interjected, it was not supported by the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC], did not go through a proper Cabinet process and brought great shame on the Labor Party and the Government at the time. I am criticised for wanting the whole of the community to have access to what the people of New South Wales own. The Labor Party wants it just so that its friends—not the whole of the State—know what the State owns. As the Deputy Premier pointed out yesterday, it is an absolutely disgraceful campaign by those opposite suggesting to the people of the Upper Hunter that we want to sell a cenotaph. What we want is for the people of New South Wales to know what their assets are so that they may make a contribution and, like the community housing sector, come forward and suggest to us better utilisation of government land. The Labor Party is concerned only with special deals, cash deals, Aldi bags, cash money in plastic bags—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to standing orders 73 and 129.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order 73 must relate to a specific member, but I ask the Minister to be relevant in her answer.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This is relevant. This is relevant to the difference between us and them. We want the community to know what their assets are and to come forward if they want to. The community housing sector has applauded our housing strategy for the next 20 years—[*Extension of time*]

This is an important policy distinction between us and Labor. We want public land to be put to public good and to be fully accountable in the process. The member for Newcastle at the time proposed a development and a special deal in a secret conversation with Tony Kelly that did not go to Cabinet and was not approved. That is how those opposite operated. We want the community to know what they own, where it is and if there can be better use of land for parks, for green space—

Ms Jodi McKay: For high-rise development.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We want to utilise that land to help with housing, with the community housing sector and community groups. We want to be open and transparent. I want to go to the ERC and fight for more housing for the people of New South Wales. Opposition members wanted to make secret little deals, whispered arrangements with Tony Kelly, which brought great shame on them and their party. It was a terrible policy decision. You know it and you should be ashamed about it. But that is how you governed.

Ms Jodi McKay: Speak through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We do not govern that way. We want to make sure that assets are there for the people of New South Wales. Mr Speaker, the private sector is involved in the project in Tweed Heads. Do you know how many apprentices we have there, how many plumbers, how many electricians and how many builders?

Ms Jodi McKay: How many plumbers when you develop the cenotaph?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We rely on the private sector to build homes for the people of New South Wales. I am not ashamed of that. I will not walk away from that and I will not stand by and have the mob opposite judge us by their own standard. We have a higher standard. We want the people of New South Wales to realise their assets, their land, for their betterment and we will go through the proper scrutiny to do so.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle is not far from joining the member for Prospect in being removed from the Chamber.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION LEGISLATION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:20): I direct my question to the Premier. In April 2018 the Government committed to the preparation of a bill to protect whistleblowers who disclose to the ICAC, following recommendations from the parliamentary committee on the ICAC. The Government promised to deliver that by December 2019. It has now been three years. When will this important bill be introduced?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:20): I thank the member for Balmain for his question. I reassure him of the Government's commitment to making sure that this legislation comes to the Parliament. As the member might know but other members may not, we are guided in relation to that bill by the steering committee. I do have a positive update to give the member for Balmain, but I want to stress who is on that steering committee. The steering committee is headed by the NSW Ombudsman. Other members of the steering committee include the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC, the Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Auditor-General, the Commissioner of Police, the Information Commissioner, the Public Service Commissioner, the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the secretary in charge of the Office of Local Government. We are waiting for them to provide us with advice as to the final form of the bill so that we can present it to the Parliament.

All of those people, everyone would agree, are eminently qualified to be able to give the Government advice. Obviously the issue is more complex than anyone had envisaged, otherwise the bill would have come to this Parliament sooner. But please know that the time it has taken to bring this to the Parliament is in no way an indication of the Government's lack of enthusiasm for it. We want to make sure that it is right, and we are relying on those good people to give us the bill in its final form. I understand that the draft of the bill was circulated on 5 March this year. The draft was discussed by the steering committee and several agencies have made written submissions to it. I understand discussion on issues arising from those submissions is ongoing between the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and the Ombudsman's office. I also understand that further instructions on the content of the bill were received on 5 May and the new draft is very advanced. That is the latest update I have.

Our hopeful expectation—but again it depends on the steering committee's recommendation and advice to us—is that discussions will be concluded very soon and the Government will have a bill ready for introduction hopefully in September this year. We have left it to the experts to provide us with the detail because it is a very complex issue. We want to make sure that we protect whistleblowers and also make sure that at all stages we do not do anything unintentionally to their detriment and that we cover everything that is appropriate. As soon as the bill is ready—I understand that it is in its final stages—it will come to this place. In response to the member for Balmain, I have not seen the draft or the final bill, but I do hope that, given the eminent people who have put it together, there will be widespread support for it when it comes to the Parliament.

HUNTER REGION ECONOMY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:23): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are cementing the Hunter region as Australia's leading regional economy?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (15:24): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. This is the third time in the past few weeks that I have been asked a question by a Nationals colleague, which is wonderful, because we did have a few challenges last year. It shows that the Coalition is back, stronger than ever, in 2021. Those on this side of the House will fondly remember Brommy's Monday night barbecues on level 12 during his time as The Nationals Whip. They were a great example of how The Nationals and Liberal Party members from the regions are advocates for the produce of their regions. I understand the meat came from Wingham Beef, which is in his electorate. That is a great segue into talking about the vision the Government has for the Hunter region, which it regards as one of our country's greatest assets.

When the Government released the Hunter Regional Plan in 2016, its number one goal was to make the Hunter our nation's leading regional economy. No doubt Opposition members who have made a beeline for the Upper Hunter over the past few weeks will have seen how the Government is delivering on that goal. Whether it is the wonderful work that has been promoted at the University of Newcastle or the great work going on in the hospitals and schools of the region, the Hunter is a prime example of what we in Planning see as the benefits of agglomeration. Much like some of the great conurbations of the world, such as the Rhine-Ruhr region in Germany, the Randstad in the Netherlands or the Midlands of England, it is a great example of a series of connections between areas of rich economic diversity, whether they are industrial, residential or agricultural. The Hunter is a resilient economy that creates opportunities for today's residents and for generations to come.

Last night in the Federal budget we saw the Commonwealth back the Government's vision for the Hunter, committing \$66 million to the upgrade of Newcastle Airport. I particularly acknowledge the incredible work that the Deputy Premier has done with the Williamstown Special Activation Precinct and his support for the vision for Newcastle Airport to make Williamstown the global gateway to the region. By linking the airport and the Port of Newcastle through the Hunter Expressway to the industries of the Upper Hunter, the Government is making the region a globally competitive and attractive place for jobs, investment and lifestyle. Like many other regional economies, it has not been without its challenges. No longer is the economy reliant purely on steel in Newcastle and coal in the Hunter. It also features a strong equine industry, a booming wine trade, fertile agricultural lands and a growing tourism market.

Members in this place have talked about the Hunter being "mines, wines and equines", but it is about so much more. Whether it is bovines, felines, canines or railway lines, anything the Hunter does not have is something that one does not want. Even the traditional steel and coal industries have transformed significantly over the past few decades, with Newcastle and the Hunter being global leaders in managing that important transition. One of the great outcomes of the pandemic has been a shift in people's perceptions of their own communities; people are staying local and they are loving it. Through the Public Spaces portfolio the Government has invested in programs like Streets as Shared Spaces and Your High Street, which celebrate and bolster the unique attributes of individual communities. Those investments have shone a light on the rich diversity of the Hunter region and the Upper Hunter in particular.

For example, residents in Scone have taken to alfresco curb-side dining with the transformation of car parks into pop-up cafes. Singleton is channelling Melbourne's laneway culture through the Singleton Living Laneways project, which has reactivated John Street through improved access to better quality public spaces in the laneway. The fertile soils of the Liverpool Plains have been celebrated in recent months with a military tattoo and International Women's Day events. I know that the member for Maitland will be excited about the Maitland town centre makeover—that incredible Riverlink development celebrating the architecture of John Choi—and the focus on new parklets, shared paths, street painting, live music and art workshops. Newcastle's notoriety as a cyclists' city also got a boost from funding to reconfigure bike paths along Wharf Road and Hunter Street. Speaking of the regions, I update the House on the regional seat of Epping, where local member Dom Perrottet is diligently observing his quarantine requirements.

Mr Ryan Park: His third seat. He's also running for Upper Hunter!

Mr ROB STOKES: We will get to that. While the Federal Treasurer was in budget lock-up yesterday, sadly our Treasurer was in COVID lockdown in Epping. [*Extension of time*]

Interestingly, he has almost become this State's version of Martha Stewart, who is also someone who has been locked up and is a ubiquitous food blogger. The member for Epping is taking up a new hobby: food blogging. His social media postings have increased substantially, whether it be selfies or photos of his breakfast. I understand that today it was sliced white toast with Vegemite. Yesterday's lunch, from what I understood, was a supreme pizza. Today he is dining on lasagne and beaming in virtually. Over the weekend he uploaded a series of videos to Instagram showcasing his barbecue skills with slow-cooked American ribs. There is even talk that he may start his own YouTube channel, Smokin' Dom's. Maybe the first celebrity guest could be the member for Myall Lakes, sharing the secrets of Wingham's wagyu. I seem to have lost the attention of the House and I am mindful that this

is question No. 10 on a Wednesday. Nevertheless, I am sure the residents of the Upper Hunter will be very pleased that from next week the member for Epping will be able to join them on the hustings again.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. We all give a shout-out to the Treasurer in isolation.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with standing order 105, general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1952 to 1981 have lapsed.

Bills

BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:31):
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill delivers on the New South Wales Government's commitment to implementing transformational reforms to New South Wales building regulations as part of its ongoing work to secure behavioural change in the industry. This comprehensive reform agenda is focused on improving building quality and restoring consumer confidence in the New South Wales construction industry. The Government's reforms since the election are part of its response to the 2019 *Building Confidence Report*, authored by Professor Peter Shergold, AC, and Ms Bronwyn Weir. The reforms include the establishment of the Office of the NSW Building Commissioner and the introduction of the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020, known as the RAB Act, and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020.

The Acts support the work of the NSW Building Commissioner and NSW Fair Trading by ensuring the building regulator has the right suite of capabilities and powers to meet the Government's commitments in this space. The amendments contained in the bill will enhance compliance and enforcement powers of the regulator, ensure industry contributes to the cost of administering the new Design and Building Practitioners Act compliance declaration scheme, and make minor machinery changes to other building legislation necessary to detect, investigate and require the rectification of serious building defects for the benefit of consumers in New South Wales. We are doing this by holding design and building practitioners, professional engineers and developers accountable for their work throughout the building process.

While the changes in the bill are predominantly focused on enhancing existing measures, I will highlight one of the key reforms included in the bill, which is the introduction of a levy on developers and owners of the building to support the oversight of these two new schemes. The Design and Building Practitioners [DBP] Act introduces new requirements on design and building practitioners to design and build in accordance with the Building Code of Australia and other prescribed standards. The new scheme provides that only registered design and building practitioners can sign off on design and building work that meet the needs and standards to ensure that the critical parts of a building are compliant with the building code and are safe. That is crucially important to protect consumers and ensure a return of confidence to the market.

While the Government has ensured that the building regulator has sufficient resources to support this scheme, including standing up new licensing systems, an online portal for the lodgement of plans and compliance declarations, and increased capability within government to audit plans, it is wholly appropriate that industry contribute to the costs of administering the scheme. The bill proposes that a levy be imposed on developers to contribute to the ongoing costs of the new scheme, including the ongoing costs associated with risk-based audits of designs and building work captured by the DBP Act and RAB Act and the licensing of practitioners to carry out this design and building work.

The Government recognises that construction of buildings already comes with significant costs and risks. We are not seeking to impose the proposed levy with the intention of adding unduly to these costs. Rather, the proposed levy is intended to ensure that design and building work complies with the relevant standards from the start of the design and building process, not when it is too late. We have seen time and again that where construction projects do not have good quality plans in place at the start of a project, or where designs are not

followed, that defects occur all too frequently. This imposes expensive rectification work on the developer if it is picked up early, or what happens too often is that the cost is passed on to the end customer.

The building regulator is increasingly picking up these defects before the keys are handed over, but the new levy will contribute to the regulator's work with industry to prevent these defects occurring at all. We will achieve this by requiring comprehensive designs for critical building elements to be prepared only by competent design practitioners and imposing an obligation on the builder to stick to these designs. The levy will allow for processes developed by the Building Commissioner to work with developers and practitioners to rectify work that falls short of the required standards to be maintained and to help support the standards of the building and construction industry in New South Wales. The Government is in support of the concept that those who benefit financially from this regulatory effort make a proportionate contribution to its cost. Targeted consultation with the development industry has also shown that they are largely supportive of the introduction of this levy, again showing that industry is committing to coming along for this journey of transformation, which is very encouraging to see.

I now turn to the substance of the changes proposed by the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill proposes amendments to the Design and Building Practitioners Act. Schedule 1 [1] and [2] seek to amend section 20 of the Act to provide that the regulation can require the lodgement of variations to regulated designs to be lodged on the NSW Planning Portal before building work on that variation can commence. This remedies an inconsistency between the initial regulated design, which must be lodged before building work can commence, and variations, which currently can be lodged after building work commences. Schedule 1 [3] and [4] seek to broaden the scope of power available to regulate the recognition or registration conducted by approved professional engineering bodies by allowing the regulation to prescribe requirements that professional engineering bodies must meet to be eligible for approval and to maintain that registration.

The proposed changes to section 55 come following extensive consultation by the Government on the Design and Building Practitioners Regulation 2021 which, amongst other things, establishes pathways for professional engineers to become registered. The pathways include investing responsibilities in approved professional engineering bodies to assess the competency of professional engineers to do professional engineering work across prescribed classes of engineering. Following consultation, it became clear that new regulation-making powers were required to ensure that the assessment process for professional engineering bodies would appropriately deal with a body's competency to undertake assessments of professional engineers as well as impose conditions on that registration to ensure that they continue to meet the exacting standards required to carry out this function.

To ensure that this new process is still subject to appropriate procedural fairness guarantees, schedule 1 [5] proposes the insertion of section 55A to provide that a person aggrieved by certain decisions of the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service may apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a review of the decision. These will include a refusal to grant recognition as a professional engineering body, to suspend or cancel recognition, to impose any condition on the grant of recognition, or the suspension or cancellation of recognition, or to vary recognition as a professional engineering body. Schedule 1 [6] proposes changes to the regulation-making power to clarify what fees may be charged, as well as giving the secretary the power to waive, reduce, refund or postpone fees. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill amends the existing section 107 (5) to clarify that the power to exclude a person from the operation of the Act does not require an entire class of persons to be excluded. This amendment will ensure that any exemptions to requirements under the Act are targeted.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes amendments to the powers of the building regulator under the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. Schedule 2 [1] proposes a new section 6A to allow the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to require certain persons to pay a levy in relation to building work to the Home Building Administration Fund under the Home Building Act 1989. Among other things, the Home Building Administration Fund allows the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to meet the costs of administering the Home Building Act and other prescribed Acts through contributions from industry. The bill proposes that a new levy be imposed on developers for building work in accordance with requirements that will be prescribed in regulation. While section 6A will establish the framework, the details of the proposed levy will be dealt with in regulation to ensure that the Government can consult with industry on the quantum of the new levy and when it should be paid.

The Government has undertaken initial consultation with developers to test support for this new levy, and I am pleased to confirm that there is acceptance of the appropriateness of this levy, as well as support for likely amounts. I can confirm that the Government will prescribe strict circumstances when the levy will be imposed, charging on a sliding scale with larger projects, whose size will be determined by the number of storeys, paying a greater amount. The sliding scale reflects the increased workload for auditing and compliance based on the number of storeys which usually results in an increase in the number, type and complexity of plans required. The

regulation would also create an exemption power for paying the levy to ensure that smaller projects are not unduly burdened by the new industry contribution to the administration of the building schemes.

In addition to the proposed levy, the bill proposes amendments to existing powers and penalties. Section 7 of the RAB Act currently requires that one or more developers notify the secretary at least six months, but no more than 12 months, before applying for an occupation certificate for any part of a residential building. There is also a requirement under section 8 to notify the secretary of a change to the expected completion date. Notification is critical to ensure effective oversight of the Act, including determining whether an inspection by compliance officers is required before an occupation certificate is issued. The proposed amendments will prescribe daily penalties for each day the developer is in contravention of the requirements to notify.

The prohibition orders under the RAB Act are a critical tool for ensuring that developers remedy defects before settling on properties with the end customer. The orders prevent an occupation certificate being issued so that the developer has a financial incentive to fix the defective building work. While the Government considers this as a measure of last resort, we must ensure that when developers are not willing to fix their defective building work that there is an appropriate response available to the building regulator to prevent the costs of fixing this work being shifted from the developer to owners' corporations and lot owners.

The proposed amendment to section 9 inserts two new grounds for the issue of a prohibition order: where a developer fails to comply with a direction of an authorised officer under sections 17 and 18 of the Act, such as failure to comply with an order for the production of designs necessary to fix defects; and any other ground prescribed in the regulation. The Government has sought to include the new regulation-making power because some developers are still seeking to circumvent the intention of the RAB Act by dragging their feet and unnecessarily challenging decisions by the Building Commissioner to fix defects. The regulation-making power will allow us to quickly move to stop these developers taking advantage of any perceived gaps in the grounds for a prohibition order.

Item [5] of schedule 2 prescribes new daily penalties for noncompliance with a direction or order from an authorised officer. This amendment is proposed to respond to the minority of the industry that continues to drag its feet on producing good quality designs and building in accordance with them and following the direction of building inspectors to fix substandard building work. The intention of the amendment is to send a clear message to these players that they must meet the standards of work required to make buildings safe and that penalties are not just a cost of doing business. To support this, where a person is found guilty of an offence for failure to comply with an order or direction under the Act, the Local Court or the Land and Environment Court can, if appropriate to do so, make an order for the person to comply with that order or direction. Empowering the court to make an order directing that a defendant comply means that the department has greater enforcement options available and is better equipped to achieve prevention and rectification of serious defects.

Schedule 3 to the bill proposes amendments to the Home Building Act 1989 to clarify that the secretary has the power to make a legislative instrument published in the gazette in relation to the necessary qualifications, examinations, practical tests and experience requirements for certificate holders and licensees to be able to do or supervise the various categories of work under the Act. The making of an instrument will not affect the qualification requirements for medical gas work as provided for in sections 33E to 33G of the Act. Currently the operation of the Home Building Act requires the secretary to be satisfied that persons have the necessary qualifications or to pass examinations, practical tests or have certain experience before they can be issued a supervisor or tradesperson certificate.

These qualifications have previously been set by instruments published in the gazette and have led to timely amendments. Several sections of the Act need to be amended to clarify that the secretary can set qualifications, including examinations, practical tests and required experience in instruments published in the gazette. Neither the Act nor the regulation currently prescribes any standards in this regard. The proposed amendment under this bill will facilitate the making of instruments under the regulations. It would then enable quick amendments to be made as and when required.

Finally, schedule 4 to the bill amends the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017. Currently the regulation of electrical metering is split across these two Acts. With these Acts being administered by two Ministers, regulatory responsibilities are split across the Department of Customer Service and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The proposed amendments will not substantively change the effect of the rules relating to electricity meters, including advanced meters, but seek to reflect that compliance and enforcement of safety requirements relating to metering is overseen by the Department of Customer Service.

To ensure continuity with existing arrangements when this change is introduced, the bill also proposes a new section 55A into the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017 to give officers of metering providers

power to enter the premises for the purposes of carrying out functions under the Act, including to read electricity meters. This bill will support the Government's six pillar work plan to regain public confidence in a new, customer-facing industry by 2025. It is about accountability, transparency and quality. Our plan seeks to establish a new regulatory playing field, incentivise financiers taking an active and constructive role, private insurers returning to the market and public confidence returned through a chain of stewardship that enables the observation and enforcement of the design and construction of buildings. The amendments proposed by this bill support this work. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Private Members' Statements

KANGAROO VALLEY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(15:50): I am proud to represent Kangaroo Valley, an absolutely stunning part of my electorate. Certainly its beauty is captivating but even more so is its people, who have had to go through some of the toughest of times in recent months as they have faced the pandemic, like the rest of the world, but also harrowing bushfires in 2020. Our community has responded so positively and has been so resilient through these very difficult times. It is on that note that I reflect on something that happened on 2 May. I was extremely pleased to attend what was an exciting day in Kangaroo Valley, the official opening of the new Kangaroo Valley Pump Track. I acknowledge a number of people who were involved in establishing this pump track, particularly the coordinator David Johnson, who came to see me two years ago excited about the opportunities and wanting to seek out how to obtain funding and make the project become a reality.

Other dignitaries who were there on this very special day were Shoalhaven City Council Deputy Mayor Councillor Greg Watson, Councillor Mark Kitchener and Councillor John Wells; Nicole Moore, the CEO of the Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council, and community elder Gerry Moore, OAM; Anne Fagan, Branch Manager, Nowra Commonwealth Bank; Dr Ian Lambert, Principal of The Scots College, Kangaroo Valley; the Kangaroo Valley Chamber of Tourism and Commerce President, Lindy Pitt; and the Kangaroo Valley Lions Club Secretary, Lorraine Mairinger, who is a very good friend of mine and has been for many years.

The project has taken two years and the new pump track is looking absolutely fantastic. It is a credit to all the local people involved, who have invested many hours and lots of sweat, tears and hard work to make it all happen and to literally get it off the ground. The track would not be here without a number of people who made a very generous contribution. Much of the base material was supplied by Downer Seymour Whyte, who is a contractor on one of our roads projects in our electorate. Hundreds of tonnes of topsoil was supplied by local dairy farmer Graham Cochrane and the asphalt was supplied by Paul at Ledacon and Fulton Hogan, another wonderful contractor in our community doing great work on highway upgrades. They also provided much of the asphalt and support for the Shoalhaven Heads Pump Track.

The track has been built by local earthmover Shaun O'Connor, who has been instrumental in making this facility so impressive. It was terrific to see Shaun there on the day, who reflected on the mounds that he created and enjoyed playing on as a young person growing up in Kangaroo Valley. The pump track committee has been partnered with Shoalhaven City Council and the local Kangaroo Valley community to bring this wonderful project to fruition. I was extremely pleased to secure funding from the New South Wales Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, towards this pump track facility. That investment was money very well spent, as evidenced on the day. There is a pump track at Shoalhaven Heads, as I mentioned earlier, that is packed every weekend. It is awesome to have a new facility such as this in the Kangaroo Valley community, especially as an asset for young people. It is not just for tourists in the valley but also for people who love living in Kangaroo Valley. I am sure many tourists will use the pump track as well.

A professional concept plan was put together by Dirtz, who specialise in the design and construction of off-road cycling facilities, and Shoalhaven City Council gave the project the go-ahead. BMX riding and cycling are both incredibly popular sports across our region. I thank the Kangaroo Valley Pump Track committee and I congratulate the local community on its dedication to this project. In addition to the grant from the Premier, the Government provided funding support for this project through the Wollongong 2022 Legacy Partnership Program. The legacy program is aimed at promoting cycling in all its forms—for sport, for leisure, for physical activity, as a mode of transport and, most importantly, for fun. This particular legacy fund comes from the UCI Road World Cycling Championships, which will be in our area towards the end of 2022. As a Parliamentary Secretary I was part of the group bidding for this competition to be hosted not only in our State but in our region. I also thank Minister Stuart Ayres for his support.

I am very pleased to see this project come to fruition in Kangaroo Valley. As I mentioned, the UCI Road World Championships were certainly a great way to secure funds for another great cycling project in our region. It is one of the biggest annual sporting events in the world and has been secured as one of the New South Wales Government's 10 world cups in 10 years. It will be the largest international sporting event ever seen in the Illawarra region and will showcase our region to the world. We are expecting around 300,000 spectators on the ground and millions worldwide. I hope that many cycling enthusiasts take the opportunity to see the best road cyclists in the world compete on the world stage in our region later this year.

I always enjoy talking with local residents in Kangaroo Valley and I look forward to my next visit as I see more things come out of the ground. This is a community that just simply gets things done—be it the late Franz Mairinga, who worked hard to secure the ambulance station, or people like Ron Bower, who got the community footpaths project done. This is a community that rolls up its sleeves, and here is another big tick to what is a wonderful village in my electorate.

THE ENTRANCE TOWNSHIP

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:55): Tonight I speak about the namesake of my electorate, The Entrance township. The Entrance is home to over 6,000 of my constituents; it is also the location of my electoral office. The Entrance was recently voted one of the top 10 popular Australian tourist destinations. The town has been a very popular tourist destination—including to the member for Heffron; he is a regular visitor to The Entrance electorate—since 1885 when the first guesthouse was opened at The Entrance. However, the main street of the township contains many vacant and poorly maintained shops. Westpac bank recently closed its main street location and the Commonwealth Bank has now announced it will close its branch in June. The Entrance cinema, which was established in the 1930s, was recently purchased by a developer who has evicted the cinema operator, Majestic Cinemas, from that location.

On top of this, Central Coast Council has announced its intention to close The Entrance library and the branch office that the council operates in the main street. It is therefore no surprise that many of my constituents have contacted my office to express their concern about the current state and future of the township. Part of the problem is that The Entrance economy remains completely determined by tourism. During holidays the town is extremely busy—it is full and there is brisk trade in the main streets. Another big factor as to why the town is suffering at the moment is that 37.2 per cent of the dwellings in the area are unoccupied outside of the holiday periods—they are holiday homes—and lone-person households are above the average for the State, at 37 per cent compared with 20 per cent. The population generally is older as well; therefore, spending outside of the holiday periods drops off dramatically.

During the fifties, sixties and seventies that was sustainable. The Entrance was one of the few major townships on the Central Coast, so most people in the immediate region who wanted to do shopping would visit The Entrance because their only other options would be to travel all the way to Wyong or Gosford. However, during the eighties and nineties larger shopping centres were developed, such as Bateau Bay Village, Erina shopping centre and Westfield Tuggerah, and there is much more competition for the shopping dollar now on the Central Coast. Added to that, the current Government closed The Entrance motor registry in 2016, taking away another incentive for people to visit The Entrance during Monday to Friday. Add to that also the pandemic over the past 12 months, which has seen the quite important and well-executed series of tourist-attracting events run by the council come to a halt.

Those factors go to the heart of our problem: there is an unreasonable expectation by those who own property to rent to business owners. They expect to achieve a rent related to the busy holiday periods and they have no conception of the problems experienced by local businesses during the quieter periods in between. Local planning for the area also suffers after being dominated by a council with a desire over 10 years ago to develop key sites in the area where the planning envelope was allowed to expand on key sites. That created expectations of development in the area which have never materialised. None of the key sites earmarked for The Entrance has been developed.

For some time now, in response to the town's problems, I have been advocating that empty spaces and empty shops be activated along the lines of the Renew Newcastle model, which was successfully implemented over a number of years in Newcastle, supported by the former Labor Government, working with landowners and shop owners to offer concessional rents and the casual letting of premises to at least allow spaces to be used. Council has started down that path; it has a place plan and is looking at public spaces and activating those. It has allowed council premises in The Entrance to be let on a concessional basis to artists like Tammy Briggs. We are heading in the right direction, but we need to do more and we need to prioritise the interests of the community over the interests of those who own property in The Entrance township.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE FLOOD RECOVERY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:00): I update the House on the flood recovery in the Myall Lakes electorate. I think members get the picture of the devastation of the floods but a few statistics will help them understand. Destroyed or damaged in the flood were 715 residences, 116 facilities and 141 outbuildings. A total of 964 buildings were lost or damaged. Also lost were 339 head of livestock and 1,000 kilometres of fencing. As part of the recovery the State and Federal governments have provided to the electorate about \$16 million in business grants and primary producer grants. The flood came on top of not only COVID but also the bushfires that ravaged the area in the summer of 2019-20. In the bushfires 192 residences and a total of over 600 facilities and outbuildings were lost; over 6,400 kilometres of fencing were destroyed; and 52 head of livestock were lost. Again, about \$16 million in State and Federal funding has been provided so far.

Any way we look at it, the number of houses and outbuildings that have been lost, destroyed or severely damaged totals over 1,500. As I said, The Nationals in the State Government have come to the fore with grants of up to \$50,000 for small business. For example, Sailos, an iconic club down on the waterline in Taree, received a \$50,000 grant, which was a major help in allowing the club to reopen on 5 May. Without that grant assistance, the club would not have been able to open. Grants of up to \$75,000 have been provided for primary producers and we have introduced small business rebates for fees and charges of \$1,500, which provides very timely relief. The community and the businesses show great flexibility and community spirit. Businesses showed great flexibility in moving to continue trading while they recovered. For example, Ambiance Day Spa, which was in the Pulteney Arcade, has moved to the Centrepont Arcade and has restarted its business in just over two weeks. Bass N Blues Music Megastore in Albert Street moved next door so it could keep on trading. Margaret's Underfashions moved to the front of the Pulteney Arcade and reopened on 19 April. It is fantastic that those businesses were able to do that.

There has been a massive clean-up. The army, Fire and Rescue, the RFS and the SES provided assistance in the clean-up. The kerbside flood waste pick-up ended this week. If anyone still has need of that service, they should contact MidCoast Council. We set up a recovery centre, a one-stop shop for assistance, including for insurance claims, temporary accommodation and mental health support; with local land services, the Samaritans and so many groups and government agencies all under one roof so people could go there for assistance. Those services were dealing with as many as 90 people a day. I mentioned the community spirit. More than 50 people showed up to help Bass N Blues salvage stock as the waters rose in that store. Then of course—as some people may have seen on the ABC and read about—there was Jock Martin, the hero of Manning Point. He was key to helping evacuations, finding everyone new places to stay and getting crucial supplies, including medication and food, delivered while the community was cut off. Well done to Jock.

The Martin Bridge was closed for almost three weeks, so there was a period when Taree, Cundletown, Wingham and the Pacific Highway were cut off. The bridge into Taree was shut for three weeks because of damage to scaffolding—which had been erected for painting the bridge and started underneath the bridge and went to the top of the bridge—that had been caused by containers, concrete tanks and other things being sucked under the bridge and hitting the scaffolding. The top scaffolding is built on the foundations of the lower scaffolding and so some of the top scaffolding is just dangling. If the bridge had not been closed, there could have been a significant accident. As I said, this was on top of bushfires. I congratulate the Myall Lakes community. Well done to everyone. The ongoing recovery continues.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:05): Last week I had the honour to tour some of our emergency services units with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and to thank their members. As Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services I often get to see some of the great work that our emergency service volunteers are doing, and the volunteers in my electorate are no exception. We had the pleasure to once again visit members at the Casula Rural Fire Brigade. I appreciated getting to catch up with our RFS volunteers and to hear about their experiences. This time they had visuals to go with their story, utilising footage from the fire-spotting camera that I was previously able to fund for them. It was amazing to see the data they get from that camera and how it helps them to be aware, to be ready and to be able to fight fires when they happen.

These members were at the forefront of fighting many of the bushfires that we have seen locally and across New South Wales. In 2018 they were the first responders to the flames that erupted on the eastern side of the Georges River, near Casula train station, and then continued on through Wattle Grove and over to Barden Ridge. This resulted in almost 4,000 hectares of land being engulfed in flames. The Minister and I were joined by the Assistant Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service, Kelly Browne, AFSM, and we presented the brigade with a \$10,000 grant for the construction of a new covered area, which will enable the safe storage of trucks and other equipment. Our RFS volunteers give up so much time away from their families and friends to ensure that we are safe. I hope this funding will help keep their important equipment safe for when it is next needed.

During the Minister's visit we also went to the Liverpool State Emergency Services Unit with the NSW SES Commissioner, Carlene York, to tour its new facility in Liverpool and to thank members of the unit for the work they have been doing to keep us safe during the recent rainy weather. It was a pleasure to be taken on a tour by former local controller Anthony Carroll, who was a big advocate for finding the unit a new home. I am glad that this has finally occurred and the unit has a more modern and suitable base to work from. The former base is now being utilised by the Liverpool District Men's Shed and I know that its members are making great use of those premises.

Over the past 12 months the Liverpool SES unit has responded to nearly 530 requests for assistance, with 152 of these coming through during the most recent flood event. To assist with the unit's work, we announced a \$10,000 grant which will allow the unit to purchase 50 new lockers for their members, along with a new training roof to use for practising responding to storm damage. I am incredibly proud of our volunteers. We know that they help the community without wanting reward or recognition. They do it to make a difference and to be there for their community. I am pleased that we can make their facilities a little more comfortable and provide the tools that they need to train and be safe.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and I also visited Liverpool City Police Area Command to meet with Superintendent Adam Whyte and his team, including several of the new probationary constables. It was wonderful to hear of their backgrounds prior to serving in the NSW Police Force. They ranged from retail to hospitality to studying at university. These new officers are some of the additional 1,500 extra police being delivered over four years to enhance community safety across New South Wales. I commend their choice to pursue a career in policing and service to our community and I know they will do all they can to keep our area safe. I thank them all for their efforts and the work they do.

I finish by reminding the House that this Saturday is Fire and Rescue NSW Open Day. Locally, Liverpool Fire Station on Anzac Road in Moorebank is throwing open its doors between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m., which will be an amazing opportunity to see firsthand what our firefighters do. Children will be able to see a fire truck, demonstrations and fire equipment whilst the grown-ups will be able to find out more about home fire prevention. More information on this open day can be found at www.fire.nsw.gov.au/openday. I again thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for so many visits in one day. It was great to do a tour and to find out what everybody had been up to since the COVID period. I last saw the Casula RFS with the Premier when the COVID conditions first eased. It was great to be able to go back and see what they have been doing over the intervening months and to also finally get to tour the Liverpool SES to see how that new facility is suiting them. I thank the Minister for his time and I thank everyone who made the time to meet with us.

WESTERN SYDNEY DEVELOPMENT

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:10): I speak this afternoon about the rise in inappropriate developments in our western Sydney suburbs under the Liberal Party. Late last year the residents of Werrington County in my electorate contacted me with some serious concerns about a proposed 10-unit development to be located at 41 John Batman Avenue, Werrington County, as a group home. This development, which is permissible under current State legislation, did not need a development application and it did not need to go through Penrith City Council. Instead, residents got a flyer in the mail telling them a private certifier had approved a 10-unit development next door to their property, and there was nothing they could do about it.

The developer and private certifier provided conflicting information to residents and to my office about the proposed group home, including claiming verbally that the proposed home was to operate as a boarding house, not a group home. The developer tried to tell other residents that it was a group home for people with a disability, managed by a care provider. But now we can see that this was a complete web of lies. The developer is now cashing in, renting all of these so-called rooms as studio apartments on the private market. The developer and private certifier both refused to provide me with a copy of the development plan and now it is pretty clear why. They went completely dark to get this dodgy development built, and under the current planning laws it is completely legal.

Werrington County is a wonderful family suburb consisting of one- and two-storey single homes. However, residents now have a 10-studio unit development on their street, completely out of character with the neighbouring homes and with only two parking spaces. Residents have serious concerns with the current laws in New South Wales, which allow for developments of up to 10 studio units to bypass local council and development applications, instead being approved under the guise of a group home. Under the current New South Wales planning laws, these developers can build inappropriate developments with a complying development certificate issued by a private certifier. Not only do the current New South Wales Government laws make these studio apartment developments legal on small suburban blocks but they completely prevent residents being able to have their say or lodge any objection.

I wrote to the Liberal planning Minister last year, urging him to change the law to prevent these developments and asking him to meet the residents. Not only did he refuse to even entertain changing the law, he refused to meet with residents to hear their concerns. What an absolute betrayal by the Liberal Party. Because those opposite refuse to change this law, 10 studio units could replace any home in Werrington County, Werrington Downs, Cambridge Gardens or any number of other western Sydney suburbs, and not one resident would have a say. In Werrington County, the Liberal Party has allowed a developer who lives the high life in a Hunters Hill mansion to get richer from the 10 studio units he has crammed into a single suburban block.

It is a slap in the face for the hardworking western Sydney families of this suburb. This developer is now renting out these 10 studio apartments for \$270 per week. All of this has happened without any council approval, with no say for local residents and nothing but a flyer in the mailbox announcing a 10-unit development next door with only two parking spaces. The Liberal Party has completely surrendered western Sydney to developers who do not live in our area, who do not care about the impact on western Sydney families and who do not have to live next to inappropriate developments. Here is a wake-up call for this Government and its developer mates: Western Sydney suburbs are not your get-rich-quick scheme.

The current planning laws must be changed. They allow developers to provide false information about developments to residents and their local representatives and still get their unit developments built legally. There is no requirement to submit these developments through the relevant local council. Residents are left completely in the dark and large-scale development proposals are built in their street. Inappropriate developments are wreaking havoc in western Sydney in communities like Kingswood. Local residents are at their wits' end looking at what 10 years of this Government has done to their suburbs. I give this commitment to residents in Werrington County and neighbouring suburbs: I will keep fighting this Liberal Government until it changes these unjust planning laws.

ZIG ZAG RAILWAY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:15): I am pleased to talk about great things happening in the Bathurst electorate. We are moving towards being able to once again see passengers on the Zig Zag Railway train service. Anyone who has been to Lithgow would know that the Zig Zag Railway had been an important boost to the local community. When it was in operation, it saw around 60,000 visitors each and every year enjoy rides on the passenger trains within the area. Only last weekend, for the first time in nine years, a steam train travelled on the famous Zig Zag Railway tracks. I congratulate everybody who has been committed to seeing this eventuate through the restoration and repair of the tracks. Congratulations go to the chairman of the Zig Zag Railway, Ben Lawrence, and the band of volunteers who are out there during the week and on weekends restoring the tracks.

I do not think anyone could understand the significant issues the volunteers have had to deal with over the last nine years. The rail service had to stop operating due to the independent regulator identifying safety issues. Straight after that the tracks were impacted by fires and then floods. Then there were more fires and more floods on top of that again. For them to continue their commitment and hard work to make the Zig Zag Railway operational again has been phenomenal. There have been times when they have been close to getting a train on the tracks but those moments have slipped away because of continuing unfortunate circumstances. But as I said, only last weekend they were able to return steam power to the Zig Zag Railway as they put one of their newly restored engines through its paces. The last time this occurred was on 7 December 2011. So it was a fantastic and monumental moment to see the engine return to the tracks and complete another key milestone in the recovery process.

Engines of this age cannot simply be popped down to the workshop and repaired and restored quickly. They need continual service. A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to ensure that these engines are safe to use. The group has rebuilt much of this engine from the ground up, creating matching pistons and bearings to build a new spark arrestor and break hangers. The list goes on. I could speak endlessly about what they have been able to do. They have had skilled contractors, and they have had volunteers who have dedicated thousands of hours to ensure that the rebuild was completed and the safety commissioning trial could go ahead. It has been an amazing achievement. I am very proud to have witnessed it last weekend. The locomotive, which is the old 218A and affectionately known as "the Yank", is one of only two engines of its kind remaining in Australia. These engines were brought to Australia during World War II to help move supplies around the country.

I pay tribute to the New South Wales Government for backing this project for a number of years. We know the potential it can bring to the Lithgow community in providing jobs and driving the visitor economy. The return of 60,000 visitors into the Lithgow region will benefit the shops and businesses within the area. It is not just for the Lithgow community, it is a regional project that will again drive economic activity in the region. The New South Wales Government has contributed over \$3 million towards this project. Some of that funding has gone towards building a car park. I understand a development application is going through council right now to

upgrade amenities. There is a workshop at the lower end of Bottom Points where the engines and equipment are stored and where work is done on these trains. There has also been restoration work on the tunnels of the Zig Zag Railway. This is a momentous occasion. I cannot underestimate the value that it will bring back to Lithgow and the surrounding area. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on its commitment and vision to ensuring that the Zig Zag Railway will operate again.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:20): It has been 106 years since Australian troops landed on the Turkish coastline at Gallipoli. Reflecting on and marking the spirit and mateship of that day has become deeply embedded in our history as we come together on Anzac Day to celebrate the lives of the courageous service men and women who have sacrificed greatly for this country. This year was particularly special, after our traditional Anzac Day ceremonies could not proceed last year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, as we all know, Australians did not stop commemorating our heroes last year. We found new ways to celebrate our Anzac spirit by lighting up the dawn with candles from driveways and many other different activities.

Today I commend the people of the North Shore and recognise their efforts in making Anzac Day ceremonies possible this year. I had the great pleasure of joining my local community for a number of services. I joined with the Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch at the Kirribilli Club and the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch at the Mosman War Memorial for pre-Anzac Day services the Sunday before Anzac Sunday. I thank Kirribilli sub-branch president Julian Robinson and Mosman president Peter Watson for leading these services and putting together a beautiful tribute to our service men and women. I also thank the students and teachers of Mosman High School and principal Susan Wyatt, who organised a touching service at the school assembly, with all of the year 7 students in attendance.

The school also welcomed Peter from the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch to deliver a speech on the day. He spoke quite extensively about history and tradition and his own experiences with the Royal Australian Navy. He also spoke about some of the characteristics that we hold dear and reflect on during Anzac Day. In particular, he spoke at some length about respect. I speak with students and staff at Mosman High School about that quite regularly. I know it is definitely part of the ethos of that school. The school prides itself on inclusion and respect of other people and students. I felt that the service reflected the very character of the students and leadership at that school.

The dawn of 25 April 2021 in all of our communities brought with it a true sense of solemnity. I attended the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch service at the North Sydney cenotaph, together with probably thousands of local attendees. Once again, it is a very well-attended and much-loved service. I thank North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch president Alex Wilson and vice-president Geoff Watson for the moving service. Together as a community, we reflected on the bravery of the men and women who fought for the rights and freedoms of this nation. That dawn service is particularly beautiful because it brings together so many of our schools, students and community groups from around the community.

A number of schools laid wreaths on the day. There were representatives from Wenona, St Mary's and Marist schools, North Sydney Demonstration School, Cammeray and North Sydney scouts, North Sydney boys school and North Sydney girls school. A whole range of representatives in our community participated. It just shows the involvement of the local community in this service and the way in which the RSL sub-branch has been able to redefine its service over the years to become something the community is a part of rather than just observing. One of our favourite features of the North Sydney cenotaph service is when Kamahl participates. Kamahl joined us to sing an incredibly moving song at the end of the service and we all had shivers, as the dawn lit up the sky, to hear Kamahl's tribute to Australia and Australia's service men and women.

I reflect on a couple of the servicemen who live in my community and their stories. David John McDowell, who was president of Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch for 15 years, served in the Australian Army as a national serviceman. He was posted to South Vietnam from September 1969 to May 1970 as part of the 101st Field Battery in the Royal Australian Artillery, providing support as an artillery gunner signaller. He handled weapons with high explosives, white phosphorous and illuminating rounds. A few years later he returned to Sydney before being discharged and joined the RSL. A sobering read of his military service can be found in his book titled *Soldier*. Alan Toner was enlisted in the Australian Army in 1999 as a rifleman and moved across the country to train as a marine specialist. In August 2001 he embarked on a landing craft mechanized mark 8 riverboat and headed towards the Torres Strait Islands to resupply communities with crucial resources. He has been incredibly involved in a range of different peacekeeping missions, including work throughout the north Arabian Gulf and Kuwait, before heading to Iraq. Those are just some of the stories of servicemen within my community. Lest we forget.

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:25): I address the Berejiklian Government's disgraceful offer of just a 1.04 per cent wage increase to nurses in this State. Those workers were promised a 2.5 per cent wage increase, only to find out in the last budget that the Treasurer had capped wage increases at 1.5 per cent. That is nothing but a kick in the guts to all of our frontline workers. It is on the back of the Premier and Treasurer cutting the wages of 400,000 public sector workers last year, including teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, firefighters, cleaners and other essential frontline workers. The Premier and Treasurer did this under the pretence that it was simply a pay freeze. Now we know it was not a pay freeze; it was indeed an ongoing pay cut. The question for the Premier and the Treasurer is why they have so little respect for our public sector workers that not only did they cut—

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Ray Williams: I am loath to interrupt a member when they are giving a private member's statement. My point of order relates to Standing Order 73 and the content of the member's speech.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understand the point of order.

Mr Ray Williams: The member's speech does not pertain solely to her electorate or an issue in her electorate but ranges more broadly across New South Wales. I ask that the member be reminded of the actual standards for private members' statements.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will listen further. I am sure that the member will ensure that her speech does have some relationship with her electorate or an inquiry from a constituent.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The question to the Premier and Treasurer is, why do they have so little respect for our public sector workers, including those in the Swansea electorate? They not only cut their wages but also lied to them about it. They are the same frontline public sector workers, including those in the Swansea electorate, who have helped guide our State through the COVID-19 pandemic—the very workers that the Premier pays lip service to in this place regarding her admiration for their work. But her actions tell a very different story. Not only has the Premier given those workers, including the workers in the Swansea electorate, a one-off pay cut, she is also now promising a pay cut every year going forward. That is absolutely shocking.

Those actions have not gone unnoticed by frontline public sector workers. Local frontline health workers in the Swansea electorate are rallying against the Berejiklian Government's wage cuts today at Belmont Hospital—and, as we discovered in question time, today is International Nurses Day. How sad that is. Frontline health workers, including those in the Swansea electorate, feel that they are being relied upon to save the economy during this pandemic, yet the Berejiklian Government does not value their work. I am getting those reports through my electorate office door on a daily basis. Quite frankly, those workers feel that the Government's current pay offer is little more than an insult.

The pay cuts simply do not make sense. The Treasurer is ripping money out of the New South Wales economy at a time when there is a need for stimulus. Maintaining public sector wage growth is good economic policy, particularly in regional areas like the Swansea electorate. It has the support of leading economists, think tanks and Reserve Bank Governor Philip Lowe, who told our parliamentary economics committee last year that public sector wages should increase by 3 per cent or more. He explained that Federal and State government wage caps are entrenching low wage growth across the board by setting a depressed standard in the private sector. Likewise, Centre for Future Work director Dr Jim Stanford this year argued that freezing public sector wages "is not just morally questionable, it's also a major economic mistake".

Removing the money from circulation in our local economies will have devastating flow-on effects that will be felt in towns and communities across New South Wales and certainly in the electorate that I represent. The best way to stimulate the economy is to get people spending again. All a pay cut will do is make more people tighten their belts for longer. It is contrary to good economic sense. The Government's public sector pay cut will hurt regional workers and communities the most. Regional workers like those in the electorate that I represent and the communities they call home should not have to subsidise Gladys Berejiklian's Sydney-centric infrastructure program with a pay cut. I stand in solidarity with the public sector workers in my electorate and all public sector workers across this State in condemning the Berejiklian Government's heartless pay cuts for public sector workers. Those workers deserve respect, not another kick in the guts from this Government.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (16:27): On behalf of the Government, I refute the suggestions of the member for Swansea, which, as I pointed out before, were well outside the realms of a private member's statement. However, I believe she did on one occasion mention her electorate. I suggest that this Government has

had to undertake some very prudent financial measures in unprecedented times because of the worldwide pandemic. Some of the measures that were put in place and have now been in place for some time have included a 2.5 per cent wage increase year after year for public sector servants, which includes every politician in the State of New South Wales. Those particular prudent measures and others have helped this State survive this pandemic and get our economy back on track. New South Wales is and remains the beating heart of the Australian economy.

FULCRUM3D

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:32):

I take this opportunity today to draw the House's attention to a business operating within my electorate that is at the forefront of innovation and will play an important part in the future of our State's economy. Since its inception, Fulcrum3D has been developing technical solutions that add value to wind and solar investments. Fulcrum3D's technology supports and accelerates renewable energy project development with resource-monitoring solutions that provide bankable wind and solar resource data. In recent years Fulcrum3D has commercialised technology that is able to accurately predict short-term future weather events. The information that this technology provides allows renewable energy generators to more accurately forecast their future energy production, helping market operators manage their electricity grids with greater confidence in the midst of ever-growing quantities of renewable generation.

The innovative technology being produced by Fulcrum3D and its highly skilled workforce—comprising scientists, engineers and energy sector professionals—is critical to our renewable energy future, an industry that will have a vital and increasingly large role in the future of this great State's economy. Since 2011 Fulcrum3D has been able to accomplish a vast amount under the leadership of its founders—Dr Martin Poole, Dr Colin Bonner and Andrew Durran—as well as the wider executive team, including Paul Copestake and Jo Hume. Domestically, the business has worked with distinguished clients such as Origin Energy, Fortescue Metals and AGL as they seek to fast-track their renewable energy developments and operational performance. Whilst the majority of Fulcrum3D's business is drawn from the domestic market, the company is making major headway into international markets, exporting all around the globe. Fulcrum3D's technology is being utilised by most of our major export partners, including China, Indonesia, Japan, Spain and parts of South America.

In conjunction, Fulcrum3D has been able to maintain local production of its hardware whilst remaining price competitive. This demonstrates the viability of high-tech manufacturing here in Australia. In fact, it considers it one of its main selling points. Fulcrum3D is a stellar example of what businesses in this State are able to achieve. In fostering the entrepreneurship of Fulcrum3D and the renewable energy industry as a whole, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are able to facilitate the growth of this industry. Providing the necessary infrastructure to help improve the viability of renewable energy production should be at the forefront of our agenda and we must take the appropriate and necessary steps now so that it can realise its full potential. Fulcrum3D is a testament to the entrepreneurship of the people of New South Wales, demonstrating innovation, ingenuity and industry. It plays a vital role in a vital industry and it is our prerogative to provide an appropriate business environment in which such innovation and entrepreneurship can thrive without inhibition.

GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY DUPLICATION AND TUNNEL PROJECT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:35): My electorate of Blue Mountains is a beautiful place. The landscape is breathtaking and the wilderness awe inspiring. When you stand atop the ridge lines and gaze out across the valleys, it provides a humbling opportunity to connect with this ancient land. We are a collection of unique towns and villages scattered along a ridge line that the World Heritage institute saw fit to take into its fold. We are much more than a mere conduit or motorway between Sydney and the Central West. Last week the Coalition Government announced that explorations were underway into the possibility of an 11-kilometre tunnel that would span the length of Blackheath and Mount Victoria. I am torn by the news that Blackheath and Mount Victoria will not be dug up and ripped apart to make way for the increase in freight by road but that the rest of my community will be asked to endure it.

In December 2019, not long before the Black Summer fires took hold of the Blue Mountains and much of the State, residents living in Station Street, Blackheath, received a letter telling them that their homes were to be compulsorily acquired by the Government in order to make way for its road, a duplicated highway, to link Sydney with the Central West. The contents of this letter were later withdrawn, with Transport for NSW apologising, saying it had been sent in error. You can imagine the collective sigh of relief and the tears from those residents, who had been shocked, horrified and saddened to think that they would be forced from their homes.

In mid-2020 the Blackheath Co-Design Committee was appointed, a small group of community members mostly hand-picked by the Government. Meetings were conducted behind closed doors and confidentiality agreements were signed and it was made extremely clear to those on this committee that they were very much beholden to this agreement. Transport for NSW stated that "relevant elected officials" were to be separately

consulted on this project throughout its development. This has not happened. If the local member for Blue Mountains, the Mayor of Blue Mountains and the Federal member for Macquarie are not deemed "relevant elected officials", then it leads us to the conclusion that there is a very deliberate strategy at play here—and that strategy is not about taking care of the welfare of the people or the landscape of the Blue Mountains.

It is our job as elected representatives to fight for what we truly believe is the best outcome for our community. From what has been presented to us so far, we do not believe this is the best outcome for our entire community. I get that should this project go ahead there will be some benefits for the Central West, there will be some benefits for the trucking industry and for Sydney. I get that there will even be some benefits for sections of the upper mountains community. What I am not convinced of is that this Great Western Highway duplication and tunnel project in its current form is the best or only feasible outcome for the Blue Mountains, and I would not be doing my job if I did not speak up.

The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has made proclamations of "saving" my community for me. I say to the Minister, I remain unfalteringly committed to members of my community and I have not stopped listening to them—all of them. I ask the Minister to drop the political spin and to speak truthfully about his real motivations for this project. To my community I say: Do not be fooled. The Minister does not care about the welfare of the Blue Mountains and he does not care about our precious environment. He has offered Blackheath and Mount Victoria an option on the surface to allay their fears. Those fears were strategically instilled with the express motivation of furthering the Minister's own agenda, which is to increase freight by road to certify the movement of B-doubles, 30-plus metres long, barrelling down through our villages. What a clever way to go about it: creating fear and division within a community by putting forward an option that would devastate Blackheath and Mount Victoria and then sweeping in months later like a Toole in shining armour with the perfect remedy—a tunnel. It could be Australia's longest tunnel.

There are still so many unanswered questions about this project, so when it is requested of me to support the tunnel there is not enough information for me to do so. In addition, Minister Toole recently announced to a local advocacy group that approximately 20 hectares of national park will need to be revoked in order to complete this project. I invite my community and others across this State to join me in my outrage at this prospect. And let's not start on the tolls that will be whacked on at some point in the future. Where is the elusive business case for this project? We have been promised it but have seen nothing. Where are the facts and figures that stack up to justify the disruption that will inevitably befall our community for years, all in the name of shaving 10 minutes off the drive out to the Central West? Ten minutes for \$10 billion. It is not on.

COUNCIL OF INDIAN AUSTRALIANS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:40): I acknowledge that 10 years ago a group called the Council of Indian Australians was formed. Like many groups representing Australians of different national origins, the Council of Indian Australians came together to advocate for, represent and improve the life of people in Australia who came from Indian backgrounds. Their particular commitment at the time of their foundation was to probity and integrity, to make sure that they were not there for self-interest but for the public interest. I can say in my dealings with the Council of Indian Australians [CIA] over 10 years—and it does fairly neatly coincide with the time that I have been the member for Riverstone—that they have lived up to that aspiration.

Over those years they have celebrated national days and festivals, putting on concerts and celebrations. One such celebration we know as Holi, where we are festooned in different colours and some kind of chalk dust is thrown over us. Their concerts and gatherings are open to the public. They have been very good at ensuring that the functions they put on in the local community are inviting. They welcome people of all backgrounds, not just Indians. The members consciously want to spread their culture, share it with others and welcome others in. That has always been a feature of the events over the years that I have witnessed.

They have also taken a role in promoting harmonious relations within the Australian community and advocating for peaceful dialogue where there has been the potential for tension. They have run seminars helping people of Indian background understand the way that policing works in Australia—how to be safe in the community; how to deal with police and to bring concerns to the attention of police. That relationship of trust and respect is facilitated for people who may need to take advantage of it. They have held briefings and seminars for different community groups about their activities, helping to build community and helping people to belong and feel that they understand what goes on around them. The council is based in Sydney's north-west and has held a number of events in The Ponds in the electorate of Riverstone. It has been a privilege of mine to host many of its events. The council has also operated in Blacktown and in more recent times in Harris Park.

Just lately, president Nitin Shukla and public officer Mohit Kumar have been prominent in speaking against the Commonwealth's use of the Biosecurity Act to prevent Australian citizens in India from returning to Australia. It is an important issue for Australians of Indian background and, understandably, a very sensitive one. Like

leaders of other Indian Australian groups, the Council of Indian Australians has certainly stepped up to make sure that the perceptions of their community are understood by leadership in Australia. For example, when a TV ad treated Lord Ganesh as the subject of a joke, the Council of Indian Australians stood up and articulated to the authorities just what that meant for people of Indian background and how it might be offensive.

I acknowledge the current office bearers of the Council of Indian Australians: Nitin Shukla, Shail Wadhwa, Ashish Desai, Praful Desai, Keyur Desai, Satyadeep Ranyal, Sharda Shukla, Stanley D'Cruz, Kedar Oza and, as I mentioned, Public Officer Mohit Kumar, who has filled a lot of roles within the CIA over those years and been a stalwart and the public face of the council to other organisations in the community. Like many community groups, the Council of Indian Australians has been less able to hold its functions during the period that COVID has affected our community. We have all had to change the way we operate. Certainly the CIA has attempted to remain active and involved in the affairs of Indian Australians and to make sure that it represents community members' interests to local, State and Federal leaders. The Council of Indian Australians has strived hard to hold itself to a standard of probity and integrity in representing the public interest and serving its community. I believe it has done a great job of doing that over the past 10 years. I commend its contribution to our society in New South Wales.

WAVERLEY CHARING CROSS INTERSECTION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:45): I draw attention again to the continued danger faced by pedestrians at the Charing Cross intersection in Waverley. I have brought the safety issues of that intersection to the attention of the transport Minister through several letters and a petition with over 500 signatures from concerned locals, which I tabled in this House. To date, the Minister's response has been one of complete apathy and neglect. The Charing Cross intersection in Waverley is a convergence of some of the major eastern suburbs arterial roads: Carrington Road, Bronte Road and Victoria Street. Every day thousands of local schoolchildren cross those major roads to get to and from six of our local schools, all of which are within one kilometre of the intersection: Waverley Public School, St Charles Catholic Primary School Waverley, St Clare's College Waverley, Waterford Junior School, Waverley College and St Catherine's School Sydney.

A conversation with any local parent reveals frightening stories of near misses and close calls involving their children and fast-moving vehicles. Having spoken with many parents, educators and students, it is clear to me that the risk to pedestrians is real and entirely unacceptable. The safety concerns are significant and plain to see: cars speeding through the intersection; vehicles running red lights; trucks and cars queuing across the intersection, including across the pedestrian zone; and pedestrian islands too small for the number of students who are crossing. Those are only some of the safety issues parents have raised. The solutions are not complex or expensive. The Government has no excuse not to act and put the safety of schoolkids and families first. If we want to reduce congestion, we must ensure that our active transport routes are safe for all pedestrians, especially children on their way to school.

Late last year I tabled a petition with over 500 signatures. Every signatory is a local parent, teacher, student, family member or community member who is concerned about the safety of our local schoolkids. I am the voice of those local people in this place and of the many more who have contacted my office regarding the safety of the Charing Cross intersection. Together, this community and I are calling on the Minister to do his job, cut through the bureaucracy and improve the safety of the intersection. One of the many solutions presented in the petition to this Parliament is to extend the local school zones to include the entire Charing Cross intersection. That would reduce vehicle speed through the complex crossing to 40 kilometres per hour during the morning and afternoon school periods. That is a commonsense suggestion from the experts—local parents who are sick of seeing close calls every day and worrying about whether their kids will get to school safely and who want to see action from their Government.

A large part of their frustration is that despite the proximity of the intersection to several adjacent schools and their respective school zones, the intersection does not fall within the local school zone traffic restrictions. The Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads has advised local parents and me that the Transport for NSW schools zones policy does not apply to the Charing Cross intersection because it is outside the required range. However, the gate of St Charles Catholic Primary School is less than 100 metres from the intersection. Along with my community, I would like to see the school zone extended to take in the entire Charing Cross intersection, which includes the convergence of Bronte Road, Carrington Road and Victoria Street in Waverley, together with an appropriate length of each of those roads leading up to the intersection. That alteration would reduce the speed of vehicles crossing the intersection and avoid cars queuing across the designated pedestrian crossing zones, which happens every day. It is not a complete solution to the problem but it is a positive step in the right direction that will help address some of the safety issues that arise every day.

As I have expressed in my correspondence, I would welcome an opportunity to meet with the transport Minister to discuss the concerns of my community and resolve the issues. Finally, I thank Maria Moran and the

wonderful local parents who have been advocating for improved safety at the Charing Cross intersection for years. We will continue to fight for the safety of our local kids. We call on the Government to do its job and ensure the safety of our children.

COFFS HARBOUR SHOW

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:50): The Coffs Harbour Showgirl competition is a favourite tradition of the Coffs Harbour Show, which was held this year from 30 April to 2 May. The competition's official reception was held on the eve of the show and gave entrants the chance to practise their networking and public speaking skills in a safe and inclusive environment. The Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, joined me to show support for the competitors. I applaud the competition organiser Mel Crossland and her team for promoting our future leaders. I congratulate the entrants and commend them for participating: Sara Bergen, Sharny Williams, Tahli Deane, Kiari Deane, Jessica Wilson, Joey Gardner, Keeley Gardner, Mahayla Gardner, Heather Orme, Emma Cunningham, Ethonie Blair, Jessica Franklin and Anika Dean. In particular, I congratulate and recognise the winners. In the senior category the winner was Heather Orme and the runner-up was Sharny Williams. The teen winner was Keeley Gardner, with Jessica Wilson as runner-up. The junior winner was Joey Gardner, with Emma Cunningham as runner-up.

It is fantastic to see our country shows bouncing back in 2021 after the COVID emergency brought them to a halt. The Coffs Harbour Show Society does an extraordinary job in planning and staging one of the most important community events on our local calendar. Once a show is done and dusted, usually preparations begin for the next one. In particular, I thank show society president Christopher Pearson, vice-president and chief steward Margaret Crawley and secretary and treasurer John England for marshalling a small army of dedicated volunteers to bring the show to fruition. Committee member and assistant treasurer Lorraine Tibbs has been involved with the show for more than 30 years and is a crucial part of the team. So too is Jackie England, who represents the ladies' auxiliary catering committee. Christopher Pearson told me that without the support of the community, especially those involved in agricultural pursuits in the Coffs Harbour region, the show would not have been the success that it was.

Thousands of show goers attended this year's three-day event and exhibitors, competitors and organisers were pleased with the outcome. The show had something for everyone, including sideshow alley and show bags, working kelpies and reptile displays, pavilion exhibitions, country cooking, artwork by Coffs Coast school students, poultry, cats, horses, equestrian events, livestock and woodchopping. Coffs Harbour and District Banana Growers' Association president Jeff Eggins told local paper *News of the Area*:

We had to convince people we were giving away bananas for free but once they chose their banana we were keen to get their preferences from the different varieties.

I am reliably informed the Coffs Harbour cake decorators would give their Sydney Royal Easter Show counterparts a run for their money, such was the quality of their remarkable contributions. Coffs Harbour Orchid Society presented a beautiful orchid display that included prize winners from recent competitions. Treasurer Bruce Hall told *News of the Area*:

The purpose of our display at Coffs Show was a promotion, to pique the interest of potential new members.

Committee member Judy Whiting added:

You meet incredible people. It's such a great activity, and it's addictive.

The Coffs Harbour Creative Arts Group had a steady stream of art lovers through its doors. Isabella Brandli told *News of the Area*:

The Coffs Harbour Creative Group was very glad to see the Coffs Harbour Show return after 2020's COVID interruption, and it seems the community was too, with over 180 visitors to the Showground Gallery's art display, despite the often rainy weather.

Coffs Harbour and Districts Poultry Club president Aaron Frewin reported that there were more than 200 entries and many new local breeders exhibited for the first time. The poultry was sponsored by local business The Paper Boys. Co-owner Beryl Rigden said, "We have a close connection and affection for the chooks." Her grandfather Ben Donn-Patterson and her father, Bill Donn-Patterson, were both show bird enthusiasts. Next year's Coffs Harbour Show will be held from 13 to 15 May 2022. I encourage members to mark it in their calendars. I am proud that the New South Wales Government has invested millions of dollars in upgrades to the Coffs Harbour Showground under the COVID-19 Showgrounds Stimulus Funding Program. Our showgrounds are multi-use community hubs, so it is terrific to see that investment in infrastructure upgrades to keep them safe and functional for future generations.

SOUTH COAST RAIL SERVICES

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:54): Right now we can view images and video of Mars from the Curiosity rover but we cannot remain connected to communication services on a train trip from Sydney to Wollongong. Let that sink in for a moment because it is an interesting comparison. High-quality images and video can be beamed from Mars more than 300 million kilometres away and yet mobile phone dropouts occur just 60 kilometres out of Sydney on a train trip to Wollongong. It might not seem like a big deal but it has a big impact on the thousands of people who commute from Wollongong to Central each day. It means that they are unable to contact family to arrange a pick-up from the station or to alert them of a delay. It means that any work that could be done on the train must be done later instead, interrupting time with family. It means that people are unable to enjoy entertainment on the train or complete personal tasks like paying bills. That is yet another problem with the rail transport network beyond the outskirts of Sydney.

The Government has not addressed the problem in the decade since it came to power. The Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Program has provided the funding and the technology is available but it appears the one thing missing is the will to fix it. Who knows whether it will be fixed if and when the New Intercity Fleet comes into service on the South Coast Line. Wi-fi connectivity is one of the Government's key selling points in respect of the new fleet, yet it cannot say whether it will activate that functionality on the carriages. The fact there are sections of the South Coast Line that lack mobile and internet connectivity is yet another reason why the Government should not get rid of guards on trains when the New Intercity Fleet carriages come into service. It is a safety issue, pure and simple.

But a loss of mobile and internet services on the outskirts of Australia's global city is not the only problem that faces rail transport to and from the Illawarra; we must also contend with the conflict between passenger and freight services. While the Government is content to try to push the issue into the future, according to an assessment by Transport for NSW the South Coast Line will reach a choke point by around 2030. More than 35 million tonnes of freight is moved into, out of and throughout the Illawarra each year, so keeping transport links like rail in particular free of congestion is important. It is even more important when one considers that the rail freight task is expected to grow by around 60 per cent over the next 40 years. And it could be more if the freight task at Port Kembla grows quicker than expected, which is likely. The Government's response to the problem was to announce, with much fanfare, an inquiry in late 2018, to be chaired by Professor Andrew McNaughton, conveniently timed right before the 2019 election. The Government's big solution was to provide another report on the possibility of faster rail to the Illawarra.

The Government has done nothing more than two years after it received that latest report, which I unsuccessfully tried to obtain under a freedom of information request. Apparently it had to be kept secret because it had crossed the Cabinet room threshold. It is time for the report to be released to the taxpayers who paid for it and for the Government to take immediate steps to improve transport services to and from the Illawarra. After all, in the 10 long years since the Government came to office the minimum travel time between Wollongong and Central has only been reduced by a grand total of two minutes and 12 seconds. At that rate, which I am sure the Government would find acceptable, it would take 120 years to achieve an hour-long journey between Wollongong and Central. By that time, it is more likely that we will be making that journey by drone or by some other form of transport. But options are available to the Government to improve rail transport to and from the Illawarra, and the June budget is an opportunity to take some positive steps.

The Government should commit to untangling the passenger and freight task by undertaking work on the Coniston crossovers; commit to detailed planning work to duplicate the track south of Unanderra to allow for a greater frequency of passenger services and to cater for the growing population of Dapto; commit to detailed planning for the completion of the Maldon to Dombarton link, with the inclusion of a passenger component to properly connect the Illawarra with south-west Sydney; undertake timetabling improvements to better connect public transport services within the Illawarra in order to reduce private car demand; and fix the communications black spots on the South Coast Line. The Government should also release the McNaughton report so that we can all read it.

Over the past 24 hours there has been plenty of backslapping about the funding that was provided in the Federal budget for the Mount Ousley Interchange. While I have long supported that important safety upgrade, transformative transport changes for the Illawarra will only come when rail is fully integrated into the transport solution. A lot of work needs to be done and kicking the can down the road will not be tolerated. The Illawarra risks being isolated unless our rail transport challenge is taken seriously. We will have a congested line to the north, we will not have a means of travelling by rail to Sydney's west and south-west and the population immediately south of Wollongong will not be catered for at all. Those problems will limit the Illawarra's economy, its employment opportunities and its social future, which is simply not good enough.

Business interrupted.

*Public Interest Debate***TAFE NSW CAMPUS SALES**

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:59): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Government recently sold the Scone TAFE campus for \$4 million.
- (2) Calls on the Government to rule out the sale of any further TAFE campuses.

I am really glad to debate the issue of funding for TAFE campuses. The tertiary education Minister and I have wanted to have a debate on Scone TAFE and on TAFE generally for quite some time. We were unable to have a debate in Scone a few weeks ago but the Minister promised that we could debate it in this place, which is surprising. Last Thursday we thought that it may not happen but, lo and behold, here we are debating TAFE.

Dr Geoff Lee: Serendipity.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Serendipity like you wouldn't believe. We have found a way to debate this important topic, which relates not only to Scone TAFE but also to the idea of TAFE more generally and the Government's approach to TAFE. I am sure the Minister, on behalf of the Government, will argue that he wants to amend the motion so that it says that the Government is doing a great job. I challenge the Minister to not amend the motion and I challenge him and his colleagues to vote on whether or not they will rule out the sale of any more TAFE campuses, because that is what the motion is all about. Government members will say that a heap of lies have been spread. Labor challenges that. They will claim that we have said all sorts of things. I challenge that. They will say that we do not believe in TAFE. I challenge that.

Since the Government came to power, 18 TAFE campuses have been closed or sold. Investment in TAFE seems to have dropped, yet the Government keeps saying that its investment is up there. Some 8,000 staff have been cut from TAFE, and that is just teaching staff; I have not even got to the non-teaching staff. A couple of years ago, right before Christmas, 700 TAFE support staff lost their jobs. "Merry Christmas, the Government loves you." Last week more staff lost their jobs. The Government tells us that it loves TAFE, but it does not love TAFE at all. Finally we can have a debate and find out what the issue was with Scone TAFE. That was the tipping point. A community can only take so much. In 2015 a document stated that the TAFE Commission wanted to divest 29 TAFE sites and campuses.

Back in 1998, when the Assistant Speaker and I were young lads, the Government of the day spent \$3.5 million to build a TAFE campus at Scone as part of a bigger project for the so-called horse capital of Australia. That project would include a great racetrack, a museum, an equine industry and, most significantly, somewhere to train people to do the work required in that industry. Thirty-odd years ago \$3.5 million was provided to build the TAFE campus at Scone, which the Government has now sold for \$4 million. I am no investor but even I know that is a very small return on investment. Actually, it is akin to ripping people off and it is a really dodgy deal. I say that because the events that have occurred are just not right. The Government's modus operandi is to run TAFE down by cutting its courses, teachers and support staff. Then when there are not enough students, it says, "Nobody really wants to take it up. Let's sell this investment. Let's sell this property."

That is exactly what happened to Scone. That public, world-renowned, world-class facility offered courses that were only available in one other institution in the State, and the Government sold the site for \$4 million. Well, I say it was given away for \$4 million. I have a lot of time for the Minister, but we disagree on that. At budget estimates the Opposition asked the Minister how it all came about. He said, "Racing NSW wrote us a letter saying they were keen to buy the land, so I met with them." We asked what happened at the meeting, to which he replied, "I can't remember what we talked about." Finally, when asked what happened after that meeting, the Minister said, "I wrote a letter outlining that the Government thought the TAFE campus should be put up for sale, which we did." The land was put up for sale and we now know what the Government was willing to sell it for.

Members may have an opinion of the upper House but sometimes it does good work. Documents produced under Standing Order 52 provided the contract of sale. The most disappointing thing is that this Government was willing to accept \$3 million. That was the reserve. That tells me that if someone offered \$3 million and nothing else, the Government would sell it. Remember it was worth \$3.5 million in 1998, and 20-odd years down the track this Government is willing to sell it for \$3 million. What does that tell me and every single person who cares about TAFE and has tuned in to watch the debate today? It tells us that this Government does not care about TAFE. It has given up on TAFE. It will sell TAFE. This Government sees a connected learning centre [CLC] as the only option. It is not. A connected learning centre is a complement to TAFE; it is not a replacement for TAFE. I call on the Minister to answer these questions. Will Quirindi, which has been closed for two years, now be sold? Can we rule that out now, because we could not during budget estimate hearings? Can we rule out the sale of Singleton

TAFE now that there is a CLC there? Will the Government rule that out? Can we rule out any further sales of assets? Can we, for example, rule out the sale of Bega TAFE?

Mr Paul Scully: West Wollongong.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Or West Wollongong, Dapto, Gosford, Chullora, anywhere you want to go. If the Minister or his department says to a member of this House, regardless on which side of the House they sit, "Hey, we've got some great news, we want to give you a CLC", my advice is to run. If a member has a TAFE in their electorate and the Minister says, "We are going to give you a CLC", you can kiss your TAFE goodbye. That is exactly what will happen. I challenge the Minister and Government members: If they want to talk about TAFE and say that they believe in TAFE, that they want to invest in TAFE, that they do not want to sell off TAFE, then agree to my motion and do not move an amendment. Those opposite say that we go running off and spreading mistruths. We are here debating the issue, and we are happy to have the debate. I will stand here every single day on behalf of the members of the Teachers Federation and the Public Service Association and all the students who are trying to get ahead in life. Once we stop investing in education and the public education system, we give up on our society. We cannot give up on TAFE. We have to believe in TAFE and we have to rebuild TAFE.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (17:06): I thank the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE for his interest in NSW TAFE. Certainly the Government does not agree with his motion. The shadow Minister and I share a genuine interest in TAFE. As a past TAFE teacher, there is no person more passionate about TAFE than I am. Let me acknowledge the great teachers and staff at TAFE.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Members will be silent when the Minister is speaking.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I congratulate them on their passion for their work. Over time I have travelled around regions of New South Wales, visiting more than 45 different TAFEs and talking to staff. The main thing I see is the teachers' passion and dedication to learning and the teaching of skills. They are sensational. No-one is more dedicated to TAFE than this Government, with a record \$1.97 billion budget this year. In addition, we are investing \$263 million in capital expenditure to upgrade facilities across the State. The member's motion does do one good thing. It gives me the opportunity to update the House on the recent sale at Flemington Drive. We achieved a \$4 million sale, 30 per cent above the reserve price. It is important to know why we did this.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is important to know that the Government is recycling assets to invest further in TAFE. It is about recycling under-utilised assets to benefit the community, students and industry and to deliver fit-for-purpose facilities.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: The Government believes in providing great facilities for our students. We are not frozen in time, like those opposite. The great news for TAFE is that we are investing \$3 million in the Scone Connected Learning Centre [CLC] towards a multi-trades hub. That is in addition to the \$6.5 million that we invested in 2019 in the Scone CLC. So that is a \$9.5 million investment in Scone in TAFE. The Government is also investing \$1 million in the upgrading of facilities at Muswellbrook for teaching business services and hair and beauty. Of course, that is in addition to our commitment to two connected learning classrooms and \$300,000 for updated trades equipment. It is great news that Racing NSW has committed to build a world-class academy of equine excellence. Importantly, the racing industry is investing money in the area, creating jobs in the area, and providing world-class training, even attracting international students. Scone can have it all. The difference between this Government and a Labor government is that we reinvest. When those opposite were last in government, they sold 20 sites. One only has to Google to see the sites that they sold.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The members for the electorates of Rockdale, Lakemba, Fairfield and Cessnock will come to order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: They included Mona Vale campus, which is now townhouses; Mayfield campus, which is now apartments; Kahibah campus, which is now townhouses; and Tamworth campus, which is now townhouses. Those opposite say one thing but do another. Judge them on their deeds, not on their fake words.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: We on this side of the House are committed to recycling assets. Look at what happened to Crows Nest campus. It is now a high school. A new public school is planned for Epping campus and the Mudgee annexe was sold to council to create a community facility.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: This Government is committed to expanding campuses across New South Wales. We have seven more CLCs to come. There are brand-new sites where there has never been a TAFE campus, including at Yamba, Batemans Bay and Nambucca Heads, and very soon we will be opening the Nambucca Heads, Tomaree and Hay CLCs. That is a great result for those communities. We on this side of the House care about TAFE, with record investment in TAFE and a record ability to upgrade facilities. The intention of the shadow Minister was to come here—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The members for the electorates of Wollongong, Rockdale and Lakemba will come to order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Unfortunately, his motion is ill-conceived and misleading and at worst it is deceptive because, as we have seen, Labor sells campuses for townhouses. Mr Assistant Speaker, recently I wrote to the member for Lakemba. I have always said to him that my door is open and I am happy to chat with him. My door is still open. If the member wants to have a sensible debate, I am more than happy to do that. I am sorry that he was misled by the Opposition. They do not always get the facts right. This Government is proud of what we are doing. We are proud of TAFE, we support our teachers and staff and we put students at the centre of our decision-making.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens and the member for Blue Mountains will come to order. A number of members in this Chamber have been called to order for the second or third time and will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to misbehave—except for the member for Rockdale, who I know wants to go home early.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:12): I pose a rhetorical question to those opposite and to the Minister himself: Minister, how many representations have you had from members of your own party who have come to you and said, "Please sell my TAFE campus"? How many members on the other side are sticking up their hand and saying, "Minister, please come and sell my campus. I want my TAFE sold"? Who is doing that? No-one is doing that because selling your local TAFE is a dud deal.

What is the purpose of TAFE? The purpose of TAFE has been to equip people with trade qualifications, to provide an opportunity locally so that people can obtain a qualification or to change their career. A very important part of TAFE has been to engage people who may not have been engaged in a mainstream school setting. I know of cases in my community where young people have left school to go to TAFE and have done wonderful things in their career. They were deeply engaged with learning hands-on skills at TAFE but they were not very engaged at school sitting at a table in front of a computer. Having attended TAFE, they have done great things with their lives.

We need to consider the framework around the population who are having their Scone TAFE sold. I do not know how many times the Minister has been to the upper Hunter, but it is my neighbouring electorate. So I am going to fill him in on a few Census data details. Of the top 10 communities who go to TAFE and get a trade qualification, upper Hunter ranked number eight in 2016, number eight in 2011 and number 13 in 2006. There is a pattern there: 25 per cent or more of the Upper Hunter population have trade qualifications that they received through TAFE. That is a pretty important market for TAFE. You would probably want to invest in that market, not withdraw from it—but that is just a thought.

Let us think about those people who do not have any post-school qualifications; they would be a pretty important market audience for TAFE, I would think. A Minister looking after TAFE should be thinking, "Where is a really good place to put a TAFE? Why don't we get into those communities where people don't have a lot of post-school qualifications? Let's give them the opportunity to get involved in that market." Why would the Minister not think through that process? Again, the Upper Hunter is in the top 20 communities where residents have no post-school qualifications. Why would the Government not invest in that market, rather than withdraw and retreat from that market? The logic being applied on that side of the House is against the common logic of every other person. Let us acknowledge the mastermind behind selling everything that this State owns: the good old member for Epping. What is the profile of the member for Epping's community?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will be heard in silence.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The member for Epping might not even know a person with a trade qualification, because his electorate is ranked at number 81 out of 93 for trade qualifications. Fewer than 10 per cent of people in his electorate have a trade qualification. What about university qualifications in the member's electorate? Epping is ranked at number 11, with 53 per cent of people holding a university qualification. That is probably why not many of them are going to TAFE. The Minister knows this that the universities talk about a tertiary

entrance score as being a reflection of a postcode. The member for Epping is in a postcode where children, young people and students do exceptionally well at going on to university. Not too many of them go to TAFE.

He is the guy making the decisions to sell, sell it all, sell every TAFE campus, because the Government does not want to empower people who currently rely on trade qualifications. It does not want to empower people who currently have no qualifications. It does not want to empower them at all because in the world that the member for Epping lives in that is not necessarily a requirement to get ahead. It is a disgraceful outcome for the Government to sell a campus in a community that so heavily relies on TAFE education and qualifications. It defies logic. Government members should be ashamed, or they should stick up their hands and ask for their TAFE to be sold.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Cootamundra, I remind the House that a number of members are on multiple calls to order. The member for Rockdale and the member for Prospect have been called to order three times. The member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Maitland and the member for Newcastle have been called to order twice. The member for Bega has been called to order once.

Ms Trish Doyle: The member for Maitland is not even in the Chamber, Mr Assistant Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I realise that; I am reading the list. I will do my job and I will let you do yours.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:18): It gives me great pleasure to defend the Government's record of investment in TAFE. I will speak to the investment that has occurred in rural and regional New South Wales. As most members know, I represent one of the largest electorates in New South Wales and I have said many times in this place that I am a TAFE graduate. That gives me some credibility to talk about the investment that the Government has made and the impact it has on the ground. I have great respect for the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE and it would be wonderful if he could come to my electorate and see some of the TAFEs at work. I can talk about the experience of a rural person trying to extend their skill base by going to TAFE and having to travel great distances to do so. I am a florist by trade—

Ms Kate Washington: Did you do it online in a connected learning centre?

Ms STEPH COOKE: No.

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

Ms STEPH COOKE: I am happy to acknowledge that interjection. I will get to that in a moment. To obtain my qualifications, I was able to study up to certificate IV before I relocated my home to Temora to take on my family's floristry business, which I then expanded. I was determined to be the number one florist in New South Wales and I recognised that to do that I would have to invest in my own skills. I wanted to undertake a Diploma of Floristry. The only campus that offered that course was Padstow and I was living in Young. With three shops, that meant leaving my shop at midday and driving to Padstow to be ready for a six o'clock kick-off to study the diploma.

It would finish at 10 o'clock and I would then drive home. I would get back into Young at two or three o'clock in the morning; I would then be back on the floor at 7.00 a.m. to restart and go again, and I did that for two years. My other florists had no options to undertake that type of training. There are three connected learning centres [CLCs] in my electorate, which cost about \$6.5 million each, and floristry is now being offered in two of those locations. It is so fantastic. I was with the Minister when we opened the most recent one in West Wyalong.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Blacktown and the member for Fairfield will come to order.

Ms STEPH COOKE: I was able to conduct one of the introductory classes to a brand-new class on opening day, with 10 wonderful students enthusiastic about studying floristry. I was able to give a guest demonstration of that wonderful trade. Members know that floristry is growing across New South Wales. It is a fantastic profession, and so are many other trades. The CLCs allow young people in our communities to move straight from school into an apprenticeship and be able to study without having to travel for hours and hours on country roads when it is not safe and they are on their provisional driver licence. It means that they can stay, live locally, train locally and work locally. We know that post-COVID many people are looking to retrain into other areas or are looking at their career options and where they might want to go to next. The Government has recognised that change with its almost \$300 million investment in TAFE infrastructure across New South Wales, the vast majority of which is being spent in CLCs. Fifteen have already been delivered in regional and rural New South Wales.

Ms Anna Watson: They don't work.

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

Ms STEPH COOKE: I respectfully suggest that CLCs in rural and remote communities are the way forward. Enrolments in West Wyalong TAFE are up 100 per cent, and it has only been open since the start of the year. That is a fantastic outcome. At Grenfell enrolments are up 400 per cent. That demonstrates that the Government's strategy around TAFE is the right one. I am proud of the Government's investment in TAFE.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:23): As the great Barbra Streisand sang, "You don't bring me flowers anymore". If you were a wonderful florist like the member for Cootamundra, you could do some learning online and you might learn some things from a book. But guess what? At some stage you actually have to get your hands dirty and create a beautiful bouquet. You have to tick off and achieve those skills. Let us talk about certificates. There are three educators on this side of the House—and many more—who understand TAFE and what it means to be in an area where you are actually delivering. I draw the attention of the House to an article in a wonderful newspaper called *The Scone Advocate*. On 24 January 2020 the skills Minister, Dr Geoff Lee, member for Parramatta—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I will start removing members from the Chamber.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: —is pictured standing next to the disgraced former member. We would have known the writing was on the wall with the announcement of a CLC, or connected learning centre. But the anomaly is that there is a TAFE campus down the road at 2 Flemington Drive. The Government will sell it; something stinks about this. The announcement said, "You can study community services, property services, aging support, leadership and management, individual support for aging, creating and designing spreadsheets, basic computing, and enterprise training, all online." Well, that is fantastic. But then a few days later the great man himself, Bob Sim, who was a teacher of 25 years and a local farrier, which is a smith who shoes horses—

Mr Paul Scully: Hard to do online.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Yes, very hard to do online, because you need to work the steel and you need anvils and hammers in order to get the shoe to fit on the hoof of the horse. But, nah, we'll do it online. These are not my words; I am not misleading the House. Because on 22 February Bob Sim, who has been teaching for 25 years at Scone TAFE, said, "This is not just a thing you can teach online." Oh my gosh, what an epiphany! A teacher is actually saying to the Government that there are certain things you can and cannot do in the delivery of a curriculum at TAFE. I will give an example.

In 1998 I was a design and technology teacher retrained at TAFE, under a Labor government, to deliver vocational education and training as a construction teacher in schools. That was in partnership with the great TAFE, delivered by the former Labor Government. But this Government decides in its infinite wisdom that it is going to put in these connected learning centres at the expense of actually teaching in front of a group of students to get their skills up. Courses cannot just be done online. As a teacher, you need to see what your students are doing, whether they are competent, whether they are achieving. That is what you do.

But surprise, surprise, we have a by-election and now, all of a sudden, Minister Geoff Lee says, "Oh, there's a further \$3 million to build the workshop." Guess where? At Scone TAFE, at the back of the CLC. There was already a functional and working TAFE there but the Government ripped it apart. A by-election is coming up and they say, "We're investing." This is what they are investing in: agriculture, horticulture, fixing chainsaws, small motors and wool classing. These are courses that need to be done in the classroom and which a TAFE teacher has to deliver. I ask members to support this motion moved by the member for Lakemba.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:28): Those opposite are once again wasting everybody's time by pointing the finger for something they themselves practised when in government.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat. A number of members in this Chamber are already on two or three calls to order. The member for Hawkesbury will be heard in silence. I place the member for Swansea on three calls to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Those opposite say that they oppose the sale of TAFE campuses, but those opposite divested plenty of TAFE sites when they were in government. What short memories they have. At several sites where they sold off TAFE campuses, townhouses now stand in their place.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I will get to the question of where. Once again, their hypocrisy is absolutely breathtaking. Whilst those opposite with short memories play games with our communities, this Government remains responsive to the changing student and industry needs. The Government has purchased new sites to expand delivery where demand

is increasing. Yes, sometimes sites are divested where they are no longer required for training delivery or are becoming under-utilised. We on this side of the House are committed to maximising community benefits from government-owned property when it is no longer needed for delivering services in New South Wales.

Those opposite need to listen to this. It was Labor that sold campuses all over the State. Most of them were sold to private purchasers. Let me refresh their memories, if they have forgotten the sites. At Cessnock, private purchaser; Cootamundra, private purchaser; Woy Woy, private purchaser; Charlestown, private purchaser—the member for Port Stephens may laugh—and Mona Vale, private purchaser. Shame on Labor for telling tales of privatisation when it was selling off TAFE assets to every private bidder. While TAFEs were replaced with townhouses under Labor, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is building and upgrading sites across the State to ensure more people than ever have access to training for jobs. The New South Wales Government is committed to TAFE NSW as a comprehensive public provider.

The Government has invested \$263.2 million this financial year alone into capital projects for TAFE NSW. How quickly the memories of those opposite fade. We on this side have delivered a record budget for TAFE NSW of \$1.967 billion in the 2020-21 budget and an increase of 5.7 per cent on the previous year. But they do not remember that, do they? The New South Wales Government will continue to support TAFE NSW to invest in new facilities that meet student and industry needs right across New South Wales. The divestment of TAFE campuses is nothing new and has been occurring for decades, including under Labor. The difference is those opposite have no plans and no vision. They just state a whole bunch of lies that is causing unnecessary distress in the communities for whom this Government is providing. It is nothing new, but neither are these ridiculous scare tactics: what they are opposing and what they are putting forward.

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

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Both Labor and the NSW Teachers Federation ought to be ashamed of their actions in the upper Hunter.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat. She will continue when there is silence.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: They have claimed:

TAFE teachers will be moving to ... a "shed" facility on the campus, with no amenities, no staff offices, no tea room, no technology, or paddock areas.

Shame on them; absolute shame on them. TAFE teachers in Scone have access to excellent facilities at the new \$6.5 million connected learning centre—a fact that those opposite do not like. The centre is also receiving a further \$3 million boost and expansion. Those opposite already mentioned it. There is the media release, if they did not catch it—an extra \$3 million was announced on 22 April.

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

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Those opposite have been telling untruths. They have said that the No. 2 Flemington Drive site was sold under the nose of teachers and students, who reportedly were told when the sale video was being filmed that it was for maintenance check purposes. That is absolutely wrong. TAFE NSW staff were consulted on multiple points throughout October 2020, November 2020 and January 2021. Get the facts right. How dare Labor strike fear into students by claiming they are unable to complete their TAFE courses at Scone. It is an absolute disgrace.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:35): The Greens wholeheartedly support the motion. It is ironic that the supposed friends of the bush, the Liberals and The Nationals, think that people can be taught to shoe a horse on a desktop. It is important to say that connected learning centres [CLCs] are an adjunct to TAFE campuses but they should not replace TAFE campuses. Of course, this is within a greater context. I said to one of our staff, "If I had a dollar for every speech that I've had to do defending public education, I could probably retire." It is a terrible state of affairs that we constantly have to defend our public providers in this State. A legacy that is recognised universally is that TAFE campuses and TAFE are being gutted over and over again.

Selling off a specialist rural TAFE campus in an agricultural community makes absolutely no sense at all, when you have agriculture and horticulture, which are hands-on physical professions; kinaesthetic learners, which the overwhelming number of learners in rural and regional New South Wales that go to TAFE are; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. I did my Higher School Certificate [HSC] at TAFE because I was looking after my mother with a disability. I left school in year 10 and I did my HSC at what was then called tech. Like the member for Cootamundra and others, I understand the kids and the adult learners who go to TAFE. The idea that they can be plopped in a desktop environment without

specialist teachers is an absolute joke. It was indefensible when the disgraced former member for Upper Hunter backed in this decision.

In April 2020 Minister Lee said, "We have no plans to sell Scone TAFE." In January 2021 it was listed on realestate.com.au. It is so disturbing to think that, exactly as was described, the Government sells off a beautiful campus where people can have equine studies and when there is a backlash, it pumps some money into the town's CLC. It is very hard to understand that the Government would sell off a campus in the context of coming out of COVID. Teachers Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos—whom I have known for many decades—said, "Members were appalled at the haste". They are concerned about other examples across the State at Bega, Cooma, Cowra, Moruya and Tomaree where CLCs are planned. What does that mean for the campuses?

It is not as though TAFE is not a heavy hitter in terms of a return. Recently the Australia Institute put together statistics about the value-add that TAFE brings. The combined annual costs for operating the TAFE system's 35 institutes, before this Government got its hand on it, was a modest \$5.7 billion. In contrast, the actual economic benefits generated, thanks to investments in TAFE, were estimated at \$92 billion. That is 16 times the investment in TAFE that was returned. I cannot even begin to capture how important TAFE is for students who come from the lowest quintile of society, who are more likely to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and are more likely to identify as having a disability compared with students at private providers. That is the other issue: It is an ideological war and it is about privatisation. It is very disappointing. Despite all the cuts, the TAFE system continues to make a strong and disproportionate economic and social contribution to the Australian economy.

I say to those opposite: Please admit you are wrong. Stop the cuts. Listen to teachers and students. Stop listening to the bean counters. Stop listening to the Treasurer. This is about teaching and learning. Billions of dollars in public funding have been wasted trying to build an inefficient, uncoordinated private vocational education and training [VET] market that has failed workers, businesses and government alike. The TAFE system is the most experienced, reliable and high-quality national level vocational training infrastructure. It is best positioned to lead the VET sector response post-COVID to the unemployment rate that we will see in my community and in regional and rural communities like Scone across the State.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:40): In reply: I acknowledge the important point made by the member for Ballina about the number of times the Minister or the department, whenever asked the question, will say, "We've got no plans to sell," but eventually we find the TAFE campus is for sale. It has occurred every single time we have asked about a campus, including Dapto and all of the campuses read out by the member for Ballina. I mention Dapto particularly because I visited Dapto with the member for Shellharbour. It is a place that is incredibly important and valuable and brings so many opportunities.

I acknowledge and thank all members for their contributions to debate. Of course, some contributions are more welcome than others but I thank them all. The Minister keeps saying that the motion is misleading and is ill conceived. I do not know what is misleading about stating that Scone TAFE was sold for \$4 million or what is ill conceived about asking the Government to rule out any more TAFE campus sales. There is nothing misleading about that. It is a matter of fact. I give credit to the Minister when he says his door is open. But sometimes we do not have to speak through the open door; there are other ways we can debate.

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

Mr JIHAD DIB: I also pull the Government up on its great new phrase "asset recycling". Asset recycling sounds like it is doing something really good: We recycle because we are trying to save the world!

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

Mr JIHAD DIB: Give me another two minutes, Mr Assistant Speaker, and I will say it again. "Asset recycling" are just buzzwords for saying, "We want to sell". It is clear that those opposite want to sell. They want to walk away from TAFE. Every time we have moved a motion in the Parliament, those opposite either amend it or vote against it. Today I ask Government members to vote for my motion to show that they commit to and support TAFE. All I heard from Government members were all of the problems on this side of the House. Yet they are the ones who are making the decision to sell. I acknowledge and thank the member for Cootamundra for telling us her personal story. It was a good story about effort and it highlights the value of TAFE. We can take something from the contribution of the member for Cootamundra to improve our TAFEs and ensure we offer all courses. Through her story she was saying "Let's keep going with TAFE". The member for Fairfield was brilliant and entertaining. I am not a Barbra Streisand fan but I thought his speech was fantastic.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Rockdale that I have asked him to come to order five times.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I liked that the member for Fairfield acknowledged the teachers. Unlike the Minister, I met with the teachers who had been working at Scone TAFE. They mentioned all of the skills that they had and all of the skills that will be lost. It is more than just the equine industry; it is equine and agriculture. I thank the member for Cessnock, who gave some great statistics. I also thank the member for Ballina and the member for Hawkesbury.

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

Mr JIHAD DIB: I do not agree with what the member for Hawkesbury said. Maybe the member should not take the word of others but look at her own speeches. I also say to the member for Hawkesbury that although the Government tells us the budget has increased, what it does not tell us is that it cut a whole heap previously. I commend this motion to the House. I ask that every fair-minded member vote to support TAFE and to make sure that no more TAFE facilities are sold.

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

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes44
Majority.....0

AYES

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

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

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

NOES

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

Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
Kean, M
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
O'Dea, J
Pavey, M
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A

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

PAIRS

Hornery, S

Perrottet, D

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There being 44 ayes and 44 noes, and the numbers being equal, I give my casting vote to the noes and declare the question to be resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Private Members' Statements

LACHLAN RIVER FISHWAYS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:52): Yesterday evening I started speaking on the important issue of obstructions to native fish passage in the Lachlan River in my electorate of Orange. As a result of inaction by this Government to install fishways at weirs, the golden perch, or yellowbelly, is a threatened species as it cannot migrate to breed, feed and seek refuge. The fish species outline for golden perch on the website of the NSW Department of Primary Industries [DPI] states:

The abundance of golden perch has dramatically decreased in the Murray-Darling due to migration obstruction and the alteration of flow regimes and temperature stratification following the construction of weirs and dams.

This Government's own department is aware of these threats to the species and conducted river obstruction surveys more than a decade ago. Many of the weirs were constructed along the Lachlan River in the late 1800s to the early 1900s. The DPI has outlined threats to fish habitats resulting from barriers to fish passage. Its website further states:

Australian native fish require unimpeded access along waterways in order to survive and reproduce. Both fresh and saltwater fish move within waters at different times to access food and shelter, to avoid predators, and to seek out mates. Of the 83 species of freshwater fish in south eastern Australia, over half migrate at least once as part of their life cycle. Some species can migrate thousands of kilometres ...

Barriers to fish passage prevent the migration of native fish species and can have severe implications for these populations. In extreme cases, barriers can result in localised extinctions. This has occurred for golden perch [or yellowbelly] populations above several large weirs and dams—

Such as, along the Lachlan in my electorate. The DPI has outlined impacts upon native fish as a result of barriers, which include interrupting spawning or seasonal migrations, restricting access to preferred habitat and food resources, increasing the chance of predation and disease, and reducing genetic flow between populations through population fragmentation. The DPI website further states:

The cumulative effect of barriers to fish passage has been identified as a Key Threatening Process to the continuing survival of several species of native fish in Australia.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority and relevant State agencies formulated the 10-year Native Fish Strategy, or NFS, for the Murray-Darling Basin, commencing in 2003 and concluding in 2013. The strategy has now apparently been abandoned by this Government. The strategy provided a response to the key threats to native fish populations in the Basin. One of the key elements of the NFS was connectivity for native fish. I am advised that the first major initiative of the NFS that was implemented was the Hume to sea fishway program. Recent history will tell us that it was an amazing success. The NFS originally had a 30-year horizon, with a goal of recovering native fish to 50 per cent of pre-European settlement in 50 years. That might have been achievable if the plan had stayed in place beyond 2013 to form the guidelines for the real recovery.

The NFS strategic actions were designed to achieve 13 objectives directed at improving the status of native fish populations in the Basin. Point 5 was to provide adequate passage for native fish. Point 6 was to devise and implement recovery plans for threatened native fish species. Significant funding is generated through recreational fishing licences and other river water uses, yet the reinvestment into inland rivers and streams for restocking of native fish, habitat restoration and the facilitation of fish passage for migration is severely lacking. One could go so far as to say that the failure to address the man-made obstructions to fish passage such as weirs is negligent, given that this Government and its agencies failed to install fishways where obstructions were clearly identified more than a decade ago. I recently visited several weirs on the Lachlan River and its tributaries which clearly obstruct the passage of fish. Cottons Weir and Jemalong Weir are just two of many weirs that require the installation of fishways.

I have made reference to a number of organisations in this speech, several of which are departments or agencies of this Government, and all basically say the same thing: Yellowbelly is a native fish species under threat as a result of river passage obstruction. Fishways are essential infrastructure to allow native fish, such as yellowbelly, to bypass weirs and other obstructive barriers so they can survive. This Government has been vocal on the protection of koalas. However, it has failed to act to protect the threatened native fish species. I call on the Government to install fishways at all of the mapped obstructions on the Lachlan and other inland rivers.

FORMER MANLY HOSPITAL SITE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:57): Over the past four or so years I have spoken regularly in this place and throughout the community of Manly about the future uses of the old Manly Hospital, which closed a number of years ago. This week we reached a proud milestone for a lot of people in the community of Manly when we commenced construction of what will be Australia's first hospice for young adults. Many people will be familiar with Bear Cottage, which is also located in Manly and provides palliative and hospice care for young children who have an incurable illness and their families. The current situation means that when those young people turn 18, they have nowhere to go other than places like nursing homes, hospital wards and the like. The commencement of construction on what will be Australia's first hospice is an incredible moment that is worthwhile pausing and reflecting on.

The facility will make the most difficult of circumstances slightly more bearable for families across New South Wales. Life is often hard enough and the love, compassion and humanity that is the sanctuary of the former Manly Hospital site and location for the first hospice of its kind in Australia is reason enough that this project gets built. However, the designs speak for themselves, as do the importance and the need for the facility, as were shown when speaking to parents like Debbie or Kylie or to clients of the hospice like Matthew and Scott, who were there on Monday to witness the turning of the first sod.

The project has been the dream of many people and this week we realise the vision, energy and commitment of people throughout the community of Manly and beyond. I acknowledge the vision of the former Premier, my predecessor, Mike Baird, and Narelle Martin, the manager of Bear Cottage, as well as the incredible generosity of Kay Poche, who donated \$6 million to ensure that this project got up and running. I acknowledge the efforts of the outstanding Northern Sydney Local Health District, Health Infrastructure and, of course, the leadership of the Premier. I also acknowledge and thank former Prime Minister Tony Abbott for his contribution and Deputy Premier John Barilaro for his significant contribution to the capital costs of the project.

The project means that a promise that was once made is now a promise that has been kept. It highlights compassion, showcases collaboration and demonstrates the art of the possible when government, community and philanthropy come together. It allowed all of us at the sod turning and indeed people who have seen the project to have a moment to reflect on how lucky most of us are to have our health, and to know that if people are ever in need of help and respite, the hospice that will be located in Manly means that they will not be travelling that road alone. It has been an enormous privilege to be involved in the project. It was a defining moment personally to be able to turn the sod this week.

I acknowledge the outstanding contributions of many people across the community, including Ray Mathison; Jean Hay and her husband David; Greg and Kay Van Norton Poche; Shirley Marshman, who is the president of the Manly Hospital Auxiliary; Kylie and Grant Jones, who have been wonderful advocates for the hospice and are the parents of Jaya; Narelle Martin and the team at Bear Cottage; Debbie and Matthew Van Hoek, who have also been wonderful advocates for the hospice; Denise Keen, a local community member who has been on the journey for the redevelopment of Manly Hospital for many years; Deb Wilcox, the chief executive officer of Northern Sydney Local Health District, who has worked side by side with me to bring this project to fruition; Mr Trevor Danos, AM, the chair of the Northern Sydney Local Health District; Allana Thompson from the local health district; Candice Peters; Katherine Clark; Lisa Rathborne; Hayley Bell; and many others who have supported the project along the way, in ways both big and small.

The project will be built in the coming year and we cannot wait to have it open to service and support families throughout New South Wales who are facing the most challenging and difficult of times. I think society is ultimately judged on how it manages to care for those who are in need and this project will do a stellar job providing care for those people across our State.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING DECISIONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:02): I again raise my concerns about the conduct of local government and the demise of transparency in decision-making by councils and planning decisions by local planning panels. I first raised those concerns in this House in May 2018 and not even a change of Minister has prompted any change. The problems that concerned me then have been allowed to fester. There is a scourge of secrecy that now plagues local government. Councils have adopted the practice of general manager briefings, where council staff gather councillors together behind closed doors to inform them about various matters, on which councillors then exercise their vote subsequently at council meetings. Those briefings can deal with matters as significant as the council's budget, which can authorise spending of perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars.

The staff seclude the councillors in a closed room, away from the prying eyes of the press or the public, and debate and discussion occur in private. They even have processes for declaring conflicts of interest at those

briefings. They are like council meetings in miniature but they are not open to the public. There is even the farce of councils deferring matters from council meetings to briefing sessions. That is how a council like Bayside Council is able to adopt its budget at an open council meeting in just a matter of minutes. It is scandalous. When this House deals with a budget, it is debated for days and then months on end. There is enough in local government to keep ICAC busy as it is, without this practice proliferating.

What is being discussed in those meetings that cannot take place in full view of the public? Council staff were once judged by the public and their peers in the industry on the quality of the advice they gave. Planning panels—ostensibly introduced as an anti-corruption measure—now barely deal with matters in public if they can avoid it, which is completely contrary to the intent. For example, last night I registered to address the Bayside planning panel about one of four matters listed on the agenda. When opening the meeting, the chair advised that the other three had been dealt with by the panel in a non-public meeting and so only one matter would be dealt with in public that night and, even then, it would take them seven days to publish their decision so that they could have their debate in private.

Dealt with how? Why was it in private? What is the public not entitled to know? Is it not entitled to know a discussion on planning matters? It may be convenient for the panel, but that is no excuse. It is certainly not the intent of the Local Government Act and it is contrary to schedule 2 to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. When he introduced the Local Government Act, Gerry Peacocke, that outstanding National Party local government Minister, told this House:

I am convinced that in striking a fair balance between the legitimate needs of councils being able to efficiently administer their operations and the legitimate need for the communities they represent to have a say in what councils do, we have created a piece of legislation which is not only fair but will lead to a much closer and more harmonious relationship between the people and their councils.

As I said, it is inconsistent with clause 25, schedule 2 to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which requires planning bodies to meet in public. After 30 years of tampering with local government legislation, successive State governments have destroyed the harmony and quality of elected representatives and staff of local government. My colleagues across the Chamber despair at the decline. It is time to shine a light into the dark corners of local government. The way to improve the performance of councils is to increase transparency. With most local newspapers now defunct, scrutiny by the public has never been more crucial. The practice of general manager briefings must end. Councils must return to the spirit and letter of the law and ensure that their meetings and committees are open to the press and public. Only the disinfectant of sunlight can cure the disease of incompetence and corruption that now plagues many areas of local government.

COMO PUBLIC SCHOOL 100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:07): It is with great delight that I acknowledge the 100-year anniversary of Como Public School, which is a tight-knit community nestled on the banks of the Georges River between proud heritage gums. Led by its outstanding principal, Nicole Gilmore, the school is home to 105 exceptional students who uphold the school motto of "quality education in a caring environment". Como Public School was the first official school in the Sutherland shire. On Wednesday 16 April 1884 the school was opened by Mr John Halsted under the name Woronora School with an enrolment of 85 children. A month later, on 9 May, the name was changed to Como School. The school closed in October 1885 after construction of the Como-Sutherland railway bridge was completed and many of the workers and their families moved away.

On 29 January 1921 the Como Public School that stands today was established by principal Frank Middenway. Within weeks of the school's opening enrolments reached 68 students, with children coming by boat from East Menai—which is now Illawong; "The Bonnet"—which is now Como West; Como village; Green Point; Coronation Bay; Oyster Bay; and the area now known as Jannali. Within months of opening, the school community was already bustling with laughter and mischief. By March Mr Middenway had to discipline eight boys of adventurous spirit for taking a boat and rowing out into the Woronora River. In 1928 Amos Bridge became the principal and he was known for his tender love of gardening. Under his leadership, the school gardens flourished as the children grew beans, beetroots and chillies. In fact, the students were awarded a garden shield for the best school garden in the shire.

Today Como Public School remains a bustling home of budding green thumbs. With a thriving garden, thanks to the passionate gardening club and a brood of happy hens, the students are always excited to get their hands dirty whilst they learn firsthand about veggies and agriculture. Currently, Como Public School has five large compost bins and four worm farms that create "worm tea" for the gardens. The students enjoy their home-grown capsicums, herbs, spinach and warrigal greens, along with resident bees and a blue-tongue lizard. The wonderful garden is watered regularly by the solar power irrigation system, which was made possible thanks to the hard work of outstanding parent volunteers.

By 1936 the students had developed a habit of wandering across the road to visit the unofficial tuckshop, which was owned by Mrs Williams. There they would purchase a greasy but delicious rissole or lollies for half a penny. In Cremona Road, shopkeepers Mr Harrison and Mr Faulkner offered further delights, including homemade ice blocks called "pink ladies" and "blue lakes" or a funnel of hot chips for a penny. During World War II, air raid drills were conducted at the school monthly. Students would scatter to hide in safe places with rubber earplugs and rubber mouthpieces to protect their teeth during bomb blasts. To calm the students during the bleakest days, talented pianist and teacher Jack Crogan would soothe a restless assembly with his music. In 1963 Miss Dorothy Lord became Como Public School's first female principal and, with a special forte in music, she began a choir of over 50 pupils. Soon after the choir would come to gain critical acclaim and perform on a number of occasions in the Sydney Town Hall.

Today Como Public School makes use of the leafy bushland and coastal pools that surround it, encouraging the students to immerse themselves in their local flora, fauna and parklands. The children take part in annual swimming and various picnic days down at Como Pleasure Grounds. In October this year, the school has planned a number of exciting events to celebrate its 100-year anniversary, including a historical photographic exhibition at Kareela Village, a black-tie event at Jensens Restaurant in Kareela and a school fete with a smoking ceremony and music from the Jannali High School band. Without the wonderful staff and volunteers behind Como Public School these 100 years of exceptional education would not have been possible. I commend the Parents and Citizens Association, which works tirelessly to maintain the vibrancy and richness of the Como Public School community. I thank outgoing president Ms Dana Bloye and the 2021 executive committee, including Mrs Jen Richardson, Mrs Rochelle Kirk, Mr Alex Ryan and Mrs Asta Polo.

Finally, I commend the exceptional educators who are at the heart of Como Public School. I acknowledge principal Nicole Gilmore, Georgia Karamanis, Linda Highett, Amanda Curl, Lauren Patterson, Michelle Milnes, Katrina Roffey, Lauren Perry, Sarah Steege and Elise Ezzy for their dedication to educating young people. I also commend the wonderful team, who are the cornerstone of Como Public School, including Barbara Davies, Margo Hollowell, Mark Bird, Bianca Storer, Elise Purnell and Leanne Best, alongside school captain Lacey Winnett and vice-captain Jet Fuz. I congratulate the outstanding Como Public School on achieving 100 years of exceptional education and look forward to celebrating this milestone in October.

REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:11): Two weeks ago I visited the glorious town of Deniliquin in the heart of my electorate to attend the upper House regional health inquiry. Everyone knows that our rural and regional health system is in crisis. That is why there is an inquiry. Twenty years ago, people in the Murrumbidgee electorate lived longer than those in Sydney. Now we die three years earlier on average. We now have almost three times the suicide rate of Sydney. That rate has skyrocketed these past two decades. Yet over the same period government has stripped away our health and hospital services.

As I travel across my vast electorate, everywhere I go I hear versions of the same story. At Leeton District Hospital people have nearly died because there was no doctor on duty. A boy in Deniliquin broke his arm and had to be transported for two hours with no pain relief just to get it set in Wagga. Moama does not have its own ambulance service and leans heavily on the Victorian system for all its health needs. Last year the people of Wentworth lost their only full-time GP. In Griffith, the Government is refusing to include a mental health unit at the hospital, even though it has amongst the highest suicide rates in the country.

These people are real; these problems are real. The people in our towns know they are real because they live with them every day. I commend the New South Wales upper House for bringing its inquiry out into the regions to hear, at last and firsthand, the stories I have been hearing for years. But when I attended the inquiry last week, I got a rude shock from one member in particular. The Hon. Wes Fang is a member of that committee. His job on that committee is to ask questions and hear the evidence given by constituents who have direct experience of the problems on the ground.

Wes Fang was not interested in asking questions. He was not interested in listening to what the witnesses had to say. Instead, he tried to tell the witnesses that they had got it wrong, that they just did not understand the system and that they did not know how lucky they were. The chair pulled him up and reminded him of his job but he kept at it, putting words in the mouths of witnesses, bullying them and belittling their concerns. He turned on me, a member of the audience. He let off an unprovoked rant worse than anything I have received in this House—and that is saying something. It was vicious, it was vile and it was uncalled for. Have a look at the committee transcript. It is all in there: the ignorance, the bullying and the unprofessionalism of a man who does not seem to understand his role on the committee.

I wish I could say that this was an isolated incident, that it was a mistake by one man under too much pressure to perform a job, but his behaviour in Cobar was no different, as the committee moved on. On reflection,

I have to say that the Hon. Wes Fang's behaviour is simply a metaphor for the once great party he represents. For years now The Nationals have not listened to the people of rural Australia. They have not believed us when we have told them how life really is in the bush. They have talked down to us. They tell us that we should be thankful for the little we have, even as they keep stripping it away from us. They do not listen and they do not want to listen. When one of us stands up and tells it like it really is, they get dirty and they get personal. If The Nationals really want to be the party of regional New South Wales, then they need to boot out the Wes Fangs, reboot their attitudes and start listening to what rural people are telling them.

JERUSALEM CONFLICT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:16): Today is the last day of fasting for Ramadan. Members would know that in the Muslim community it has been an important and very holy month. From tomorrow I will be able to eat normally, drink coffee and stop being hangry towards people.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Thank goodness!

Mr JIHAD DIB: The member for Rockdale gets very upset because he thinks that I get quite annoyed. On what would usually be a joyous occasion, over the past couple of days in particular people in my electorate have been raising with me the issues in Jerusalem and Palestine. Many people are thinking not only about their families but also about what is going on there. We want to celebrate Eid but it is hard to celebrate when we know that so many people have been killed and such violence is taking place.

Jerusalem is a city of significance to so many people, civilisations, communities, societies and religions. For several thousand years it has been the centre of many religions, particularly early monotheistic religions. It has been the centre of the growth of many civilisations and, unfortunately, also of much unrest and many conflicts based on religion. Jerusalem has been at the centre of this conflict and unrest, as it shares some of the most holy sites revered by both Jews and Muslims. The Temple Mount and the Old City's Western Wall are part of Judaism's holiest site, while the Haram al-Sharif, or Noble Sanctuary, with the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, is the third holiest site in Islam and stands above the Temple Mount. The proximity of those holy sites has resulted in conflicts and ongoing questions regarding Jerusalem's role in those religions.

Throughout all the years there have been conflicts and wars, many of them based on religious differences, and here we are with another religious conflict in the special city of Jerusalem. As far as we know, to date more than 20 people have been killed in Gaza, including at least nine children. Unfortunately, as the conflict continues, the number of people injured, hurt and mentally scarred continues to grow, with the number now estimated at over 300. Those injured are not just adults, there are also children who will carry the scars of this great city for a lifetime. The unrest and clashes have resulted in violence that has surged into the occupied West Bank and Arab communities. The deaths in the Gaza area have been a result of the fighting between some militants and Israel. I have also heard that there have been air raids, as violence has surged into the occupied West Bank and Arab communities, and demonstrations have also been held within Israel.

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan commenced a month ago, with many Palestinians already complaining of severe restrictions being imposed. The Israeli police have prevented them from gathering on the steps outside the Old City, which is an unofficial tradition after evening prayers. That has led to increasing conflicts between the two sides. Hundreds of far-right Israelis marched down the city streets chanting "Death to Arabs" and confronting Palestinians. Let me be clear that I condemn any act of violence at or on any place of worship of any religion. I have spoken about it before. People should be free to worship freely and without fear of attack.

The scenes that I saw at the Al-Aqsa Mosque were absolutely horrific, horrifying and devastating. While people were trying to pray, soldiers came through the holy sites with boots, stun grenades and rubber bullets. It is not something that we can accept, nor should we. People should be allowed to live their lives in the comfort of their homes and without the fear of eviction. The reason I say that is because a longstanding United Nations convention states that occupying people's lands, occupying people's homes and kicking people out of their homes is not acceptable. If people are continually pushed into a corner, that is a slow strangulation of the people. It has often been referred to as a form of apartheid, and it is creating so many problems.

When people who are in a mosque trying to pray on the holiest night in the Islamic calendar come under attack, we need to speak up. The question is: How do we respond? Australia is a strong ally. So many of our former and current prime ministers talk about the fact that we are a friend of Israel. That is fine. But does a good friend not tell you when you are doing something wrong? Does a good friend not give you advice when you have done the wrong thing? Does a good friend not pull you up when you are going out of control? Make no mistake, this looks like it is completely out of control. As a nation, we cannot turn a blind eye to what is going on. I know

we cannot change everything that is happening, but as good friends—if we are a good friend as a nation—we must say, "This is not right".

Young people are being killed. People have the right to pray. This is the holiest time of the year and yet these people are under attack. The situation continually hurts people. People want a response of some sort. What is the long-term solution? Is it the two-State solution. Let us go back to what the United Nations has said. As I said at the outset, people have a right to live in peace and harmony, people have a right to live in their own homes. They should not expect bulldozers to come through their towns and effectively be kicked off their land. This cannot keep happening. We cannot keep saying it is okay to take people's homes, to occupy their lands and to attack them. As I have said, I condemn any attack on any place of worship. I do hope for a resolution. I hope for the best for the people of Palestine who are going through this awful tragedy.

ST CLAIR AND DISTRICT MEN'S SHED

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:21): Men's Sheds play a vital role in the mental health and wellbeing of men in our communities. They are a place for men to find friendship, creativity and belonging.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Hear, hear! Women's Sheds, too.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: I thank the member for Rockdale for his affirmative response. The St Clair and District Men's Shed has been an instrumental organisation in my electorate, providing a place of belonging and friendship to many in our community. It has been my pleasure to support the St Clair and District Men's Shed over the years and I am very proud to be their patron. Thanks to the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program and financial support at times from Premier Gladys Berejiklian, I have been able to support the St Clair and District Men's Shed to build a new state-of-the-art shed at Mamre House in Orchard Hills.

Over the years I have been able to support the construction and fit-out of this shed and I am thrilled that next week we will officially open the completed shed. After many years of hard work and toil raising money through all manner of methods by the men of the St Clair and District Men's Shed, as well generous donations from local businesses, together we have been able to make the Men's Shed a reality. The president of the St Clair and District Men's Shed, Aurel Vasilescu, must be commended as he has continually advocated for funding and has led the charge in ensuring this shed will be delivered.

I also commend the secretary of the Men's Shed, Andrew Moody, for his contribution in making the new shed possible. I acknowledge his regular phone calls and text messages to me to update me on their progress, as well as informing me when obstacles and delays were impacting their lease arrangements and asking for my support in helping address those obstacles. Well done to new shed building committee members Ian Pike and Ian Baistow and shed manager David Greaves, who oversaw all of the internal fit-out of the shed. Congratulations to all the men at the St Clair and District Men's Shed, who have worked together to make their dream of a new shed a reality. I have had the pleasure of visiting and sharing many barbecues and morning and afternoon teas with those men. I am always so encouraged by the community and the level of camaraderie and acceptance that they have created within their organisation.

I also thank the many businesses that have contributed to the men's shed over the years for their support of this great organisation. CatholicCare Social Services has the lease over Mamre House at Orchard Hills, the grounds upon which the shed is situated. I thank them for providing the St Clair and District Men's Shed with the land for its shed and for entering into the lease arrangements. I particularly thank Joe Cashman and previous CatholicCare Social Services employees Jean Pierre Abood and Mick Manning, whose efforts provided the Men's Shed with the building site. I thank the architects from JPA&D, Dr Jennifer Preston and Emily Saunders, and the surveyors, Thierry Grabara from Grabara T & Associates. I thank the electricians, Phil Romana from Romana and Sons, and the plumbers, Simon Khoury from Aabel Services Plumbing. I also acknowledge the following suppliers, who offered their services at reduced cost and provided some work at no cost.

I thank the men's shed for its generous donations, and Max Dessmann from Rondo Building Services Pty Ltd, who graciously supplied all the top hats for lining the shed at no cost. Thanks also to Aaron Oliveri from Roladuct Spiral Tubing Group, who assisted with the cost of ducting within the shed. I thank Bunnings Warehouse at Minchinbury and Blacktown and their activities officers, Narrele Hunt and Kylie Hazeltine, who provided goods for the shed, as well as the financial support to allow the shed volunteers to host the famous Bunnings sausage sizzles on a regular basis on weekends to continue to raise the funds they needed. Congratulations to all at the St Clair and District Men's Shed and to the organisations and businesses that contributed to this mammoth project. It has taken many years of hard work, toil and focus to get to the place we are at now. The shed will be officially opened next week.

I trust that the completion of the project will see many more men join the shed and benefit from the friendship and community found there. Infrastructure such as the men's shed is simply an avenue to achieve

community cohesion and support for members within our community. On that note, I highlight that at my electorate office I met a local elderly resident who was experiencing significant mental and physical health issues and challenges. I encouraged him to go to the St Clair and District Men's Shed, gave him the contact details, and asked the president and secretary to call him, which they did. Last Wednesday he turned up for the first time. He said that he loved his time there and will be back again. Congratulations to everyone at the St Clair and District Men's Shed for making this a reality.

LOWER DARLING RIVER

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:16): Water is life. No-one knows that better than communities in far west New South Wales, especially those along the Lower Darling, including Menindee Lakes. The Liberal-Nationals Government has deprived those communities of not just water but also life as it has also allowed floodplain harvesting and excessive water extraction from rivers in the northern end of the Murray-Darling Basin. There has never been a starker reminder of the mismanagement of the water system than a million dead fish, some decades old, floating to the surface. The fish kills left an indelible mark on many communities around New South Wales, including mine, and I received countless calls and emails expressing horror at the failure to protect the river system, the lakes and the wildlife they support.

Two weeks ago I had the great privilege to visit Menindee with my good friend the Hon. Rose Jackson. We met with community leaders, which is something that sadly even the New South Wales environment Minister—never normally one to miss a photo op—still has not done. We met with farmers, including Terry Smith; local residents in town like Graham McCrabb; the larger-than-life owner of Tolarno Station, Mr Rob McBride; and Indigenous Elders Cheryl and Barb. Their message was clear: They wanted people to understand the devastation the Government's mismanagement has wrought on the local community, the social and cultural heritage of the lakes and, of course, on the environment. For generations, the water that flowed through the Murray-Darling Basin rivers has sustained 30,000 wetlands. It is home to 166 species of birds and native fish and to 95 threatened species of animals and plants.

The importance of the Lower Darling cannot be overstated, given the integral role that the ephemeral lakes play as key bird and fish breeding grounds. Some birds travel from as far as Siberia to the Menindee Lakes system. What once used to be full to the brim with "yellowbelly" golden perch, which birds thrived on, is now arid dirt. Of course, it is not just the local ecology that depends on the Murray-Darling Basin; so do more than three million Australians who rely on the rivers for drinking water, including more than 40 Aboriginal Nations. Every single year, the Murray-Darling Basin produces \$22 billion worth of food and fibre. Tourism alone contributes \$7.5 billion to the economy, generating thousands of jobs, including 10,000 in the recreational fishing industry alone. Each of those dollars spent is for the most part going into communities that are struggling.

We drove past acres of what was once prime grape crop, abandoned and left to wither on the vine because farmers no longer have access to the water they need. These communities of the Lower Darling are not asking for much. They are just asking for a fair go from a Liberal-Nationals Government, which has abandoned communities, economies and the environment just to prop up its mates. To understand the importance of the river system to the custodians of this land, you need look no further than the name "Barkandji," which comes from the name "Barka", meaning "people of the river". When we visited, it was Barkandji leaders Cheryl and Barb who had the most heart-wrenching stories to tell of the impact of water mismanagement. I will never forget standing on the banks of the river with them, next to trees that were hundreds of years old, still bearing the scars of ancient Indigenous canoe carving. Tragically, a once great river, a cultural lifeline, is being destroyed before those Elders' eyes. There is an undeniable link between the shamefully poor social and health outcomes of the Indigenous people of the region and the desecration of this river. While The Nationals like to blame the drought and shirk responsibility for the impact of water mismanagement, it could not be further from the truth. A report into the Lower Darling fish kills by the Australian Academy of Science in 2019 states:

The conditions leading to this event are an interaction between a severe (but not unprecedented) drought and, more significantly, excess upstream diversion of water for irrigation. Prior releases of water from Menindee Lakes contributed to lack of local reserves.

Starving the river of water—acts sanctioned by this Government—led to mass fish kills in the Lower Darling. Despite that clear finding, two years on nothing has changed. There have been no wholesale changes to management of the river and no reform initiated by the Government to help protect it into the future. Once again, this region has been forgotten by this Government. That is the reality of living in communities in the Lower Darling, who are deprived of water, deprived of local democracy and, as we saw in the case of the recent fish kills, deprived of life. We must acknowledge the failure and make wholesale change now to stop this absolute devastation from continuing.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:31): I have spoken in the House about social housing a number of times but each and every day my office is dealing with constituents in absolute desperation. They talk of poor maintenance, being forced to live in mould- or termite-infested properties, fences falling down and beyond repair, or the anxious 10 year-plus wait for a social housing property to become vacant. Even more alarmingly, there is not even any temporary accommodation available anywhere between Branxton in the Upper Hunter and Newcastle. I am hearing about those issues on a daily basis in my electorate office in Maitland. Telling someone that there is not even temporary accommodation is simply unacceptable.

How can there be no accommodation available that is not in a share boarding house in an area as big as the Hunter? Where does the Government expect those people to go? I know the Minister is very passionate about making a difference in his portfolio. Last week on the ABC in Newcastle he said, "If you are homeless right now you can call Linked2Home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year and they will find accommodation for you. And you will be supported until you get a permanent home." I am sorry, Minister, but this is certainly not the feedback that I am receiving from my constituents. I have raised this issue on a number of occasions with the Minister and his office. I am pleased to say that Minister Ward and his staff will always accept my call but he does not appear to have the power to address the simple lack of housing stock. The other Minister responsible for the supply of housing, Minister Pavey, is missing in action.

Recent data from Hume Community Housing has shown an increase of 24 per cent in the need for temporary accommodation. The number of homeless people who are sleeping rough in Maitland is just staggering. The increase in numbers is just appalling. I am concerned that the number of people coming to my office who cannot find anywhere safe to sleep at night continues to rise, and that the temporary solutions they may be offered are in complete breach of any standard of First World care for their physical and mental health. That is just a disgrace. Some of those people have a drug or alcohol dependency, complex trauma or significant, diagnosed mental health illness that they do not take medication for because they are afraid of being attacked and assaulted while they sleep rough on the streets.

I have heard shocking stories from tenants who have turned up for inspections. This problem is also impacting longer term rentals. I have heard of 100 potential tenants in Maitland being asked to nominate on their rental applications how much extra rent they could pay and therefore determining their success in getting the tenancy. Since COVID many people have been working from home. Some of them have moved from Sydney to our already booming regions, contributing to the short supply of private rentals and public housing. Due to 10 years of this Government's neglect, a number of social housing properties in the Maitland electorate require extensive capital works to bring them back up to standard. The problem is that all this is happening at a time when we have no spare accommodation. It is the result of the Liberal-Nationals showing a complete lack of foresight during the 10 years they have been in charge of housing the most vulnerable people in our community. At every point, they have failed to act and plan.

Only last week we heard of a Port Stephens family—an ordinary, middle-class family—that experienced a job loss through ill health. They sold their house and started renting. The landlord says, "I need to put the price up. Someone else can pay me more money because there is a rental crisis." And what do you know—they are out on the street. Under this Government a person can own their home and within less than 12 months be out on the street with nowhere to live because the Government refuses to plan for a homelessness issue that is starting to pervade every aspect of our community. While people have a lot of sympathy for those ordinary families, the people who are most at risk—the vulnerable, the domestic violence victims and survivors, the people with mental health conditions, the people who have never had a break—are left homeless and alone by this Government. It is shameful.

*Community Recognition Statements***MARGARET THORNE**

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:36): I commend and thank Grose Wold local Mrs Margaret Thorne for her contribution to the Richmond Literary Institute and School of Arts as a volunteer and member for 43 years, including 39 years as president. Over the years Margaret played an important role in many improvements to the institute and school, including renovating the Archerfield Room, rebuilding the Murray Wing, installing air-conditioning in the auditorium, padding the chairs and carpeting the hallway and surrounding rooms. On Margaret's recent retirement she became a patron and a life member in recognition of her achievements for the community and the organisation. Margaret is working on a historical book about the Richmond Literary Institute and School of Arts. I look forward to reading it and having Margaret's knowledge and historical record available to the public. I wish Margaret all the very best. I also wish Sean Duff the best of luck in his role as interim president until the annual general meeting in August when the board will elect a new president.

KELLY HANSEN

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:37): I acknowledge the 30 years of service and dedication that Ms Kelly Hansen has provided women's crisis and homelessness services in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region. Ms Hansen currently serves as the chief executive officer of Nova for Women and Children, which was established in 2008 when Eva's Project and Lower Hunter Women's Housing amalgamated. In 2014 Eastlakes Women's and Children's Refuge joined the organisation. Nova for Women and Children supports women who are at risk of homelessness to remain safely in their homes. The service also assists women who are homeless or experiencing a housing crisis, providing them with support to maintain safe accommodation. Recently I met with Ms Hansen to discuss the housing and homelessness crisis impacting our community. I can speak firsthand of her passionate advocacy for women facing homelessness. I congratulate Ms Hansen on her 30 years of service and thank her for the fantastic work she does in assisting women and children facing homelessness.

BINYA PUBLIC SCHOOL SWIMMING TEAM

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:38): I congratulate four students from Binya Public School for winning the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association [PSSA] State swimming championships. Students Charles Kite, Tom Curran, Ella Rowney and Max Conlan competed in the Earl Magee relay team. The team has been training extremely hard in the lead-up to the State championships. That showed when the students won their event with a time of two minutes and 30 seconds. The team not only won the New South Wales PSSA Swimming Championships but they also broke a 17-year-old record. The old record of two minutes and 32 seconds, held by Grong Grong Public School, had stood since 2004. It is amazing to see students from small regional country towns compete and take out State championships. I congratulate Charles, Tom, Ella and Max once again on their outstanding achievement. I cannot wait to see where their swimming dreams take them in the future.

CENTRAL COAST MARLINS LITTLE LEAGUE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:39): I congratulate the Central Coast Marlins Little League baseball team on qualifying for the Australian championships. I am pleased to announce that the New South Wales Government has provided the Marlins Little League team with \$5,000 to assist their journey to the nationals. The funding will go towards travel, uniform and fees for the tournament, which will take place from 9 to 14 June in Lismore. The team qualified after winning Baseball NSW's 2021 Little League NSW State Championships in April. I can only imagine the ongoing hard work and dedication to training required to qualify for the national championships. It is only the third time since the inception of the tournament that a team from the Central Coast Baseball Association has qualified for the nationals. The 12 players and the rest of the team, including coach Shaun Smith and team manager Kellie Smith, should be incredibly proud. I wish the Marlins Little League team the best of luck.

ARTSPACE POP-UP GALLERY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:40): I acknowledge and congratulate Ms Tammy Briggs, Ms Cheryl Bruce and Ms Jess Sylvester on their launch of the Artspace pop-up gallery at The Entrance. The Artspace pop-up gallery is part of a wider Creative Community Program initiative that seeks to utilise vacant premises at The Entrance to deliver cultural exhibitions, workshops, demonstrations and community events. The launch of the program at The Entrance was purposefully designed to bring colour and confidence back into the community in the wake of COVID-19 in response to a flood of recent shop closures. I commend the trio for their community-minded efforts to encourage creativity and originality, and to enliven The Entrance with the launch of this project. I acknowledge Central Coast Council for making available council premises at concessional rates to enable the project to commence. It has been a great success. The gallery contains many exhibitions of local art. Tammy and her team are conducting a bunch of art classes for the community. I commend them for their work.

AMELIA BRYANT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:41): Recently I had a lovely time at the Wellington Show. It is certainly one of the highlights on the town's calendar and attracts a lot of interest across the broader community. It was an honour to be there to see Amelia Bryant crowned as the 2021 Wellington Showgirl. Amelia works as a registered nurse in Sydney. She is also studying a postgraduate degree in neonatal intensive care and hopes to return to our region soon. She entered the showgirl competition with the hope of being an ambassador not only for Wellington but also for rural New South Wales. Shows are an incredibly important part of regional towns and cities. Showgirl involvement is also a great opportunity. I have known Amelia for many years. She has grown into an articulate and community-minded young woman, who will be a wonderful representative for our area. I wish Amelia all the best.

TRIBUTE TO AYAZ YOUNUS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:42): I pay tribute to a young man from my electorate who tragically lost his life at only 25 years of age in the recent New South Wales floods. Ayaz Younus was a kind and caring man. He enjoyed sport and travel and was passionate about Australia. While travelling to work on the first day of his new job he became trapped in floodwaters at Glenorie. Ayaz was an international student studying engineering in Sydney. He became an active member of our local Ahmadiyyan Muslim community. He had even signed up to assist with the local flood recovery efforts in north-west Sydney. On 5 May Ayaz was farewelled at the Baitul Huda Mosque in Marsden Park. Our local community has lost a hardworking young man. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends, in Australia and in Pakistan, who are coming to terms with the loss of a kind and caring son, brother and friend. Rest in peace, Ayaz.

HAWKESBURY CAMERA CLUB

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:43): I commend and thank the Hawkesbury Camera Club for donating pictures to the Hawkesbury District Health Service children's ward and after-hours clinic. The club has been brightening up the walls at the hospital for 13 years. Students from Comleroy Road Public School and Windsor Public School selected 25 photos that they believed would brighten the day for children at the hospital. The Hawkesbury Camera Club is a not-for-profit organisation. Its volunteers give their time and effort to put a smile on the faces of sick children. Last year's photographs were donated to the hospital and sold at the gift shop. The money that was raised went towards the children's ward. I thank and commend the hospital and others who were involved or who provided support for that initiative.

GARRY SIMS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:44): Garry Sims runs the Walk 'n' Talk for Life community group in the upper Blue Mountains village of Blackheath. The group meets regularly to walk and talk about what is happening in their lives. Garry is helping people to make connections in the Blue Mountains so that they feel less isolated and lonely, and to improve their mental health. His aim is to prevent suicide. Garry, a police officer and R U OK? community ambassador, decided to become involved in the Walk 'n' Talk for Life community group after growing concerns at the suicide rate in Australia. The walk and talk group welcomes and includes anyone who wants to join. When the group could not get together at the height of the coronavirus pandemic last year, Garry turned to technology and encouraged members to connect each week over Zoom. Mental health is a significant issue in our society. I applaud Garry and those who walk with him for their commitment to improving mental health in our Blue Mountains community.

MIRANDA MAGPIES FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:45): I acknowledge the wonderful Miranda Magpies Football Club, which recently celebrated Female Football Week. Officially established in 1967, the Magpies has been a sporting hub in the electorate of Miranda for decades. An important focus for the club is valuing women in football. On 8 May 2021 I was invited to celebrate the club's Women in Football round in recognition of the wonderful female players who contribute meaningfully to the sport through their involvement. The club is home to over 30 female teams and recently it surpassed 1,000 players for the first time. Those weekend events would not have been possible without the club's outstanding volunteers. They include president Gary O'Riordan, junior vice-president Bob Rivett, junior girls coordinator Rebecca Edgell and coaching coordinator Michael Whawell. I also applaud executive committee members Jo Milburn, Tracey Lentell, Craig Smith, Darren Smith, Luke Richardson and Gerard Burgess. I commend the wonderful Miranda Magpies Football Club and wish them well for the season.

THE LOST DIGGERS OF FROMELLES

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:46): I congratulate the students of St Clare's College on the recent premiere of their documentary entitled *The Lost Diggers of Fromelles*, which is based on video profiles that year 12 students first created in their year 9 history class. The dedicated group of students collaborated with author and historian Patrick Lindsay to tell the story of the Battle of Fromelles through the eyes of women. The Battle of Fromelles was the start of Australia's involvement in the Western Front, in which occurred the greatest single loss of life in a 24-hour period in Australian military history. The students, ably led by their history teacher, Mr Michel Burden, brought to life the untold stories of pain and suffering felt by the women and children who were left behind. The documentary rightfully received rapturous applause and glowing reviews. I congratulate Kate, Immi, Lily, Emily, Lily, Claudia, Hannah, Baylee, Elena, Ayla and Emma. Well done!

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:47): On 7 April our Jewish community commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day, which reflects on the devastation of the Second World War and the Holocaust. I joined with local seniors, including several Holocaust survivors, at the COA Kygier Centre in Woollahra for a special candlelit memorial service. I thank CEO Rachel Tanny, president Frank Marks, vice-president George Freund and life president Zelda Feigen. In the evening I attended a Yom HaShoah event, which was hosted by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies at Moriah College. The keynote speaker was Alex Ryvchin and the event was attended by the president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Lesli Berger, and his wife, Kirsty; the CEO of United Israel Appeal, Yair Miller, OAM; the CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum, Norman Seligman; the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Jillian Segal, AO; and Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin from Our Big Kitchen. That wonderful occasion was, in fact, the last commemorative event attended by Vic Alhadeff in his role as CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. It was my pleasure to attend the event and I wish Vic well.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:48): "Honour the warrior, not the war." With those words former Wollongong RSL president Peter Poulton ended the last of a number of recent Anzac Day ceremonies in Wollongong. This year a number of the traditional commemoration services and events returned to normal following the COVID restrictions of 2020. I thank and acknowledge the Illawarra Vietnam Veterans Association on hosting the annual Anzac Day Eve event, which provided a moving start to the events that followed on Anzac Day. A small dawn service was held at the Wollongong RSL Sub-Branch. Later that day hundreds of people participated in and thousands more attended the Wollongong Anzac Day march. The Vietnamese community hosted a commemoration of the Vietnam War, recognising the strong bonds that were developed between the South Vietnamese community and Australia during that conflict. I attended another event at Figtree Sports, where an assembled crowd heard from legend of the Wollongong veterans community Peter Poulton, who conveyed the sentiment behind Anzac Day and once again proved why he has earned the respect and deep admiration of veterans, members of the public and elected representatives over his many years of advocacy for veterans.

OATLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:49): Nothing moves the community of St George quite like our local Anzac services, which acknowledge the humility and patriotism shown by Australian men and women at war. I recognise the Oatley RSL Sub-Branch, which this year hosted an outstanding ceremony at the Oatley Memorial Gardens. It was my privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of both the New South Wales Government and the local community in honour of the sacrifices made by Australian service men and women. I recognise the president of the Oatley RSL Sub-Branch, Mark Howell, as well as secretary John Grimes and the entire team for continuing to share the Anzac spirit throughout our community. While standing at the Anzac service in the Oatley Memorial Gardens, I was reminded of what the Anzac legacy means to me: courage, bravery and determination. Those are just some of the personal qualities that were enshrined by our Anzac men and women. The Oatley RSL Sub-Branch has ensured that those characteristics transcend time through the hearts of local men, women and children. We must never forget the selfless sacrifices made in service to the nation in the past, present and future.

BOTANY RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:50): Congratulations are in order for Bayside Council, which this year organised an exceptional Anzac Day dawn service at Booralee Park. It was one of the most outstanding and dignified dawn services that I have had the honour to attend in my many decades in public office. Cold weather did not deter the thousands of people who came together to pay tribute to the men and women who have served our nation in times of war and peace, and to honour those who have given their good health or their lives in defence of freedom and democracy for future generations. Coordinating such a large public event is a logistical challenge at the best of times, and the coronavirus only exacerbated things, but Bayside Council handled the event with aplomb. I pay credit to the council and its staff, who should be very proud. Lest we forget.

GEOFF LITCHFIELD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:51): I acknowledge former navy fighter pilot Geoff Litchfield, who has announced his retirement from flying after 72 years and more than 18,000 hours behind the stick. Geoff is a member of the Hastings District Flying Club. He has flown biplanes, propeller fighter planes, navy jet fighters and passenger aircraft. During his time with the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy, beginning in 1952, Geoff made 350 day and night landings onto and 205 catapult launches from aircraft carriers, including HMAS *Melbourne*, HMAS *Sydney*, HMS *Illustrious*, HMS *Vengeance* and HMS *Bulwark*. At just 18 years of age Geoff realised that his career path would be flying planes. After his acceptance into the Royal

Australian Navy he commenced training in various locations, including Melbourne, Brisbane and Wirraway—near Wagga Wagga. Geoff recalled that his proudest moment as a pilot was when he was issued with his wings at RAAF Base Point Cook in 1953. He described that feeling of accomplishment as a "local country boy who had come good". Other achievements in Geoff's career include flying a Fairey Firefly, a Supermarine Seafire and a Hawker Sea Fury in Scotland and England, after which he returned home to join the 805 Squadron.

NATIONAL WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:52): National Walk Safely to School Day raises awareness about the benefits of walking to school. It improves kids' health, increases road safety, reduces congestion and helps the environment. This Friday marks the twenty-second National Walk Safely to School Day, which is run by the Pedestrian Council of Australia. I congratulate the thousands of kids, families and schools that will participate across New South Wales, including in my electorate of Summer Hill. The school drop-off and pick-up makes a significant contribution to congestion on our roads. The cost of congestion in Sydney is set to climb to \$15.9 billion in 2031. Only 23 per cent of kids are active enough to meet the current national physical activity guidelines. At the same time, road trauma is the number one killer of children aged under 14, and the most dangerous time to be on the roads is during the afternoon school pick-up. We must do more to give families and kids the option to walk or ride to school. The best way to do that is to make the roads around our schools safer. I congratulate everyone who participates in National Walk Safely to School Day.

NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (18:53): In 2021 the North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club had one of its most successful Australian Surf Life Saving Championship campaigns, coming in the top 15 out of the 315 surf clubs and after competing in almost 500 beach and ocean events on the Sunshine Coast. North Cronulla placed twelfth in the open event with five gold, four silver and two bronze medals; twentieth in the masters event with two gold, one silver and two bronze medals; and eleventh in the youth event with four gold and two silver medals. The 2021 Australian champions in the open competition were Maggie Mahoney, Alex Rampoldi, Lucy Flanagan, Zac Hughes, Leah Rampoldi, Emily Rampoldi, Kristine Whitford, Katlynn Cogan, Aylsha Lerond, Mark McDonald, Hayley Urquhart, Tyler Maddern, Annika Freiheit, Ariane Sharpe, Indi Bullian, Heidi Quintano, Mitch Bouzounis, Jackson Ford, Jason Brown, Tiahna Woodger, Tiarne McGrath, Jordan Fleming, Kane Butterfield, Michael DeFrancesco, Lockyer Barnes, Steven Swane and Michael Bofinger. I congratulate all of the competitors from the North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club who took part in the competition.

JOHN BARKER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:54): I acknowledge local resident John Barker from Aurrum Aged Care at Norah Head, who sends handwritten letters to my office frequently updating me on a wide range of information about the community and outer suburbs. Mr Barker is very passionate about government issues and I thank him for his input on issues in our local community. I appreciate every single letter that he has sent to my office. It is important for Mr Barker and Aurrum residents to have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Mr Barker ensures he has well researched all topics and his thoughts and suggestions are well received. I thank him for continuing to contribute to the life of our community.

BRENTON HAWKEN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:55): I congratulate Temora High School teacher Brenton Hawken, who won the Aboriginal Education Council Aboriginal Education Award at the 2021 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards. Brenton was up against a strong field of young high school achievers and he should be very proud to have won this prestigious award. He has a permanent position with the Department of Education as a food technology teacher and is also student representative council coordinator and Aboriginal education coordinator. He works closely with the deputy principal at Temora High School to make Aboriginal education a high priority at the school. This is wonderful recognition for his hard work and passion for public education. Well done Brenton.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:56): I congratulate the mayor of Maitland, Councillor Loretta Baker, and the Maitland City Council team—and, of course, all the volunteers—who made such a success of Taste Deconstructed this year. The event was cancelled last year during COVID, so they decided to have it again over three days in different locations. On the opening night 2,500 people came to the events. It was just spectacular. I went and had a great walk around, looking at all the different foods. I did not sample anything—I was trying to be good—but it was great to see them. Maitland City Council is working on getting events up for our struggling

tourism industry and local businesses. This year we will hold the Aroma Coffee and Chocolate Festival on 14 August and, for those people who love their rail, Steamfest will be back on 11 September.

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BEER SPECTACULAR

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:57): I am pleased to confirm that two local businesses, Six String Brewery and Bay Rd Brewing, will represent the Central Coast in the upcoming Great Australian Beer Spectacular showcase taking place at the Sydney Showground this month. The showcase is a great opportunity for businesses to show off their unique flare as independent breweries whilst representing the local Central Coast area. Six String Brewery will even be launching a brand-new product: Crème Brûlée Imperial stout, 8.9 per cent alcohol by volume, featuring flavours of burnt toffee, baked caramel and vanilla custard. While I have not personally tried it, I have heard it is an exceptionally good drop—and at 8.9 per cent I suspect it is. The event will include cooking demonstrations, entertainers, beer hall games and live music, and will promote many small businesses. Patrons will be able to buy a taster or full pours of the showcased products. Once again, I wish these two fantastic local brewers the best of luck.

CAMERON PARKER AND COLOUR ME WYNTER BLU

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:58): I congratulate Cameron Parker and his guinea pig, Colour Me Wynter Blu, both of Bateau Bay, on their outstanding performance at the recent Sydney Royal Easter Show. Mr Cameron Parker and Colour Me Wynter Blu collected several prestigious awards at the show. Colour Me Wynter Blu won the Best in Group Award, the Best Baby Award and the Best in Show Award. Eleven-year-old Cameron Parker took home the Junior Exhibitor Award for exhibitors under the age of 18. I congratulate Cameron and Colour Me Wynter Blu on their commendable performance—an impressive feat for this young and dynamic duo. I wish them all the best in their future showings as their career progresses.

STARS OF DUBBO DANCE FUNDRAISER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:59): It takes a lot of courage to get up on stage and dance in front of an audience, but a number of Dubbo residents did that recently—all in the name of a good cause. I give a big shout-out to Maddie Langley, Cara Grey, Jasanna Pilon, Errin Williamson, Anthea Patteson, Amy Welbourne, Danica Paice, Gabrielle Armstrong and Kevin Dickinson, who all took to the stage for the Cancer Council's Stars of Dubbo dance fundraiser. It was a great night with some great dancers, including Tracy Hanna and the AllAbilitiesDanz Group, who delighted the audience with their high-energy performance. In fact, all the dancers did an outstanding job. While Kevin certainly wowed the judges, the real winner was the Cancer Council—which raised almost \$81,000. This event was postponed last year due to the pandemic, but that did not deter the dancers or their amazing teachers who persevered to achieve a tremendous outcome. Well done to everyone involved.

EASTLAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY RAMADAN IFTAR DINNER

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:59): On 29 April I was pleased to attend Eastlakes Public School for its first ever community Ramadan iftar dinner. Over 250 students, staff and parents gathered in the Eastlakes school hall to celebrate Iftar together—the breaking of the fast. I always look forward to Ramadan, one of the holiest months of the Islamic calendar and a foundational element of Islamic practice. It is a period of intense devotion, prayer and recitation of the Koran, but it is also a festive occasion where families and friends come together to celebrate. We live in a truly great country because I feel so warmly welcomed and included by my local Islamic community at these events. That is because Ramadan embodies the values that are shared by all Australians: family, community and charity. Eastlakes is a diverse multicultural community and this iftar was no different. I commend Eastlakes Public School on its initiative and wish my Islamic community Ramadan Mubarak.

KIRRAWEE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:00): I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Kirrawee Public School on their appointment. Kirrawee Public School is a wonderful community of bright, caring students who thrive due to their brilliant teachers and nurturing educational environment. Their motto, "Informed Citizens Building Harmonious Communities", is upheld by the outstanding educators who are focused on ensuring that the students are empowered with strong skills to take their place of change in society. The 2021 leadership team are a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Kirrawee Public School. I congratulate the student leaders—Liam Gately, Riley Harris, Alex Ethimiou, Polly Jackson, Madison Jones and Charlotte Melbourne—on their successful appointment. They 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 of Kirrawee Public School and look forward to seeing them excel.

MARRICKVILLE CRICKET CLUB

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:01): Marrickville Cricket Club recently hosted its 2020-21 season presentation at Marrickville Town Hall. The club has been ably led by its new president Arvind Sampath and has had a stellar season. This year the club fielded over 600 players, including 32 junior teams, three senior teams, and both junior and master blaster introductory programs. I am really proud that it also fielded four youth girl teams. The club fielded teams in the Canterbury Wests Association, the Sydney Sixers League and the St George competition, and took home five home premierships. I congratulate them all. The club has a wonderful volunteer culture and, apart from 60 coaches and managers who get the teams on the park, there are many parent helpers who do the hundreds of tasks over the season to keep things moving. Marrickville Cricket Club has a proud history and thanks to the tireless work of local volunteers, parents and the supporters, the club continues to nurture and celebrate future cricket stars, including many young girls.

ALL STARZ PERFORMING ARTS STUDIO

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:02): I recognise Belinda, Priscilla and all of the fantastic staff and students at the All Starz Performing Arts Studio in Peakhurst. Thanks to the ongoing hard work and devotion of the team, the organisation has been awarded Best Dance Studio as part of the 2020 St George Local Business Awards. That is an outstanding achievement and I was delighted to drop in to a training and performance night to congratulate each and every member of the team. I also make special note that I have never seen a bigger trophy cabinet than the one located in the foyer at the All Starz Performing Arts Studio. I am by no means surprised; it was easy to see why when I was lucky enough to watch the Glee Club and a junior dance group perform live. It was fantastic. The quality of the students and the staff, as mentors, is extraordinary. I thank Belinda and Priscilla for helping to build this outstanding organisation over a number of years. Well done everyone.

KATHERINE GARDNER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:03): I congratulate Katherine Gardner from Wyong District Girl Guides, who received the Junior BP Award. Katherine Gardner joined Wyong Junior Guides in 2016 at the age of seven and has been enthusiastically involved in guiding with Wyong District Girl Guides for the past five years. To achieve the Junior BP Award, junior guides must complete a total of 12 challenges across the six fundamental areas of guiding, which are promise and law, outdoors, patrol system, service, guiding traditions and world guiding. Katherine worked on the BP Award for the last 18 months and was presented with the Silver Endeavour Award in 2020 for completing nine challenges and reaching the halfway point of the award. Some of the challenges that Katherine completed included organising a toiletries donation drive for We Care Uniting and making koala and boomerang swaps to share at the 2018 Sydney Girl Guide Jamboree. The BP Award has helped Katherine to develop the leadership skills of helping others, communicating as part of a team and actively listening.

WORLD MS DAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:04): Each year on 30 May World MS Day takes place, bringing together the global multiple sclerosis [MS] community to share stories and raise awareness. I am delighted that Colleen Daniels, who leads a local MS group on the Central Coast, has organised a free picnic day at Mount Penang Parklands in Kariong to honour the day. MS is a central nervous system condition that interferes with nerve impulses within the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. For those who have MS or other neurological conditions, a range of local services will be present, including Central Coast Neuro Rehab, All Ability Yoga, Urban Personal Training, Limitless Wellbeing Sanctuary and Plan Tracker representatives, who will offer assistance with NDIS plan management. The picnic will aim to connect people with similar experiences, forming friendships and solidarity. MS affects over 25,000 people in Australia and there is no known cure. Awareness is imperative to community understanding of the condition, as well as attracting attention to finding a cure.

MINGARA MEDICAL CENTRE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:05): I acknowledge and congratulate Mingara Medical Centre on the organisation and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination to residents of the Glengara Retirement Village. I recently received a letter from Mr Brian Smith, a resident of the village, who praised the Mingara medical team for a well-planned operation which vaccinated 400-plus residents. Mr Smith specifically commended Dr Quinten Willemse and Mrs Kate Herron on their diligence in following up with patients after they received their vaccination. On behalf of my community, I thank the team for offering such a high standard of proficiency and care to residents of the retirement village. The display of care and support from staff throughout this period has been admirable.

*Community Recognition Notices***HEALTH SERVICES UNION MEETING**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to meet with representatives from the Health Services Union (HSU), local HSU delegates, and members of Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital staff on 21st April 2021. The health services staff at the Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital have been essential in protecting the safety and the good health of the residents in the Bankstown electorate, both during the COVID-pandemic and through more normal periods. Without their dedicated work ensuring a hygienic and well-functioning hospital, we would not be able to receive the quality of healthcare that we do. I was proud to meet with some of these workers to thank them for their amazing service and to discuss potential improvements to their working conditions. Thank you to HSU's Secretary Gerard Hayes, Campaign Manager Adam Hall, organiser Joshua Howarth and HSU delegates for their tireless efforts in championing campaigns in support of the hard-working health services staff at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital.

AL MINIA CHARITY OPEN DAY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the Al Minia Charitable Association's Open Day on 11 April 2021 at the Chester Hill Bowling Club. The Al Minia Charitable Association was established in 1978, with the organisation celebrating its 43rd Anniversary this year. Since its establishment, Al Minia has played a pivotal role in providing support and essential services for the Lebanese community in NSW. This includes organising social activities to promote cohesion within the local community, offering medical seminars and education programs for children and the elderly. The Open Day commemorated the beginning of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting and praying for Muslims. This month is an important opportunity for those practising to develop a closer and more meaningful connection to their faith, family and friends. I was honoured to be invited to the festivities and share this special occasion with the Islamic Community. I wish to congratulate the Al Minia Charitable Association President Moustapha Mahfoud, Vice President Nazih El Kheir, Secretary Ahmed Bakr, Treasurer Ahmed Dehabi, Media Director Rami Dandan, and the rest of the Executive on a successful event. I wish all those observing Ramadan in my Electorate a happy and blessed Ramadan Kareem.

WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB - AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—Wanda Surf Life Saving Club recently finished fifth overall at the 2021 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, which saw members from 315 surf clubs compete in almost 500 beach and ocean events on the Sunshine Coast. The open men's relay team (Jamee Smith, James Karagiannis, Matt Lewis and Clayton Beranek) won the beach sprint, bringing Wanda the title for the first time in its 75-year history. History was also made by Ali Najem, who became the first man to win four titles in the open men's 2km beach run. I congratulate all the competitors from Wanda Surf Club who took part in the competition and acknowledge the club's 2021 Australian Champions - Keira Vincent, Fletcher Warn, Ben Sutton, Nicholas Middleton, Riley Dixon, Noah Steiner, Nathan Jay, Chloe Gentle, Jesse Phelps, Nathan Jay and Kai Hammond.

IAN MCGAW

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Ian McGaw who was recently recognised by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW with a Certificate of Appreciation for more than 60 years of service to the Royal Easter Show. Mr McGaw has dedicated countless hours volunteering at local shows as a steward and chief steward and has also been involved with the Grafton Agricultural Show for more than 40 years. By volunteering at the Royal Easter Show, Mr McGaw has been able to share his knowledge of agriculture and rural life with members of metropolitan communities who may never get to experience living in a rural environment. It is a fabulous and selfless achievement to have volunteered your time and effort for more than 60 years and I wish Mr McGaw good health to be able to continue in a pastime that he clearly loves.

TABULAM COMMUNITY BRIDGE CELEBRATION - ART EXHIBITION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Congratulations to everyone involved with the Tabulam Public Hall Art Exhibition which was part of the Tabulam Community Bridge Celebration last Saturday. I thank Ama Cedar for her efforts organising this extraordinary exhibition which I was fortunate enough to open alongside Cr Earl Grundy. The theme of places, people, things and events in Tabulam was a wonderful way to celebrate the community of Tabulam. I congratulate Peoples' Choice Award winner Kathy Pollitt and Poppy Walker who accepted the Indigenous prize on behalf of the Walker artists. It was a great community day well attended by locals with free "Journey Back to Nature" canoe trips under the bridge, Tabulam community market stalls of a wide variety, a Kids Zone that included puppet shows, kids disco, supervised sport, jumping castle, snow cones and popcorn. Community services, bushfire recovery and community resilience service providers were also on hand to help locals in attendance. I also wish to thank John and Friends for playing live music, the Lions Club

for their sausage sizzle and the Country Women's Association for providing fresh food and drinks at the festival. I look forward to seeing the festival continue in the future.

TENTERFIELD AUTUMN FESTIVAL A ROARING SUCCESS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate Kerri Hampton and the entire organising committee on the roaring success of the inaugural Tenterfield Autumn Festival which was held over the Easter Long Weekend. After tough times through drought, bushfire and COVID border closures it was wonderful to see Tenterfield come alive, bustling with locals and tourists enjoying the Autumn festival. The four day event included markets, barefoot bowls, a family fun day at Jubilee Park, gourmet lunches and the Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday which attracted over 500 kids and was run by the Tenterfield Lions Club in association with Tenterfield High School. The festival culminated in the Lift the Country Spirit concert which was headlined by Shannon Noll, the Buckleys, Nine Year Sister and Taj Matheson. Kerri told the Tenterfield Star that whilst it was difficult to get the exact numbers of festival goers it was impossible to get a park in the street, businesses were flat out and over 2000 people came through the markets which for a town of 4000 is impressive. The festival made an incredible contribution to the local economy and spirits of Tenterfield. I hope it becomes a regular, popular event.

AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE - MOOREBANK SQUADRON

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Last month it was an honour to meet the young men and women of the Australian Air League-Moorebank Squadron and present them with a new NSW State Flag. After a much needed update the Squadron were provided with a brand new NSW State Flag and flown for the first time. I also had the honour to meet Commissioner Raymond Claude Bell OAM, whose dedication and tireless work has been instrumental in establishing the Squadron at Camden Airport. After a lovely morning tea, I was shown new aircrafts, servicing equipment and learned the hard work, dedicated training that is provided to the new and upcoming cadets. I pass on my thanks to Lachlan Hyde for organising the day.

WILLIAM COX

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I acknowledge 13-year-old William Cox in his dedication in preparing to become the youngest person to circumnavigate Australia by plane. William hopes to depart for his trip June 1, 2022. William hopes to not only break records with his circumnavigation flight, but also raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. At the age of three, William developed a passion for flying, however, he begun lessons at the age of eleven. William hopes to one day become a commercial pilot for Qantas or Emirates. Good luck William, I look forward to hearing about your adventures.

SHANE BRADFORD, AFSM

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—I would like to recognise Captain Shane Radford AFSM of Narrabri on celebrating 30 years of service with Fire and Rescue NSW. Shane officially joined the ranks of the then NSW Fire Brigade on 1 May 1991 at Narrabri Fire Station progressing through the ranks to Engine Keeper in 1998, Deputy Captain in 2001 and Captain/Station Commander in 2009. Shane has attended numerous incidents throughout the Narrabri Shire and NSW over his 30-year career. In 2015, Shane was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honour list for his commitment and distinguished service to Fire and Rescue NSW. This is the highest honour of any firefighter to be awarded within Australia and is one of the many awards received by Shane throughout his career. I congratulate Shane on reaching this significant milestone and thank him for his service to the community of Narrabri and NSW Fire and Rescue.

DEMOCRATIC KURDISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—On Saturday April 24 the Democratic Kurdish Community Centre of NSW was officially opened. The Centre is located at Kings Park near Blacktown. The opening featured traditional Kurdish music, food and dance performances. It's an impressive Centre, made even more so by the fact that it was developed with volunteer labour. That's a reflection of many things, but especially the commitment the community has to the project. Speakers on the night included Democratic Kurdish Community Centre Co-Chairs Gulfer Olan and Brusk Aeiveri and Co-Chairs of the Federation Cigdem Aslan and Ismet Tastan. This centre will be an important focus for the community in the years to come. It will also raise the profile of the Kurdish Community. That's particularly important in a context where the Kurdish role in opposing ISIS has not received the acknowledgment in Australia that it merits.

PROFESSOR JOSH DAVIS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Hunter is very fortunate to be home to many outstanding health clinicians and researchers. One such person is Professor Josh Davis. Josh is a John Hunter Hospital Immunology and Infectious Diseases Staff Specialist, who divides his time between his work as a senior clinician and developing leadership roles in the Australian Infectious Diseases Community. At the virtual Australasian

Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID) annual scientific meeting in March, Josh was awarded the 2021 Frank Fenner Award for Advanced Research in Infectious Diseases. Named after Professor Frank Fenner, an Australian pioneer of viral research, the Frank Fenner Award is the peak research award from ASID. It is awarded annually on the basis of a portfolio of original research in infectious diseases. Josh is one of Australia's leading clinical trialists in the field of clinical infectious diseases, undertaking and publishing research of international quality that address key questions in infectious diseases. This included the CAMERA2 trial into treatments into combination antibiotics for Staphylococcus aureus (golden staph) bloodstream infection, published in JAMA, an international peer-reviewed general medical journal. Congratulations Josh and thank you for the work you do to improve the outcomes for patients.

UNDER 15 HOCKEY STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Newcastle has a proud tradition of producing hockey champions and that continued with the recent National Under 15s National Hockey Championships held at Bathurst. As the sporting capital of NSW, Newcastle sent along a swag of players as part of the four NSW teams. After a tough week of matches against the other States, both the New South Wales State teams were crowned 2021 Australian Under 15 Boys and Girls Hockey Champions. The NSW Girls team defeated Western Australia in the grand final 5 goals to 3 after some adversity during the week, injuries and some incredibly tough games. Our NSW Boys overcame Tasmania in the grand final 4 goals to 2, with superstar goalkeeper Ashley Dimmock starring in the second half of the match. Congratulations to local hockey superstars, Ashley Dimmock, Kane Nutley from the NSW Boys team and Matilda Woolnough and Hannah Baxter from the NSW Girls team who all returned with gold medals. We also had four amazing players in the Girls and Boys Blues teams that finished ninth and seventh respectively. A great effort. Congratulations to Luke Hill, Gus Anson Smith, Sienna Harvey and Maliah Abel on a great performance.

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 stand-out 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 5 medals, 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.

FORSTER SLSC

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Forster Surf Life Saving Club for the incredible service they offer our community not only by saving lives on our beaches but by helping guide our region through disasters such as fires and floods. At the clubs recent awards evening Brayden Lee, Amanda Williams and President John Quinn were all recognised for completing the most patrol hours in the 2020-21 season. The dedicated Cathy Quinn was also recognised for receiving an award for an amazing 20 years patrol service. I also want to commend John Thorn who received the president's award for his outstanding service to the club. Gordon Godwin Club person of the year was jointly awarded to the beyond worthy Amanda Williams and Grant Fleming. I again congratulate the award winners and commend all other club members and volunteers for their tireless work to keep our community safe.

FAIRFIELD MUSEUM & GALLERY - MILITARY HISTORY EXHIBITION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I was honoured to attend the launch of the exhibition "An Afternoon of Military History" at the Fairfield City Museum & Gallery. This was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the work of Anzac Memorial researcher Dr Catie Gilchrist in her exploration of Fairfield's military past. This exhibition of approximately one hundred items includes exclusive artefacts from Fairfield citizens. These included gasmasks, knapsacks, helmets and historical records. Five hundred citizens from Smithfield, Fairfield and the Canley Vale districts enlisted to serve in World War I. These objects tell the human story behind their time of service. I commend Fairfield Museum & Gallery for giving us a wonderful local insight into this time in Australian history.

ICCA WESTERN SYDNEY CULTURAL ACADEMY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to offer my congratulations to the NSW Indo China Chinese Association Inc. (NSW ICCA Inc.) on the opening of the Western Sydney Branch of the new cultural academy. The NSW ICCA Inc. has been a local leader in the preservation of Chinese culture and tradition. The association strives to promote artistic talents, improve the quality of arts, encourage activity skills and nurture the cultural wellbeing of the community. In this new initiative the NSW ICCA has joined with The Australian Oriental Dance Group and The International Art Academy to establish the Western Sydney District Branch. This exciting new branch will teach the next generation of participants Eastern and Western Folk dance, Latin dance, vocal and instrumental music. I commend the NSW ICCA committee and the new Western Sydney District Branch on this collaboration and congratulate them on the occasion of the official opening.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge International Nurses Day, on Wednesday 12 May 2021. International Nurses Day celebrates the important work nurses do and role they play within the healthcare system. This year's theme focuses on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the health system and the nursing profession, and how it has shaped the future of vision of healthcare. Over the past year, our nurses and frontline health workers have helped get our state through the pandemic. We also see nurses playing an important role in the vaccine rollout. We rely on our nurses to look after family and friends in hospital when they are in need and turn to them for comfort in these times. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all nurses for the important work they do in helping keep our community safe and looking after those in need.

YOUTH ART CONNECTION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the work of Swansea Community Cottage and ARTea's Gallery & Garden in presenting Youth Art Connection exhibition. I recently dropped by the Youth Art Connection exhibition. The event is always a great showcase for local artists with the community picking a People's Choice award. The exhibition is held as part of youth week and was held from 21 April until 1 May 2021. I would like to also thank Lake Macquarie City Council for their support for this event. Congratulations to Max Walsh for his painting 'Floral Overload', which won the People's Choice Award. Thank you to Swansea Community Cottage for partnering with ARTea's Gallery & Garden, to present the event. The Cottage does a fantastic job in supporting our local community.

DYLAN PETERS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge Dylan Peters who is preparing to run 100kms before 31st of May in order to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research. Dylan's mother, Miranda, was diagnosed with MS seventeen years ago when she was just 30 years of age. This is a cause very close to Dylan's heart and by doing this run he hopes to not only raise funds to support research but to raise awareness for this cruel disease. I commend Dylan's community spirit and wish him all the very best with his run. You should be proud of the support you have given to your mum and family by taking on this great challenge.

CAITLIN NEUCOM - YEAR 10 COOLAMON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Caitlin Neucom who was recently recognised by the Deputy Prime Minister as a winner of the 11th Annual Anzac Writing Competition. Caitlin displayed great creative writing skills within the crafting of her Anzac Day tribute which featured in this month's school newsletter. She showed a great depth of knowledge within her writing and was able to convey the true challenges fought by our service men and women during the war. I commend Caitlin on this courageous piece of writing and congratulate her on this achievement. You should be very proud of yourself!

GINA FIELD AND BELINDA LEONARD

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—It is pleasing to note that this year's nominees for Western Sydney University's "Women of the West Awards" included Penrith locals, Gina Field of Nepean Regional Security and Belinda Leonard of Noro Music Therapy. These annual awards celebrate and recognise the outstanding contributions, leadership and diversity of women who work and live in Greater Western Sydney. Belinda is an amazing woman who is a strong advocate for improving health and wellbeing. She is CEO of Noro Music Therapy a local not for profit organisation that assists over 1300 people every week, utilising music therapy as a means of improving physical and mental health. Being nominated for this award is indicative of how highly respected she is. Gina, founder of Nepean Regional Security (NRS) is well known across our community for her hard work and dedication. Gina is also passionate in supporting female participation across diverse industries including her own industry of security with 11 females employed at

NRS. Congratulations Gina on receiving the Woman of The West (Business) Highly Commended recognition. Both of these women are to be applauded for their ongoing contributions to our community.

BINYA PUBLIC SCHOOL 4 X 50M RELAY TEAM

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to congratulate the Binya Public School 4x50m relay team of Max Conlan, Ella Rowney, Tom Curran and Charles Kite for their win at the NSW PSSA Swimming Championship, breaking a 17-year-old record. Swimming over 2km every day for five weeks, each team member's hard-work and dedication helped ensure their victory in the Earl McGee Small Schools relay event, 12 seconds ahead of their nearest competitor. I commend these young athletes for their willingness to dedicate time, effort and passion to represent our region in swimming, and congratulate them for their incredible achievement.

NEPEAN NEWS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate Kerrie Davies and the team at the Nepean News on reaching the 300th edition of their fantastic and informative local newspaper. Kerrie has built and nurtured the Nepean News brand since 2009 when the first edition went to print. At the time, Kerrie was a single mum with three children and had recently lost her job when the newspaper she worked for went out of business. With the love and support of her friends and family along with investment from local business owners, Kerrie was able to begin her own newspaper that would bring local news to the people of St Clair and other surrounding suburbs. The Nepean News continues to focus on the greatness of local community by highlighting the sporting and academic achievements of local kids, raising awareness of families in need, calls for the community to support local charities, recognising award winners and bringing the latest on big news stories. Congratulations Kerrie on this outstanding achievement! It has been a pleasure to know you and work with you for ten years. I look forward to seeing you celebrate the many milestones ahead. Well done!

KAREN LEE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge Glenmore Park resident, Karen Lee for her success in the art industry. Karen is a talented local Indigenous artist who creates pieces inspired by the natural landscapes of Australia with a contemporary use of Aboriginal cultures and traditional symbols to tell stories. Karen is passionate about sharing her culture through her passion for art. Karen's art career began four years ago when she completed her double arts degree. Prior to this she had studied visual arts, designed and technology as well as interior design and had also worked as a vocal teacher for three years. It wasn't until Karen was in her mid-thirties that she pursued her passion for art and began her degree. Karen now has artworks that are displayed at exhibitions around the state and many of her designs are even sold to collectors and the general public. Congratulations Karen on your incredible achievements in the art industry in only four years. I wish you all the best for the future of your beautiful art and look forward to hearing of your ongoing success.

ROYALLA VENTURA

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the Royalla shorthorn stud at Yeoval, on their 34-month-old shorthorn bull, Royalla Ventura, being awarded the Supreme Champion male at Beef Australia 2021, Rockhampton, Queensland. The Job family have been stud breeding cattle for half a century, and the shorthorn bloodline they have developed over five decades has been recognised and acknowledged by experts and peers alike. This award is the pinnacle of beef cattle breeding in Australia. This was only the second time in the history of this event that a shorthorn has been awarded Supreme Champion male. Congratulations to the Job family and the Royalla shorthorn stud on this prestigious award, realising the culmination of 50 plus years of strategic breeding and genetic development to produce Australia's best beef bull. Congratulations receiving this award, and for the fifty years of hard work and determination which led to this momentous occasion.

SALLY GAVIN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Sally Gavin. Hailing from Cumnock, Sally was one of eight finalists for The Royal Agricultural Society Rural Achiever Award for 2021. The Rural Agricultural Society Rural Achiever Award is a state-wide leadership program which is run by the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales, to recognise future young leaders who are working hard to make significant contributions to their local community and to rural Australia. The award aims to acknowledge the achievements of young people aged 20 to 29 years in primary industry and rural communities. Sally interests in the agricultural sector have been motivating, and she has completed a Bachelor of Animal Science, worked in agricultural sales, livestock handling of cattle and horses, working at saleyards and most recently in the field of livestock nutrition. Sally is an Australian Stock Horse breeder. Competitor, instructor and judge. Sally is a credit to her family, and to the community of Cumnock, whom she represented in this state awards program. Congratulations on your achievements, Sally.

BUNDEENA DRUMMING LADIES

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I was pleased to recently join a small group of ladies at Bonnie Vale for morning tea and to partake in their drumming session. The group comprising of 8-9 mature aged women meet once a week at various locations in Bundeena. It's a chance for them to get together and drum purely for health and social activity. It was initially established with a key focus on 'Women's Wellness,' following a number of women experiencing health and personal issues. The group contacted my office when they were no longer able to access Bundeena House due to COVID-19 restrictions. They identified Bonnie Vale as an appropriate alternative site, and I was pleased to assist them with working with National Parks and Wildlife Services. It was fantastic to meet the ladies and witness first-hand the positive impacts that the unification of the small congregation has on each of the members. I commend them for sparking this excellent community initiative.

CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club recently finished equal twelfth overall at the 2021 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, which saw members from 315 surf clubs compete in almost 500 beach and ocean events at the Sunshine Coast. In the opens, the club won six gold medals, two silver and two bronze. The Tony Purcell Memorial Award, which recognises the member or members who have made the greatest contribution to the club's Australian Championships effort, was presented to Ace Haslam. Ace won gold in the U17 beach sprint, U17 beach relay and U19 mixed beach relay and bronze in the U17 beach flags. I congratulate all the competitors from Cronulla SLSC who took part in the competition and acknowledge the club's other 2021 Australian Champions – Max Geronimo, Joshua Tattam, Sasha Popovic, Isabellah Walker, Lauren Hocking, Jack Robertson and Nathan Breen.

RAFIKI MWEMA

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the remarkable work of Lennox Head woman Sarah Rosborg, co-founder of Rafiki Mwema, a charity based in Ballina that provides support, therapeutic parenting and a safe haven for girls and young women in Kenya who have been sexually abused. Rafiki Mwema (meaning 'Loyal Friend') provides housing and education for girls and boys who have survived horrific abuse living on the streets. Rafiki Mwema teaches boys to respect themselves and others and models positive behaviours towards women so that they are supported to mature as safe men, husbands and fathers. For the girls – some just infants – the trauma of sexual abuse is compounded by the stigma that follows. One of the group's great achievements is ensuring that video links are provided in courtrooms so that victims do not have to be near perpetrators. From fundraising efforts that helped keep the doors open nine years ago, to a fulltime commitment to the cause today, Sarah works tirelessly with Kenyan people and officials and with a board of Australian women and committees around the world to transform the lives of children. Seventy children are safe today, and 80 more being fed daily through a Rafiki Mwema project.

BYRON BAY WOMEN GOLFERS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate five local golfing women who all celebrate their 90th birthdays this year. The five, stalwarts of the Byron Bay Golf Club, are Joan Martin, Jean Milgate, Maureen Parker, Bev Porter and Tweed Taylor. Jean has had an association with the club from its earliest days, when the Byron community got together to develop a course on a former dairy farm. Like all five women she sat on the board and the Ladies' Committee, represented the club at pennant winning events, worked hard to raise funds and shouldered catering duties. Maureen Parker joined in the early 80s, when the course was being upgraded from nine to 18 holes – the "back nine" being created from a sand-mining site. A Captain of the Ladies' Committee, Maureen led the way for women to join the board at a time when some male members thought the sky would fall if women played golf! Maureen still plays golf once a week. The Club responded to anti-discrimination legislation and did away with "Associates" (that is women) in 1987, making women equal members. I applaud these matriarchs for holding their own in a male-dominated world and helping bring about change.

THE FAMILY CO

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful team at The Family Co who recently rebranded from Sutherland Shire Family Services as part of an organisation expansion. The Family Co are a local charity who support families and victims of domestic violence. Since 1987, The Family Co have been a leading local provider of support services, education programs and emotional and financial aid in the Sutherland Shire. The charity reaches about 10,000 people a year through programs including caseworker and specialised support, homework clubs, playgroups, education and Indigenous and youth services. Renaming the organisation was driven by a desire to expand the reach of programs across Australia, such as the Toolbox Talks workplace training. The organisation currently run a number of initiatives such as Creatives Arts, Family Picnic Challenge, Coaching

Workshops and upcoming inaugural Charity Golf Day. I acknowledge the wonderful team behind the organisation including Board Members Ann Murphy, Ben Wood, Julie West, Adrian Rees, Belinda Fairfax and CEO Ashleigh Daines. I commend the team at The Family Co for their important work in our community.

STRONG SISTERS PROGRAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the students from Endeavour Sports High School's Strong Sister Program who painted a mural at Hazelhurst Arts Centre as part of the Wuliwulawala: Dharawal Women Sharing Stories exhibition. For over a decade, the Strong Sister Program has equipped young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with knowledge about their culture. Through this program, the girls travel to different locations to study engravings which they interpreted into murals. Burri Burri Dhan Dreaming is the latest in a series of over 20 murals found throughout the Sutherland Shire. It features two representations of whales, which were very important to the local Dharawal people. The young women also painted marine life fished by Dharawal women in the local waterways and inspired by engravings at Jibbon Beach, Darook Park, Bundeena, South West Arm, Woronora and Alford's Point. I acknowledge Matilda Delfs, Sarah Etheridge, Marley Monie, Skye Wackwitz and sisters Alecia, Reneigh and Tamara Scott who painted the mural, along with program coordinator Rick O'Brien. I commend the talented young women of the Strong Sister Program and look forward to seeing more inspired local murals.

BEN JENKINSON

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to offer my congratulations to Benjamin Jenkinson from Rathmines on winning this year's Lake Mac Sports Leader Award. The award acknowledges his outstanding contribution to sporting life in Lake Macquarie. Ben is a coach at Macquarie Shores Swim Club and is also the Principal Director of First Splashes Swim School in Toronto. Over the past 10 years he has taught the life-saving skill of swimming to tens of thousands of young people. Ben first became interested in teaching this life-long skill after being involved in swimming clubs and competitive swimming from when he was a young boy. His decision to make a career out of the sport was inspired by watching how his own coaches changed the lives of young people in so many positive ways. Ben simply wanted to give back to the community and help others. About 1500 youngsters now learn how to swim and develop their skills at First Splashes Swim Centre each term, with generations of the same families returning to the facility for coaching. I congratulate Ben on his well-deserved accolade and his great sense of community spirit.

EASTS RUGBY FOUNDATION SEASON LAUNCH

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On the 7th of April, I attended the Eastern Suburbs District Rugby Union Football Club for their 2021 Foundation Season Launch. Easts Rugby are an incredible community organisation and the oldest district rugby union club in Australia. That history and passion for rugby union translates through to their players. On the evening I caught up with their Women's Rugby Team who gave me great news about their team's success and participation rates. Team Captains also announced this season's players during the jersey presentation. It was just fantastic to see the Club members back together again after the events of last year – a testament to the good work of the Club and the support of NSW Rugby. I want to also acknowledge the appointment of Dominic Remond as the Club's CEO at the beginning of the year. He will join good company in the Club's leadership including Club President John Murray, Foundation Chairman Craig Smith and the rest of the team down to the Club captains who do the very important work. Well done and thank you for having me!

LOCAL PLAYGROUNDS AWARDED FOR SAFE AND CREATIVE PLAYSPACES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge the achievement of Sirius Street Playground in Cremorne Point as the runner-up in the Kidsafe National Playspace Design Awards. Not only was this achieved in a strongly contested division for Public Play Spaces under \$500,000, but this award is extra special as the playground was constructed for less than half of the amount and was competing against playgrounds with double the budget. The Sirius Street Playground is a custom designed playground with a subtle nautical theme that reflects the contemporary foreshore location. It provides a multi-purpose play space that is accessible to all levels of mobility and is safely secured by fencing along Milson Road. I would also like to acknowledge McMahons Point Community Preschool which received a Commended Award in Category 1A Preschool for its new playground. This playground was successfully coordinated by the Council's Community Development Team and features new timber play elements for children to enjoy. I congratulate both North Sydney Council and McMahons Point Community Preschool for being recognised for delivering safe and creative play spaces for children in my local community.

SUNSET SERIES LIVE MUSIC AT WAVERTON PARK

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to congratulate local musicians for their excellent performances at Sunset Series Live Music event at Waverton Park last weekend. The community was treated to a

great line-up of artists headlined by the local North Sydney Symphony Orchestra who performed famous pieces by Mozart, Handel and Bizet. The Orchestra also played famous movie tunes from West Side Story, The Lion King and Indiana Jones. The event was free of charge and drew in hundreds of attendees while complying with COVID safety measures. Well done to all the artists who put on a fantastic show and made the three-day event so successful. For an industry that has suffered greatly through this pandemic, it is excellent to see the return of live music and watch the growth of our Australian talent. I want to thank North Sydney Council and Mayor Jilly Gibson for organising the event and helping to bring live music back to into the local area. Thank you also to North Sydney Symphony Orchestra for showcasing their talent to the community.

ROCKDALE WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—Congratulations to Rockdale's well deserving Woman of the Year, Veronica Giles-Cook. Veronica has served our community at the former Rockdale, and now Bayside Councils. She has not only represented our local community for over twenty years through her roles at council but has also been heavily involved in local religious and charitable institutions, offering compassion and assistance to all in our community. The heartfelt love and commitment that Veronica has displayed in fulfilling her duties has made her invaluable to our community. Thank you, Veronica, for all the work you do for us, and congratulations on this recognition.

ROCKDALE ELECTORATE ANZAC SERVICES

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—ANZAC Day is a national day of remembrance; a day to pay tribute and reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who served and continue to serve our country. It is always an honour to attend ANZAC Day services throughout my electorate. I would like to thank Ramsgate RSL and Brighton-Le-Sands RSL for their continued effort and contribution in commemorating this day, it was particularly special to be able to attend their services this year after missing out due to restrictions in 2020. Thank you also to Brighton-Le-Sands Public School for inviting me to join their annual ANZAC Day assembly, which not only commemorates, but also educates our next generation. Thanks to Principal Tanya Sarofski, and Charlie and Ray from Brighton-Le-Sands RSL who also came along for the morning. Lest We Forget.

NORM AND BERYL BUTTERS TRIBUTE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Last year I had the pleasure of attending the official renaming of the Norm and Beryl Butters Community Centre in Oatley. This was in tribute to the couple who were well known across the community for their selfless devotion to others. This was a very special day, and it was great to be a part of the ceremony with the Butters family who were humble yet proud of this fine achievement. Norm and Beryl helped establish the Oatley Community Centre in 1970 and they were an integral part of it for just over 50 years, before they both sadly passed away on August 10, 2020. I have spoken here in this House before about how much Norm and Beryl have given to the people of Oatley and the St George region more broadly. They were two outstanding individuals who were part of a number of community groups including the Kogarah Historical Society, the Oatley Senior Citizens Centre and the Kogarah Residents and Ratepayers Group. I wish the Butters family and their relatives all the best as they carry out the family legacy into the future.

BASIL STEMPE - 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations Basil Stemp for your service to our nation and 50 years of membership and service with the East Maitland RSL Sub-Branch, as recognised at their ANZAC Day Service this year. Basil served in the Australian Army for 23 years, and was involved in several conflicts, including Vietnam, Korea and Japan. Basil went on to become the first Vietnam Veteran to serve as a RSL sub-Branch President in the Hunter for three years in the early 1990's. Basil was Marshall of the Cenotaph for 30 years and Pensions officer for 10 years. Basil was recognised by Maitland City Council with the City of Maitland Medal in 2009. The Consul General of South Korea conferred the Ambassador of Peace Medal on Basil and four other veterans in 2015. Basil felt so strongly that everyone should be given a chance to participate ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day commemorative services, that for decades he would organise commemorative services for groups such as Maitland Senior Citizens and Pensioners Association, Rotary, hospitals and nursing homes. The entire Maitland Community and our veterans thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your tireless work over half a century.

MAI-WEL IS 'THRIVE'ING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to the Mai-Wel Group, an innovative and local disability support provider in Maitland for the Thrive Workwear initiative they launched recently. Mai-Wel have set up a small 'shop' at their High Street address to assist job seekers who need that little bit of extra help and confidence by ensuring they attend job interviews looking their best. As always, the Maitland community's generosity has once again flourished with many donations of new and preloved work wear now stocked on their

racks. I was pleased to pop over to the shop last week to meet with Tracy Forbes with some donations, and to see the new premises. I was inspired by the dedication and care of the many volunteers and workers at Mai-wel who take immense pride and spend many hours sorting and preparing the clothes for their clients. The obvious teamwork involved in the process was heartening to see. I encourage anyone who has good quality new or used workwear to contact Mai-Wel and pay it forward by donating it to them.

ROTARY BOOK FAIR

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Wagga Wagga's bookworms are rejoicing. After being shelved because of COVID in 2020, the hugely popular Rotary Book Fair is making a comeback this weekend. While the cancellation in 2020 was a crushing blow, there is good news for visitors to the 2021 fair because they will now have two years' worth of donated books from which to select a few - or many - new treasured tomes. Since its inception, the book fair's total takings have now exceeded \$500,000. This year, an estimated 50,000 books will be on sale in Wagga Wagga's Kyeamba Smith Hall, along with CDs, DVDs, sheet music and other items. But planning an event of this scale is no easy task. Rotarians work on the event year round. I commend the dedicated members of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga, along with their partners, friends and other helpers who devote countless hours to this wonderful fundraiser. Helpers come from all over Wagga Wagga to lend a hand. Students from Mount Austin High School's Clontarf Foundation program also help out. Like many others, I am looking forward to adding a "just a few more" to my own bookshelves.

DR JIANG LI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I acknowledge an outstanding individual who has been an integral part of the local health community for a number of years, Dr Jiang Li. Dr Li is the Vice-President of the Australian Chinese Medical Society and he also practices in Hurstville. During the recent pandemic, he strived to help the Chinese community understand the messaging being conveyed by NSW Health to ensure that they maintained their health and social distancing. He also volunteers his time regularly to attend a number of important talks with our Chinese community to keep them up to date on local matters and to ensure that their voice is heard. Last year I had the honour of recognising Dr Li with an Individual Achievement Award as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. These awards honour some of the many men and women who go above and beyond every day to make our strong community even better. I once again thank Dr Li for all of his service to our community and I wish him all the best moving forward.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The team at Campbelltown Meals on Wheels really do a tremendous job supporting so many people throughout our community and indeed, the entire Macarthur region. They are driven by passion and a willingness to help out those who need it. Recently I visited Meals on Wheels Campbelltown's new headquarters at Ruse. Not surprisingly, I was once again impressed with what I witnessed. Next year Meals on Wheels Campbelltown will celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is impossible to put into words or numbers, the contribution that those involved with the organisation have made to our community over the past five decades. The organisation caters for the elderly, younger people with disabilities, and their carers to help them remain in their homes and maintain independence. They provide meals five days per week as well as a shopping service and housebound library service. If you speak to any Meals on Wheels Campbelltown's clients, I know they will echo the same sentiments that I have. In every community throughout our state there are people who need help. I am so thankful that organisations like Meals on Wheels Campbelltown are there to fill that void.

THE SOUNDS OF MACARTHUR

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I have made no secret of how highly I regard our local media outlets. Community newspapers, radio stations and television networks all play a vital role in disseminating news throughout their local areas. Whether it's good or bad news, it's still news we want or need to hear. One of those vital cogs in the community media machine in Campbelltown is The Sounds of Macarthur 100.3FM. Based out of the studios at Campbelltown RSL Club, there are long list of incredible programs that go to air every day. It is certainly a great way to start your day by listening to breakfast hosts Ray Standon from Monday to Thursday, John Mack on Fridays. Ian Donaghy on Saturdays and Martin Wright on Sunday. Then there are programs catered from those interested in: country music; Australian music; arts and entertainment; the best of the '60s and '70s; and rock n roll. There's also a number of shows that cater for our diverse community including ones for residents from Tongan, Cambodian, Laotian, Samoan, Chinese and Filipino backgrounds. Well done to all those involved at the station for providing our community with such great entertainment.

ALLEGRA PINFERI - ART EXHIBITOR

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise nine-year-old Allegra Pinferi whose Glen Innes Show results helped her to qualify for the

Sydney Royal Easter Show under 14 junior section competition this year. Her entries in the fine arts and crafts competition in Sydney won a ribbon in each of her four entries of sewing, knitting, creative item and handmade bag with a first, two seconds and a third. Glen Innes Show Society is proud to acknowledge that Allegra is the first junior exhibitor from the region to enter the highly competitive Easter Show Fine Arts which attracts up to 4500 entries. I congratulate Allegra for her successful results in both the Glen Innes Show and the Sydney Royal Easter Show 2021. I commend Allegra for her commitment to the many hours perfecting her artwork which has given her the successful results she has earned.

KAREN AND BRENDAN MUNN - MOREE SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Karen and Brendan Munn as long-time volunteers for the Moree Show. President Brendan and Secretary Karen have served the Moree Show committee since 2007 and they admit that it has become a big part of their lives. It is a family affair with their daughters contributing with the organisation and with the ring events. The Munns have ensured that the Moree Show continues as a family-oriented event and encourages community participation showing local produce. Similarly, the local sports clubs are often seen in the ring events as well as some of the finest local livestock. I congratulate Karen and Brendan for many successful Moree Shows. I commend Karen and Brendan for their commitment to the Moree community and the traditions of the autumn Moree Show.

TOONGABBIE PUBLIC SCHOOL SWIMMING REPRESENTATIVES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Today I acknowledge and congratulate the terrific swimmers of Toongabbie Public School who have represented their school and the local district with pride. Well done to Clara, Emily, Oliver, Rebecca and Saisha for part-taking in the recent Sydney West Public Schools Sports Association's swimming championships. All these great Toongabbie students were selected as members of the mighty Wentworthville-Seven Hills Zone Association. I have been told all the Toongabbie students performed outstandingly in their races with some beating their personal best times. The Junior Girls Relay Team came fifth overall whilst improving their times by 13 seconds at Zone level. A special congratulations to Rebecca who will progress to the New South Wales Public Schools Sports Association's State Championship for the 200-metre individual medley, 50 metre freestyle and 50 metre backstroke. This is an awesome achievement. Representing your school and local area is an honour and these Toongabbie students have done their community very proud. Thank you to Mr Brown and Miss McGoogan for their support of Toongabbie Public School swimmers.

WESTMEAD HOSPITAL CHARITABLE TRUST GRANTS 2020-2021

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Over the financial year there have been nine recipients of the Westmead Hospital Charitable Trust's grants. The Western Sydney Local Health District Research and Education Network receives over \$1 million with the aim of supporting clinicians to pursue parallel clinician and research career goals. The early career medical grants were awarded to Dr Ahmer Hameed, kidney transplant surgical trainee at Westmead Hospital, Dr Tania Moujaber, medical oncologist at Crown Princess Mary Cancer Centre at Westmead Hospital, and Dr Pierre Qian, cardiologist at Westmead Hospital. Allied health career development grants were awarded to Melanie Boyce, senior physiotherapist at Westmead Hospital, Nicole D'Souza, senior physiotherapist with the Osteoarthritis Chronic Care Program at Auburn and Westmead Hospitals, and Marie March, senior physiotherapist and Blacktown Hospital. Nursing and midwifery career development grants were awarded to Joby Alex, chronic and complex care nurse with WSLHD's Integrated and Community Health team, Cheryl Dickson, cardiothoracic surgery and intensive care nurse at Westmead Hospital, and Sarah Melov, Women's and Newborn Care nurse and midwife at Westmead Hospital. I thank these incredible doctors and healthcare staff for their work across the Western Sydney hospitals serving the residents of the Seven Hills Electorate.

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I congratulate the Sydney Theatre Company on the completion of their Wharf Renewal Project. Sydney Theatre Company has long been a cornerstone of Sydney's valued arts scene, and The Wharf is a treasured home for creatives and their audiences. The recent major upgrade is The Wharf's first in 33 years, during which time the company's scope has flourished and grown. After extensive consultation with artists, theatre-makers and specialist consultants, the modernisation has reinvigorated the site while preserving the unique character and showcasing the heritage features and iconic harbour views. I recently had the pleasure of visiting STC and saw firsthand how spaces for design, construction, administration, rehearsal and performance have been enhanced in workability, comfort and accessibility. I was pleased to see improvements in staff and audience safety, and environmental innovations like rainwater harvesting and 900 solar panels. The theatres now offer flexible spaces that will significantly broaden STC's capacity to create and deliver distinctive theatrical experiences locally and for the world stage. The completion of Sydney

Theatre Company's Wharf Renewal Project sees the return of a welcoming, exciting destination to Sydneysiders and visitors alike.

CULTURE AT WORK

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to recognise Culture at Work's contribution to the arts and science community. Culture at Work is an artist-led art science creative hub connecting art and science that supports artists and researchers to innovate across disciplines and in experimental projects. Culture at Work collaborates with universities, councils, art festivals, schools, institutes and regional galleries to create art science programs. It holds exhibitions and public talks by artists and scientists and provides creative workshop programs for parents and children. Culture at Work has operated from the historic Scott Street Terraces in Pyrmont for many years. This has been important to Culture at Work – a secure base and long-term engagement with the local community has allowed strategic planning and time for developmental projects. I've supported their ongoing residency and asked the minister to ensure heritage protection as well as a home for Culture at Work. I congratulate Culture at Work for their contribution to the Sydney electorate's culture, art and science sector and hope that their unique work will continue to educate and challenge our ideas, understandings and knowledge.

GROW - MENTAL WELLBEING PROGRAMS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to congratulate the organisation, GROW, for their amazing work in my community, on what is their 64th year helping those in our community to recover from mental ill-health. GROW is a not-for-profit organisation that provides free programs throughout our communities, providing peer-based support for those looking for support for their mental health. GROW was formed 64 years ago, on April the 26th, 1957, in NSW. Since 1957, GROW has expanded to provide services throughout NSW and Queensland and has even expanded to provide services in New Zealand, the USA, and Ireland, and are currently looking to start a branch in Canada. This last year has presented lots of challenges for everyone, and GROW is no exception, having to move all of their programs online. This has been a difficult hurdle to overcome for an organisation that relies so heavily on face-to-face interactions. It is great to hear that they have once again started their in-person programs as of April this year. I would like to thank GROW for the invaluable service they provide my community.

MASS RESCUE AUSTINMER BEACH

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—I would like to pay tribute and thank off duty lifesaver Adam Turner from Austinmer Surf Life Saving Club and also the local surfer (unknown) who helped a group of teens that were swept out in a rip at Austinmer beach Monday 18 January. I understand seven young people who were visiting our region were swimming in waist deep water when a succession of waves placed the swimmers in danger. The incident occurred late in the afternoon after the flags had come down. Adam Turner, off duty Live Saver sprang into action together with a local surfer and managed to bring the swimmers to shore. I would also like to thank the following other members from Austinmer SLSC who responded to the emergency and assisted with the swimmers when they were onshore. Adam Bennett, Alistair Reid, Chris Fry, Stephen Perkiss, Dave Eadie, Paul Empson, Will Kors, Adrian Kors. Peter Evert, President Surf Life Saving Illawarra & Duty Officer. Daren Weidner, Director of Lifesaving and Duty Officer Surf Life Saving Illawarra. Thank you for your commitment to our community.

NEWCASTLE SKIN CHECK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—over the summer, the Hunter Melanoma Foundation staged the "Spot Check" campaign, an initiative that aimed to provide free skin checks to the general public and the local community. Skin cancer is a major cause of illness in Australia, and in 2020 it was expected that an estimated 16,221 new cases of melanoma of the skin would be diagnosed. In 2016, the incidence rate was an astonishing 54 cases diagnosed for every 100,000 Australians. The doctors at Charlestown-based Newcastle Skin Check provided 723 a free skin check—of these, thirty-six were suspected melanomas. Eight were confirmed to be melanomas. Early intervention is key to fighting melanoma, so I want to thank the staff at Newcastle Skin Check for running this campaign. It will certainly raise awareness about the necessity of getting skin checks and for eight people at least may have made all the difference in the world. My thanks also to HMF executive officer Claudia Tolhurst and her team for organising this important and potentially life-saving campaign. I would like to remind everyone listening to be sun smart—and to get skin checks!

HUNTER BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—On Friday 7 May, the Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation hosted a Mother's Day screening of the film June Again at Event Cinemas Kotara to raise funds for their vital work. The last twelve months have involved a lot of challenges for the Foundation, which saw the number of people trying to access Foundation services double. Ellie Wells, the Mother's Day event organiser, told the Newcastle Weekly:

"Where we used to help a couple of hundred people a year, we are now up over a thousand a year, so there has been a real need for that support... we're getting more referrals than we ever have before which is a big thing." The not-for-profit transformed the Vmax cinema at Event Cinemas Kotara with market stalls, live music, a lolly buffet—and a cinema decked out entirely in pink! The work the Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation does is so important, and as Ellie said "Cancer doesn't stop for a pandemic." I want to thank Event Cinemas Kotara for hosting the event, Ellie for taking the lead in organising it, everyone who attended, and the wonderful people involved in the Foundation for the work they do.

GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Thursday 22nd April 2021, I had the pleasure spending the morning at Greystanes High School, to see their new garage for the school minibus. Built with funding from the Prospect Electorate Community Building Partnership Grant 2020. The successful application and consequent funds have been used to construct a new storage facility and a garage for their school bus. The storage facility is now used for equipment to keep the grounds and facilities of Greystanes High School in top shape. Greystanes High School is a wonderful school. The school prides itself on respect, responsibility and active learning. I am proud of the school's academic, sporting and cultural achievements. The Principal, Grant Sparke, teachers and staff at Greystanes High School are adamant to ensure a safe, healthy and pleasant environment for their students. It is wonderful to see the school's Community Building Partnership Grant funds go towards keeping the school grounds beautiful. Thank you to General Assistants, John Waddington and Kevin Stawpert, in taking pride in your school grounds. I look forward to further working with and supporting you in the future.

MULTICULTURAL LEGAL SERVICE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 13th April, I met with the new Multicultural Legal Service Team at the Western Sydney Community Legal Centre. Western Sydney Community Legal Centre works to increase access to justice and targets communities with the greatest legal need. Almost one-third of the Centre's catchment hosts people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is why as part of Harmony Week 2021, Western Sydney Community Legal Centre officially launched its Multicultural Legal Service, exclusively targeting multicultural clients in Western Sydney.

I was pleased to hear that in its first two months of operation Multicultural Legal Service has already commenced 6 new face-to face outreach programs and provided education seminars in conjunction with Blacktown Library. We have a wonderfully diverse community in Western Sydney, and it is crucial that despite linguistic or cultural backgrounds, we provide everyone, despite their background, the equal opportunity to legal aid. I would like to thank Louise Coady, CEO, WSCLC, for increasing access to justice for multicultural communities. I would also like to mention Tim Leach, Executive Director, Community Legal Centres NSW, Lovemore N'Dou, Principal Solicitor, Lovemore Lawyers, and Faydi Saddik, CEO, Western Sydney Community Centre, for their involvement in the official launch.

NORWEST SUNRISE (BELLA VISTA) ROTARY 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Norwest Sunrise (Bella Vista) Rotary Club on achieving their 20-year anniversary. Rotary clubs do tremendous work in my local Community, raising a great deal of money for charity, assisting local youth in developing leadership skills and also fostering a sense of community among members. The Norwest-Sunrise rotary club was very difficult to get off the ground, with members of the Hills-Kellyville Rotary having worked hard to found the club. It was thus apt that members of that club, as well as the Castle Hill Club, were able to join the Norwest Sunrise members for their 20th anniversary breakfast on the 22 April. The Club meets on Tuesday Mornings at Maurice's Café Baulkham Hills, and I'd like to recognise and thank all board members including Alex Hezari, Bev Jordan, Mercedes Durante, Gary West, Cherelyn Suzuki, Robert Bredlin, Dennis Riva, Martin Collins and Jeremy Carter.

JOSHUA FERRIS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—It was my pleasure to recently welcome Joshua Ferris to Parliament as part of the National Schools Constitutional Convention. Josh is the Captain of Rouse Hill High School and was well suited to the event. The National Schools Constitutional Convention is traditionally held in Canberra and is a great opportunity for Year 11 and 12 students to learn about modern constitutional challenges, and learn about national and state democracies in Australia, civics and political traditions. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic meant the convention had to be moved to the various State Parliaments of Australia, although I'm sure students were delighted to explore the NSW Parliament, Australia's oldest. The students at the convention, including Josh, all showed tremendous leadership skills and I know will go far when they graduate in a year or two's time. I wish Josh and all attendees the best for their futures and hope they enjoyed their parliamentary visit.

CAPTAIN LORYN MENDHAM & DEPUTY CAPTAIN TANIA BURGER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate Captain Loryn Mendham and Deputy Captain Tania Burger on their deserved recognition with Commissioner's Certificates of Commendation for their outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties during the 2019-20 bushfire season. Acknowledged for the instrumental role both women played in coordinating the Communications Headquarters during the horrendous bushfire events of 2019-2020, both Loryn and Tania were recognised on 4th May to commemorate International Firefighters' Day and Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters. During the bushfires that engulfed parts of the Mid North Coast, Loryn and Tania were instrumental in the operations of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) control centre in Wauchope, fielding hundreds of phone calls from local crews and directing assistance to areas at risk. Seen as true examples of exemplary service, Loryn's leadership during the bushfires was invaluable to the success of the overall operation and her high-level management skills under enormous pressures were pivotal. Tania was also applauded for committing an extraordinary 500 hours of volunteer service, operating the radio communications supporting both aircraft and appliance units from Wauchope. Heroes in their own right, I thank them for their service.

PORT MACQUARIE CWA BRANCH

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge an end of an era for the Port Macquarie Country Women's Association (CWA) Branch after announcing the permanent closure of the very popular Tea Rooms on Town Green. It was a time for nostalgia and reflection for the CWA ladies in Port Macquarie after the painstaking decision in April to close their doors on the weekly Tea Room. This follows decades of serving Devonshire tea to locals and tourists wishing to taste some authentic, home cooking from the masters of traditional country baking. Since 1929, the Port Macquarie CWA have been in operation, raising vital funds to support some wonderful projects and charities while providing friendship and support to rural and regional women and their families. Amongst the donations include school grants for Year 6 students and handcrafted items for emergency services and aged care facilities. Many a time I have been privileged to be hosted by the welcoming members from our CWA Branch, enjoying the famous jam and cream scones experience, along with a good old-fashioned cup of tea, brewed to perfection. I thank the President, Executive and membership both past and present for their years of service to our local community.

OSMEN TWENTY-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Michelle Lam and Michael Li are active members of the community in my electorate of Davidson and will be celebrating twenty years of success in their furniture business Osmen in early June. Whilst it is commendable for any business to operate successfully for two decades, in Michelle and Michael's case it is even more so, as they dedicate some of their profits to supporting a range of charitable organisations, including Variety Children's Charity and the Children's Cancer Institute. Michelle will be celebrating this milestone at a function attended by myself and my Federal colleagues the Hon Paul Fletcher MP and Trent Zimmerman MP, with one of Australia's most famous Winter Olympians, Steven Bradbury OAM, as Master of Ceremonies. Michelle herself did something of a Bradbury when, as a furniture wholesaler, she found her main customers had decided to import directly. Along with her husband Michael, Michelle's solution was to start a retail business herself, a business which now has eight stores across Sydney and is successfully competing against her former customers. I commend Michelle and Michael's tenacity, business acumen and generosity towards the charities they continue to support through their business after 20 years of operating.

GRAEME MURPHY AND VARIETY BASH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Graeme Murphy of Berowra who heads off this weekend for the Variety Club Bash. The fundraising trek will cover 400km a day and visit towns such as Inverell, Moree, Lightning Ridge and Armidale. Graeme had been contemplating getting a project car to restore when his wife Amanda suggested he enter the charity fundraiser and help sick kids at the same time. The rules of the event state the car must be 30 years old, so he decided on the 1980 Chrysler Valiant. He made all the modifications and repairs needed before turning it into the Batmobile with black paint, wings and the bat symbol. Graeme has so far raised \$1,862 with the help of generous locals and sponsorship from local business AirPower Climate Hire. Good luck Graeme on your journey and thank you for using this car to help raise money for this important cause.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Today marks the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. It is also the day we celebrate International Nurses Day. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the hardworking men and women whose compassion, tireless work ethic and dedication to patient care allow the NSW health system to be as highly respected as it is. We know that the role of nurses is absolutely

critical to our health care system. They are frequently the first point of contact for a hospitalised patient. They are the lifeblood of the place, are highly skilled, and provide the practical and organisational support needed to keep things running smoothly. It is for this reason the nursing profession is one of the most trusted professions of all. I thank all nurses that provide care and services to the constituents of Wollondilly, in particular those that provide care at the Bowral and District Hospital.

YOUTH SURVIVORS 4 JUSTICE RALLY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this parliament to the Youth Survivors 4 Justice rally on 8 May at Sydney Town Hall. I was honoured to speak at the event which was a youth led rally against sexism in Parliament and schools and calling for justice for survivors of sexual violence, economic safety for women, support for survivors and expanded consent education in schools. Youth Survivors 4 Justice is a youth led initiative dedicated to bringing justice to survivors of sexual violence. I commend the organisers: Chloe Korbel, Dani Pore Villafañe, Erin O'Leary, Lily-Maud Horton, Cody Twohill, Shanaya Donovan and Kathryn Guy with the support of Dr. Padraic Gibson and Kaitlyn Doyle. It was incredible to see the passion and strength from the crowd of mostly young people following months of media coverage of these issues in parliament, schools and general society. I was joined by fellow speakers: Fei Zhang (Australian Services Union), Shanaya Donovan (Youth Survivors 4 Justice), Saxon Mullins (Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy), Amanda Matthews (Violet Co) and Yattungka Gordon (Rape and domestic violence worker and co-founder of Breaking Silent Codes) and Ruby Wawn, (NTEU).

RED RATTLER THEATRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I congratulate the Red Rattler Theatre on their successful grant of \$50,000 in Round One of the Create NSW Arts & Cultural Funding Program. This grant will allow the theatre to develop and present, innovative and queer performance art and ideas core program, including artists residencies, mentorship programs, curated nights and forums. Importantly, the program will support performers, artists and audiences from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, extending the strong legacy of intersectional work at the Red Rattler. The Red Rattler is a superb example of what makes the Inner West unique, a queer theatre with a strong commitment to serving their community and always putting people before profit. Throughout COVID-19, this commitment did not waiver, and the theatre pivoted to online events. COVID-19 pushed the Rattler to its limits and the fact they were able to raise close to \$30,000 to keep their doors open is a testament to just how much the Rattler is respected and loved in the community. This funding from Create NSW will serve to strengthen the Rattler's position as the home of queer and alternative art, music and performance in the inner west. Congratulations to the Red Rattler team.

NEWTOWN BREAKAWAYS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I congratulate the Newtown Breakaways on the 20th Anniversary of their formidable football club. The Breakaways have been a pioneer of women's sport in the Inner West, providing important opportunities for women and girls to get involved in AFL and serving as a beacon of diversity and inclusion in sport. It's true of women's sport that you can't be what you can't see, and it's because of local clubs like the Breakaways that young girls see a future in professional sport. The core values of the Club – commitment, competitiveness and inclusivity – are fundamental to the success and longevity of the Club. The Club has a number of premierships under its belt, including four consecutive premierships between 2002 and 2005, and in 2011, the Breakaways were named Team of the Decade by the AFL. It's clear the "Courage of Burrridge" carries on through generations of players and I particularly acknowledge the late Rebecca Burrridge, Jamie Robertson, and all the founding members, many of whom are still involved, for their unswerving commitment over the last two decades. Congratulations Breakaways.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 19:08 until
Thursday 13 May at 9:30.**