



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 9 June 2021**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 9 June 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*

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT (COMMISSIONERS) BILL 2021**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill received from Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bill be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

## *Announcements*

### **AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members, staff and everyone in the precinct that today we will be hosting a Biggest Morning Tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council and to mark the official reopening of the newly renovated and accessible Speaker's Garden. Please join us for cakes, pastries and barista coffee from 10.00 a.m. The official part will be at 10.25 a.m. Everyone is welcome. Donations will be received on behalf of the Cancer Council. They will be tax deductible and receipts will be issued.

## *Notices*

### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Prospect will remain silent. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

*Later,*

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

## *Bills*

### **MOTOR ACCIDENTS AND WORKERS COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service, and Minister for Digital) (09:48):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Motor Accidents and Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill introduces a number of amendments to the motor accidents and workers compensation legislation, as well as the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 and the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020, or the PIC Act. These amendments seek to clarify rights and entitlements, and improve the regulation, administration and efficiency of the compulsory third party insurance [CTP] and workers' compensation schemes. The amendments proposed by the bill cover four broad themes: first, improving customer experience, scheme efficiency, fairness and equity; secondly, improving access to compensation entitlements for injured workers, certain volunteers and people injured in motor vehicle accidents and their dependants; thirdly, expanding and clarifying existing regulation-making powers, including provisions related to deemed diseases and point to point vehicles; and fourthly, establishing new powers for the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] to enable

better regulation for providers of treatment and other services in the workers compensation and CTP insurance schemes.

While the proposed amendments cover a diverse range of areas, they all work towards ensuring a more consistent customer experience for policyholders, injured people and other stakeholders of the workers compensation and CTP schemes. Targeted efforts to improve the clarity, efficiency and affordability of these schemes add up to make a difference to the lives of the millions of people who interact with these schemes either as policyholders or injured people. Last year these schemes collected a combined \$6.6 billion in premiums and had 9.8 million policyholders with 105,715 newly reported claims. In developing the bill, my department and SIRA consulted with key stakeholders across both schemes, including insurers, peak legal and medical professional bodies, dispute resolution decision-makers, industry and key government agencies. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of these stakeholders, who have provided valuable input. Members may be assured that their comments have been carefully considered in finalising the bill.

I now turn to the details of the bill. This Government is committed to maintaining affordable green slip insurance premiums. Members would be aware that a major reform has been the introduction of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017, which established a new CTP scheme on 1 December 2017. Since then, I am pleased to report, motorists have seen a significant reduction in green slip premiums of more than \$145 on average. However, this is not a "set and forget" government. We are a government steadfastly committed to responding to customer needs and making improvements where we can. Over the past 3½ years since the CTP scheme's commencement, feedback from customers and other stakeholders of the scheme has been integral in identifying areas of the legislation where further improvement can be achieved. I can assure the House that the amendments made by the bill directly address this feedback.

The bill also seeks to better align workers compensation entitlements for both paid and volunteer workers in New South Wales. The unprecedented 2019 bushfire season highlighted discrepancies in certain workers compensation entitlements that are available to paid Rural Fire Service workers but not to volunteer Rural Fire Service workers. I take this opportunity to thank the former RFS commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons, and the current commissioner, Rob Rogers, for their advocacy in bringing these discrepancies to the Government's attention. It is important that the New South Wales Government addresses these historical anomalies to ensure that those who donate their time and expertise to protect New South Wales communities receive the same entitlement to compensation as those who are employed.

There are approximately 76,319 firefighter volunteers in New South Wales, and the NSW Rural Fire Service typically receives an average of around 4,500 to 5,000 membership applications in a calendar year. In 2020 that number was almost double, with 8,494 new member applications received. The bill will provide these volunteers throughout New South Wales with the same entitlements as employed firefighters, reassuring them that their families will be protected in the event of an injury, just as they are there to protect our communities when we need them. The bill also responds to the needs of customers and stakeholders of workers compensation schemes more generally, by improving clarity and fairness in workers' access to compensation entitlements.

Protecting those injured on New South Wales roads, in our workplaces or while performing volunteering activities is this Government's utmost responsibility. This means ensuring quality care and support during the injured person's treatment and recovery. To that end, the bill also provides additional powers for SIRA to provide directions to prescribed service providers in relation to claims under the workers compensation and CTP schemes. This includes requiring a service provider to provide services in a specific way to ensure the best contribution to improved outcomes for injured road users and workers. Last year the Government introduced the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020. The PIC Act was a monumental reform, delivering a modern, independent, consolidated Personal Injury Commission with separate workers compensation and CTP insurance divisions. The commission enables injured people to benefit from a simpler, more streamlined and harmonised process. The commission commenced operation on 1 March 2021 and to support its operation this bill includes minor consequential amendments to ensure that the PIC reforms operate as intended.

I now turn to the provisions of the bill. The bill comprises four schedules. Schedule 1 provides for amendments concerning motor accidents legislation. Schedule 2 provides for amendments concerning workers compensation legislation. Schedule 3 contains amendments to the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, relating to service providers. Schedule 4 provides for amendments that support the establishment of the Personal Injury Commission. I will now highlight some of the principal amendments in each schedule. A key feature of schedule 1, which sets out amendments to the CTP scheme, is ensuring that for people injured in motor vehicle accidents, their statutory benefit payments continue to be fairly assessed and calculated. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the definition of "pre-accident weekly earnings" in clause 4 (2) (b) of schedule 1 the Motor Accidents Injuries Act 2017 to include a consideration of any increased earnings that the injured person would have been

entitled to earn had the injury not happened. This will allow CTP insurers to take into consideration any positive changes in a person's circumstances up to 12 months prior to the accident.

Secondly, schedule 1 to the bill amends the calculation of weekly statutory benefits in sections 3.6 (2) and (3), 3.7 (2) and (3), and 3.8 (2) and (3) of the Motor Accidents Injuries Act 2017 to include a consideration of a person's actual post-accident earnings. Where a person returns to work after their injury and their actual earnings are greater than their earning capacity, then their actual earnings will be taken into account when determining their entitlements. This amendment is important to promote a fair and equitable assessment of a person's weekly entitlements. Thirdly, the bill clarifies entitlements for people residing outside Australia. Currently, to access benefits, an injured person living overseas must lodge an application with the Personal Injury Commission to get an earning capacity determination, even if the relevant impact on the person's earning capacity is beyond doubt. Schedule 1 to the bill amends section 3.21 (2) (a) of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 to permit an insurer to start paying benefits immediately in these clear-cut cases and to agree with the injured person to make payments more frequently than on a quarterly basis as is currently prescribed.

Fourthly, schedule 1 amends provisions in part 5 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 to clarify that all individuals injured in a motor vehicle accident who are not wholly or mostly at fault and who have more than one minor injury are entitled to receive statutory benefits past 26 weeks. This includes drivers injured in no-fault accidents. Members may know that some ambiguities of the no-fault accident provisions were highlighted in a Supreme Court decision in *AAI Limited v Singh*. The Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 currently contains several deeming provisions in part 5 that appear to deem fault on a person in circumstances where no driver is actually at fault for the motor accident. The proposed amendment addresses this potential injustice and ensures that a driver who, for example, swerved to avoid a kangaroo that suddenly jumped on the road and caused an accident is entitled to statutory benefits for loss of income up to two years, and treatment and care benefits for life if needed. This amendment will ensure the best outcome for injured people by improving clarity and fairness of access to compensation entitlements. It is both prudent and necessary to ensure that no driver is disadvantaged where they are not at fault for the accident.

A further key objective of the bill is to provide flexibility and certainty in the management of statutory benefits claims in the CTP scheme, where the at-fault vehicle is insured interstate. Schedule 1 to the bill amends sections 3.2 (6) and (7) of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017. The amendments give interstate insurers an option to seek SIRA's written approval to manage statutory benefit claims by entering into an arrangement with a New South Wales licensed insurer or to opt for the Nominal Defendant to manage the claim on their behalf. Where the Nominal Defendant manages the claim, the bill allows New South Wales CTP insurers to recover all reasonable costs from interstate insurers relating to its handling, unless the interstate insurer does not provide insurance cover for the at-fault driver.

Members would be aware that compensation for people injured in motor accidents differs from State to State. Compared to States that have a purely fault-based scheme such as Queensland, the New South Wales CTP scheme provides more generous support to at-fault drivers in the form of statutory benefits for up to 26 weeks. To ensure that support is not eroded, schedule 1 makes a further amendment to section 3.2 in the form of a new subsection to make clear that where the interstate insurer's policy does not cover the at-fault driver, the Nominal Defendant will bear the cost of paying the statutory benefits to that at-fault driver. While that will have a small estimated premium impact of under \$1 per policy, it will ensure that all drivers injured in New South Wales receive a minimum level of support, even when their injuries are not covered by their interstate insurance.

Importantly, the bill also protects the integrity of the New South Wales Government's intellectual property. Schedule 1 to the bill proposes amendments to both section 11.11 of the Motor Accidents Injuries Act 2017 and section 121 of the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999 to give SIRA stronger powers to regulate the use of the term "green slip". Those amendments are necessary to prevent non-government entities from misusing mandatory personal injury insurance terminology to promote specific services or products. This can potentially confuse and mislead the New South Wales public in relation to the official government green slip check website.

The final key area of the amendments to the CTP scheme proposed by the bill concerns the point to point transport industry. Schedule 1 to the bill amends section 1.4 and section 2.26 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 to improve the operation of the CTP scheme in relation to point to point vehicles for addressing the current legislative gaps. Those amendments will provide certainty and clarity for insurers and industry in terms of premium determination, collection and payment. The amendments to section 2.26 allow SIRA to require taxi service providers and booking service providers to provide information that is reasonably required to determine premiums to SIRA or a CTP insurer. Because that is not currently a requirement under the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017, in many cases insurers are unable to accurately calculate premiums for point to point vehicles due to the absence of data. The amendments will ensure that insurers have access to the information necessary to access the risk and accurately calculate premiums for taxis and hire vehicles.

The amendments also require taxi service providers and booking service providers to pay premiums to insurers. SIRA will issue guidelines on the circumstances for paying premiums and may issue a written notice to service providers who fail to comply. This is necessary because although the 2017 Act allows part of the premium to be collected by taxi service providers and booking service providers on behalf of drivers, it does not expressly require service providers to pass those premiums on to insurers. That means that the only option for insurers seeking to recover unpaid premiums by service providers is to take recourse against the individual taxi or hire vehicle drivers by suspending or cancelling their registration.

This gives rise to a potential injustice as the driver may have done nothing wrong—they have paid the correct premiums to the service providers, who are withholding the payments. The bill seeks to avoid potential unfairness and ensure that individual drivers cannot be held responsible for the non-payment of premiums by service providers. With more than 15,000 authorised taxi drivers and 250 taxi service providers in New South Wales, alongside an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 rideshare drivers across 27 platforms, point to point represents a meaningful part of the CTP market, underlining the need for their treatment in the scheme to be robust and equitable.

I now turn to schedule 2 amendments concerning the workers compensation scheme. These amendments improve clarity and fairness in workers compensation entitlements and enhance the flexibility of the workers compensation scheme to adapt to change. The first amendment relates to deemed diseases. In workers compensation, a worker who suffers a disease injury must prove the disease was contracted during employment. Members will appreciate that compared to other work injuries this is not always easy to prove. That is why the workers compensation legislation currently deems certain diseases to be work related, without the worker having to prove that the disease was actually contracted during that employment. These are known as "deemed diseases".

Schedule 2 to the bill amends section 19 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to create a legislative structure that will allow the deemed diseases list to specify minimum periods of service in specified employment and minimum exposure requirements, if applicable, before a disease is deemed to be work related. This amendment will allow SIRA to take a more flexible approach to the deemed diseases list. It will also allow SIRA to incorporate scientific evidence about the causal relationship between certain diseases and occupational exposure to inform future changes to the deemed diseases list.

The next amendment introduces an important additional compensation entitlement for the benefit of the dependent children of deceased workers. Schedule 2 amends section 25 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to create an additional compensation entitlement to cover the fees charged by the NSW Trustee & Guardian to manage a dependent child's lump sum death benefit. As many members would be aware, the existing workers compensation legislation provides that the family or estate of a worker who dies as a result of a workplace injury is entitled to a lump sum death benefit. That benefit is over \$830,000 and is generally apportioned between the deceased worker's spouse and dependants, including dependent children, if any. Where the dependent children are under 18 years of age, their share of the lump sum is generally ordered to be paid to the NSW Trustee & Guardian. The trustee manages the lump sum on behalf of the child.

The trustee performs this very important role to protect the interests of the child and to guarantee the lump sum is there for them when they reach 18. As at 30 June 2020 the trustee was managing 417 workers compensation trusts on behalf of the children of deceased workers. I emphasise here that the protection of the child's interests is paramount—the lump sum is intended solely for the benefit of the child. This additional compensation entitlement to cover the cost of investing and managing a child's lump sum ensures that the child's lump sum is not at risk of being eroded by fees over time. We estimate that between 60 to 70 children and young people will benefit from this improvement each year. I acknowledge that in the context of the overall workers compensation system that represents a small number of beneficiaries, but it represents an important enhancement for children and young people tragically impacted by the death of a parent or other family member. The amendment also allows for regulations to provide for how this additional compensation entitlement is to be calculated.

Another improvement proposed by the bill relates to injured workers who cease to live in Australia. The bill makes it easier for those workers to establish their ongoing eligibility for weekly payments and to be paid their weekly entitlements. Workers from all over the world bring their skills and expertise to work in New South Wales and contribute to the New South Wales economy. Understandably, a small number of injured workers cease to live in Australia after an injury. Under the existing workers compensation provisions, a worker who ceases to live in Australia continues to be entitled to receive their weekly payments of compensation if his or her incapacity for work as a result of the injury is likely to be of a permanent nature.

Schedule 2 to the bill amends section 53 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to provide that those workers and their insurers may reach agreement on the likely permanent nature of the worker's incapacity without having to bring a dispute in the Personal Injury Commission. If the worker and insurer cannot reach agreement, then the commission can determine the matter in the usual way. In addition, these workers will now be able to

receive their weekly payments at the employer's usual time of payment of wages, like all other workers, rather than being paid quarterly in arrears. Finally, schedule 2 to the bill also simplifies and modernises the definition of "medical or related treatment" by amending section 59 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987, ensuring greater flexibility for the regulations to provide for what constitutes such treatment. This will facilitate a more adaptable definition that can keep pace with advances in treatment and injury management.

I will now address the volunteer amendments in the workers compensation scheme. This group of amendments relates to new entitlements for volunteer firefighters and emergency and rescue workers who are injured while performing their volunteering activities. The bill makes amendments to the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 to better align entitlements to those provided for paid workers under the general workers compensation scheme. Schedule 2 to the bill amends sections 10 and 26 of the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 to provide access to reasonable funeral expenses up to a maximum of \$15,000, in line with the amount paid for workers in the general workers compensation scheme. It also includes the additional compensation entitlement, which I mentioned earlier, to cover the cost of investing and managing a child's lump sum where that lump sum is paid to the NSW Trustee & Guardian to manage in the event of the death of a volunteer as a result of their volunteering activities.

Again, consistent with the general workers compensation scheme, the bill provides for the reasonable cost of transportation of the body to the place of burial or usual residence—whichever is the lesser—where a volunteer dies as a result of their volunteering activities. This applies where Australia was the usual place of residence of the volunteer at the time of their death. Where a volunteer is injured in the course of their volunteering activities and is unable to return to their paid work, they will now have access to return-to-work assistance, vocational re-education and training and workplace aids and modifications to facilitate return to work with a new employer. Providing access to these resources aims to support a volunteer in securing employment, consistent with the return-to-work incentives already available to injured workers in New South Wales.

Where a volunteer is unable to return to their current paid employment, schedule 2 to the bill introduces sections 14A, 14B, 28C and 28D to the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 to provide access to compensation for the cost of return-to-work assistance to help those volunteers with paid work at the time of their volunteer-related injury to return to work with a new employer. The cumulative value of this compensation is \$1,000, and it may cover expenses such as clothing, workplace equipment, child care and industry licences or certificates. Volunteers will also have access to up to \$8,000 for the cost of education and training.

Lastly, the bill introduces amendments concerning provisional acceptance of liability. Acceptance of liability on a provisional basis has been available to New South Wales workers in the general scheme since 2002. Schedule 2 to the bill introduces a new part 3A to the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987, which extends this entitlement to eligible volunteers, providing prompt access to medical and related treatment and weekly payments, if applicable, so that optimal health and social outcomes can be achieved. These changes will allow for the payment to eligible volunteers of up to 12 weeks of weekly payments and up to \$10,000 of medical expenses while waiting for their claim to be determined.

I now turn to schedule 3, which concerns amendments to the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 relating to service providers. One of the cornerstones of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority as the regulator is to promote the safety, transparency, affordability and sustainability of the workers compensation and CTP schemes. Currently, SIRA can refer concerns about providers' professional practice to their professional bodies or the Health Care Complaints Commission but it is unable to prevent service providers from delivering treatment and other services in a manner inconsistent with the workers compensation or CTP legislation and its objectives.

The findings of SIRA's healthcare review found that between 2016 and 2019 healthcare expenditure in the workers compensation scheme rose by 47 per cent, up to its current level of over \$1 billion a year. There was evidence of overservicing and overcharging by some providers. The review also found that limited availability of healthcare data is impacting SIRA's ability to monitor the scheme and health provider behaviours. It is clear that legislative amendments are required to provide appropriate regulatory tools for SIRA to ensure that treatments and other services provided to injured workers and road users are appropriate, timely and cost effective, and contribute directly to improving outcomes.

To this end, schedule 3 introduces new provisions to division 3 of the State Insurance Care and Governance Act 2015 to provide SIRA the power to issue directions to service providers who are not providing services in accordance with the regulations. The direction powers will include requiring a "relevant provider" to take a specified action or to deliver "relevant services" in a particular way to comply with the scheme's specific requirements. The bill allows the regulations to specify the "relevant services" and the "relevant service providers" against which directions may be issued, as well as the manner and form of those directions. It is important to

mention that following the passage of the bill, extensive consultation will be undertaken on the development of these supporting regulations.

The bill also makes it an offence for a provider to not comply with a direction and introduces new sections into the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to make it a condition of an insurer's licence that the insurer must not engage, approve or pay a service provider for an excluded service. Members may be assured that the bill upholds procedural fairness by providing a right for service providers to apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a review where a direction from SIRA restricts the provider from delivering services in the schemes. Finally, the bill will allow SIRA to direct providers to provide claims-related data and information. The CTP and workers compensation legislation already allows SIRA to compel the provision of data from insurers. Extending it to service providers in both schemes will enhance SIRA's ability to monitor claims experience and, importantly, the quality and value of those services to enable SIRA to better regulate the schemes.

I now turn to schedule 4 and the amendments concerning the establishment of the Personal Injury Commission. In March 2021 the Government launched the new one-stop shop Personal Injury Commission to simplify the dispute resolution system for injured road users and workers. I am particularly proud of this achievement, as the commission will assist thousands of customers. It puts the claimant at the centre of the dispute resolution process and simplifies the process justly and quickly and as cost efficiently as possible. The commission ensures a new way of dealing with the approximately 17,000 applications each year. To ensure the ongoing efficient operation of the commission, schedule 4 to the bill introduces new section 64A to the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020 to clarify the application of the Judges' Pensions Act 1953 and amends section 26D of the Civil Liability Act 2002 and section 6 of the Sporting Injuries Insurance Act 1978 to clarify terminology relating to medical assessors. These amendments will ensure that the powers and scope of the commission are clear and unambiguous so that the Personal Injury Commission Act operates as intended.

This bill is the result of an extensive review. These reforms will contribute to improving and strengthening the workers compensation and CTP legislation. They reflect the Government's commitment to securing personal injury compensation schemes that promote the welfare and wellbeing of injured road users and workers of New South Wales, as well as of the broader community, and deliver the best possible claimant experience. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND DISABILITY SERVICES MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT  
BILL 2021**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (10:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Families, Communities and Disability Services Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2021. The bill introduces a number of miscellaneous amendments to address emerging issues, support procedural amendments and clarify uncertainty in legislation. Some of the ways that these amendments will strengthen our community include improving information sharing under the Adoption Act 2000, improving protections for older people and people with disability, clarifying the representation of children in Children's Court proceedings and improving child protection processes for children in out-of-home care through the reportable conduct scheme.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. I start with amendments to the Adoption Act 2000. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill will insert section 133AA into the Adoption Act 2000 to clarify that a person is entitled to receive adoption information to which they are otherwise entitled, even if that information is also contained in a record of court proceedings concerning the person. The Department of Communities and Justice holds prescribed information that adopted persons and other persons are entitled to access under chapter 8 of the Adoption Act, including non-identifying background information about an adopted person's birth parents and other relatives, birth details about the adopted person, the social and medical history of the adopted person, and the reason an adoption decision was made by the birth parents. Some of this information may also be contained in the records of proceedings of the court relating to the person's adoption.

Section 143 of the Adoption Act provides that a person is not entitled to receive prescribed information from the records of proceedings in the court relating to the adoption of a person unless they make an application

directly to the court under section 143. The introduction of section 133AA will not expand the kinds of information a person is entitled to access under chapter 8 but will make abundantly clear that prescribed information that may also be contained in records of proceedings in the court may be released to a person who is already entitled to that information under chapter 8 of the Adoption Act, without that person having to make an additional application to the court under section 143.

The same item of the bill also introduces section 133AB to make it easier for adopted persons to access relevant information. Currently, the Adoption Act grants adopted people the right to access information about their history and the circumstances of their adoption, as prescribed by the Adoption Regulation 2015. Sections 168 and 169 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, referred to as the care Act, give persons who have been placed in out-of-home care the right to access information about their history and the records of their time in out-of-home care. Many adopted people are placed in out-of-home care under the care Act before they are adopted.

Currently an adopted person who was formerly in out-of-home care must lodge two separate applications to access information related to their adoption and their out-of-home care experience. Section 133AB will streamline the application process for those adopted people so that a single application can be made to access both adoption information and information available under sections 168 and 169 of the care Act. These two new sections will reduce unnecessary duplication for adopted persons in applying for information and make it easier to access their information. This is consistent with the objects of the Adoption Act to allow access to information relating to adoptions.

Schedule 1 [2] to the bill amends section 194 of the Adoption Act to clarify that the prohibition on access to records under that section does not prevent records being produced to a court or other authority in response to a subpoena or other compulsory process. Section 194 of the Adoption Act provides that records made in connection with the administration or execution of the Act or previous adoption legislation are not to be open to inspection by, or made available to, any person, except as provided by the Act or the regulations. There is no express exception to this prohibition in cases where documents are required to be produced under compulsory process, such as a subpoena or notice to produce. This has caused uncertainty about whether section 194 is intended to prevent production of documents in response to compulsory processes. The amendment will clarify that records made in connection with the administration or execution of the current Adoption Act or previous adoption legislation may be produced to a court or other authority in response to a subpoena or other compulsory process.

I now turn to schedule 2, which introduces sections to improve protections for older people and people with a disability. Schedule 2 [1] to [3] will amend the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, referred to as the ADC Act, to make it an offence for an employer to take detrimental action in relation to an employee or a contractor who provides assistance to the Ageing and Disability Commission with respect to reports about abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult with a disability or an older person. The ADC receives and responds to reports about adults with disability and older people in New South Wales who are subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect and exploitation in their family, home and community.

Anyone can make a report to the ADC but reporting is not mandatory. To encourage reporting, the ADC Act provides certain protections for reporters, including that the identity of reporters can only be disclosed with their consent or for law enforcement purposes, in section 15, and a person who makes a report to the ADC in good faith is not liable to any civil, criminal or disciplinary action for making the report, under section 13 (4). However, there are a range of other people who are asked to provide information to, or assist, the ADC. These include staff of services who provide supports for adults with disability or older people. Currently there are no protections in the ADC Act for other people who provide assistance to the ADC. Staff working with adults with disability and older people play a vital role in their day-to-day support. They also can help to raise and address concerns about abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is critical that staff members are able to assist the ADC in relation to a report without facing detrimental action for doing so.

Item [4] of schedule 2 introduces section 31A of the ADC Act to allow the ADC to provide information about the outcome of a report to the reporter and other people concerned for the welfare of the adult with a disability or older person if the ADC considers that disclosure of the information is consistent with the objects and principles of the ADC Act. In certain cases, the ADC needs to be able to provide relevant information about the outcome of a report to the reporter or other key parties to enable appropriate safeguarding of the adult with disability or older person. These circumstances might include advising an individual's NDIS support coordinator, GP or other key supporters. Information about the outcome of a report would not be provided in every case. It may often be inappropriate for the ADC to provide information back to the reporter or to disclose information to other parties. This amendment simply allows the ADC to be able to disclose information about the outcome of a

report when necessary, primarily to protect the adult from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to promote their rights.

I turn now to schedule 3 to the bill, which amends the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, referred to as the care Act, I am pleased to note that schedule 3 contains a number of important measures that will clarify the powers and processes of the Children's Court and promote the continued safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in statutory out-of-home care. Schedule 3 [7] amends section 82 of the care Act to extend the period that a court may require a report to be provided about the suitability of arrangements for a child's care and protection from 12 months to 24 months.

This amendment is consistent with the changes made to the care Act in 2019 to allow short-term court orders to be made for up to 24 months. The amendment will give the court greater flexibility to determine when it requires a progress report to be provided, depending on the individual circumstances of the case. It will also give the court greater oversight of the progress of a child or young person's permanency plan under a short-term care order. The amendment will not prevent the court from requiring a report to be provided earlier than 24 months, nor will it prevent the Department of Communities and Justice from applying to vary or revoke a care order if necessary.

Schedule 3 [3] amends section 76 of the care Act to allow the Children's Court to make a new supervision order for a child or young person if it is reasonable in the circumstances and in the best interests of the child or young person, notwithstanding the late filing of a report about the progress of a supervision order made under section 76 (1) of the care Act. Similarly, schedule 3 [8] will introduce new section 82 (2A) to the care Act to allow the Children's Court to consider and act on the contents of a section 82 report, even if the report is provided to the court after the legislative deadline, if the court considers it reasonable in the circumstances and in the best interests of the child.

The provision of section 76 and section 82 reports is to ensure that the Children's Court obtains information necessary to determine certain relevant issues such as the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children subject to supervision orders, and the continuing suitability of the parental arrangements made for a child. In some cases these reports are being filed with the court outside of the legislative deadlines. Under the current provisions the court does not have the authority to consider and act on the content of these reports. Although it is important that reports are filed within the legislative deadline so that care matters are not unnecessarily prolonged, the court must have capacity to act on the contents of a report received outside of these deadlines where appropriate.

It is in the best interests of a child or young person that the court be able to continue dealing with a care proceeding and act in response to reports about the suitability of care arrangements, even if those reports are provided outside of a legislative deadline. This amendment maintains the requirement that reports be provided to the court within 24 months in normal circumstances. This deadline is important to allow action to be taken in relation to the best interests of a child or young person in a timely manner.

I turn now to schedule 3 [9] to the bill, which will introduce an important amendment to section 98 (2A) of the care Act to make discretionary, rather than mandatory, the power of the Children's Court to appoint a guardian ad litem for a party the court considers not capable of adequately representing themselves. This amendment must be made as a matter of urgency to avoid significant delays to care proceedings in the Children's Court in circumstances where there are far too few guardians ad litem to meet demand. Section 98 (2A) of the care Act currently requires the Children's Court, if of the opinion that a party to proceedings is incapable of giving proper instructions to a legal representative, to appoint a guardian ad litem to act in the best interests of that person. A recent decision of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, *GR v The Department of Communities & Justice and Ors* [2020] NSWSC, has determined that a child or young person who is the subject of care proceedings is a party to those proceedings. As such, the court must appoint a guardian ad litem for a child who is incapable of giving instructions.

This is a departure from previous longstanding practice in which guardians were appointed largely to meet the needs of adults in care proceedings who lacked capacity to instruct. Children were considered adequately represented by an independent legal representative, if the child lacks capacity to instruct, or a direct legal representative, if the child has capacity to instruct. Lawyers who act in these representative roles are familiar with the representation of children in such matters. Following this decision, the demand for guardians ad litem in the Children's Court has significantly exceeded availability. This has resulted in some matters being delayed for several months and affecting care arrangements for children and young people. This is inconsistent with the principle set out in section 94 of the care Act, that Children's Court proceedings are to be carried out as expeditiously as possible and adjournments are to be avoided.

The amendment allows the court the discretion to appoint a guardian ad litem in circumstances where it is considered appropriate. It means that a court will not be required to appoint a guardian ad litem in cases where

the appointment is not otherwise necessary, noting that in the majority of cases until the past few months the court has not considered it necessary. This amendment does not undermine the proper representation of children in care proceedings. It simply reverts to prior practice where children are represented by an independent legal representative or a direct legal representative as required. The Children's Court must be able to function properly and avoid unnecessary delays in care proceedings to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

I now turn to schedule 3 [11] to the bill, which will amend section 170 of the care Act to apply certain retention of records requirements to designated agencies in relation to carer records. Section 170 of the care Act requires designated agencies to keep records made about the placement of a child or young person in statutory out-of-home care for seven years after the agency ceases to be responsible for that person's placement. After those seven years, or within that period if the agency ceases to be a designated agency, it must deliver those records to the secretary. Currently, section 170 does not capture records about carers who provide care to children and young people in out-of-home care such as probity checks, authorisation information, assessments and records concerning reportable conduct allegations.

Carer records play a critical role around the care and support for children and young people in care. There is a need to protect such records where a designated agency ceases operating so that they can be retrieved and provided to other designated agencies that may subsequently engage those same care workers' services. This will ensure that any important information or relevant concerns about these carers is not lost. These carer records are already required to be retained by designated agencies whilst in operation, in order to comply with information exchange requirements to allow designated agencies to assess the suitability of individuals who wish to provide statutory out-of-home care for a child or young person. This amendment simply adds the requirement for transfer of such records to the secretary following a closure of a designated agency.

I turn now to several amendments in schedule 3 designed to clarify regulation-making powers in the care Act. Changes to contemporary drafting practices in relation to specifying the scope of regulation-making powers mean that these amendments are required to ensure that, when the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 is repealed as part of the staged repeal program and remade as a new regulation within the next 12 months, a regulation-making power will be able to be clearly identified for each of the existing clauses of the regulation. Specific amendments include allowing the regulations to make provision for designated agencies to impose conditions on authorised carers in schedule 3 [10]; clarifying that regulations may provide a class of persons as a "prescribed body" in schedule 3 [12]; and allowing the regulations to provide that the secretary may approve behaviour management practices for managing the behaviour of children and young people in schedule 3 [10]. The amendments will make clearer the scope of the regulation-making power within the care Act.

I turn now to schedule 4 to the bill, which will amend section 9A of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987, referred to as the CDC Act. Section 9A provides that persons aged 18 to 21 under subsection (2) or over age 21 under subsection (1) are not to be detained in youth detention centres if they are subject to certain arrest warrants or orders. The amendment will ensure that these same people are not to be detained in youth detention centres if they are subject to a warrant or order for detention of the person on remand. This amendment will ensure that a person over 18 who is brought before a court on an arrest warrant in relation to certain matters set out in section 9A (2) of the CDC Act will not subsequently be detained in a youth detention centre pursuant to any remand warrant or order of the court.

The current wording of section 9A does not capture circumstances where an arrest warrant ceases to have effect upon a "warrant or order for the detention of the person on remand" being made authorising the person's detention in relation to the matters outlined in section 9A. In these circumstances there is nothing preventing a court from remanding a person aged over 18 or 21 to a youth justice detention centre pending determination of the allegations relating to those matters or re-sentencing them to a period of control to be served in a detention centre. When this occurs, the commissioner can make an order under section 28 of the CDC Act transferring them immediately to an adult detention facility. This amendment will streamline those processes and prevent this additional step from being necessary, whilst ensuring that people are sent to the appropriate facility for their age.

I now turn to schedule 5 [1] to the bill, which will amend the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to make it mandatory for a relevant entity to nominate a person or holder of a position to be the head of the relevant entity. If there is no chief executive officer or principal officer of a relevant entity, the entity may nominate a head of that relevant entity who can then be approved by the Children's Guardian under section 66 of the Children's Guardian Act. The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes obligations on the head of a relevant entity to notify the Children's Guardian of reportable allegations and conduct an investigation into those allegations.

There is currently no provision in the Children's Guardian Act to compel a relevant entity to make a nomination for the position of head of the relevant entity. As a result, many entities have not made this

nomination or had it approved by the Children's Guardian. This means that technically the entity has no obligations to notify or report to the Children's Guardian under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, as there is no head of the entity upon whom to impose the obligations. This amendment is necessary to close this inadvertent loophole allowing organisations to not comply with the provisions of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The amendment will better protect children from harm and ensure that their safety, welfare and wellbeing are prioritised by the effective operation of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Lastly, I turn to schedule 5 [2], which will amend the Children's Guardian Act to extend the expiry date of clause 2 of schedule 4 to the Act by 12 months until 1 September 2022. The Children's Guardian Act came into force on 1 March 2020. Powers and functions of the Children's Guardian from the Adoption Act, the care Act, the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 and the Ombudsman Act 1974 were consolidated into the new Act. Regulations under these Acts remain in force until the new regulations are made under the Children's Guardian Act. The transitional regulatory arrangements in schedule 4, clause 2 of the Children's Guardian Act continue regulations made under each of those specified Acts as if they were made under the Children's Guardian Act. This provision currently expires on 1 September 2021 and the regulations will lapse unless they are transferred by that date or the date is extended.

A one-year extension of the transitional provisions will ensure that there is no lapse in regulations pending the transfer of the provisions to the Children's Guardian regulation. This bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. Many of the amendments in the bill are technical in nature and are important steps in streamlining the day-to-day work performed by the various agencies working within the Stronger Communities Cluster. They address emerging issues, support procedural improvements, clarify uncertainty and correct errors in legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

**Returned**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I set down consideration of the Legislative Council amendment as an order of the day for a later time.

*Committees*

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

**Membership**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council advising that the Hon. Trevor Khan has been discharged from the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission and the Hon. Peter Poulos has been appointed as a member of the committee.

#### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Membership**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council advising that under section 5 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, the Hon. Trevor Khan has been discharged from the Legislative Review Committee and the Hon. Sam Faraway has been appointed as a member of the committee.

*Bills*

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

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 12 May 2021.**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (10:46):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021. The bill seeks to embed a child-focused and child safe culture within the organisations that engage in child-related work. It has been brought forward by the Government in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission revealed the horrors children in Australia were subjected to by the very institutions that purportedly existed to protect them. It shone a light on the lengths these institutions were capable of going to in

order to protect themselves from rightful scrutiny and criminal investigation, and it exposed just how far these institutions were willing to go in order to cover up the crimes of those who abused the young.

Indeed, some of these organisations are still clearly failing to come to terms with the crimes inflicted on children in their care and in their name. Not only were these children failed by the very institutions that were meant to protect them; they were failed by successive governments at every level. We must never allow this to happen again. Children's safety and their best interests must be at the core of an institution's operations and be well supported by a well-informed community. The final report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, published in December 2017, made 409 recommendations. The final report said:

All institutions should uphold the rights of the child. Consistent with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all institutions should act with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. In order to achieve this, institutions should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.

To begin with, this bill will change the objects of the Children's Guardian Act to include embedding child safe standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practices in organisations in New South Wales. It will also embed connection to family and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as a guiding principle, with the ultimate goal of the child feeling safe and secure in their identity. The bill will enshrine into law the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the royal commission.

The first standard is that child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture. This standard speaks to the importance of a child safe culture being imbedded in every level of an organisation, including its leaders and its governance. Leaders play a critical role in maintaining an institutional culture where children's best interests, respect for their rights and their protection from harm are at the heart of all the organisation's operations. This standard puts the responsibility to champion a child safe culture in an organisation's people and practices at the core of its operations. It will see staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct and there will be a focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.

The second standard is that children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. This standard reflects the fact that children are safer when institutions acknowledge and teach them about their right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Enabling children and young people to understand, identify and raise their safety concerns with a trusted adult and to feel safe within an institution is important. This standard provides the opportunity for a child to participate in child-friendly ways in the decisions that affect their lives. It will ensure that staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and will facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns.

The third standard is that families and communities are informed and involved. This standard observes Article 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that parents, carers or significant others with caring responsibilities have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child. This standard will allow for families and the community to have a say through open and two-way communication about an organisation's child safety approach, its policies and its practices and will ensure that they are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

The fourth standard is that equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account. Equity and non-discrimination are central tenets of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasises a commitment to fulfil a child's rights irrespective of such matters as race, sex, religion or disability. This standard acknowledges that child safe spaces must recognise each child's diverse circumstances, with particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The fifth standard is to ensure people working with children are suitable and supported. Child safe human resources [HR] management through screening, recruitment and ongoing performance review can, and does, play an important role in protecting children from harm. This standard will ensure a child-safety focus, starting from the recruitment and induction phases so that staff and volunteers are aware of their child safe responsibilities, including reporting obligations. The implementation of HR policies and procedures that consider this standard also sends a very clear message to applicants who may not have the best interests of a child at heart that the organisation is indeed a child safe organisation.

The sixth standard is that processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused. A child-focused complaints process is an important strategy for helping children and others in institutions make complaints. This standard will ensure that not only do staff, volunteers and families understand there is a complaint-handling system that is effective and that complaints are taken seriously but that also this is understood by the children. It will see child safe institutions respond to complaints immediately in order to protect children at risk and address complaints promptly, thoroughly and fairly.

The seventh standard is that staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training. A child safe organisation promotes and provides regular ongoing development opportunities for its staff and volunteers through education and training. This standard will ensure that staff are alert to the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly organisational child abuse, and that staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures. The eighth standard is that physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur. Some physical and online environments can pose a risk to children. This standard will reduce risks by analysing and addressing both physical and online risks without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development.

The ninth standard is that implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved. Child safe institutions know it is a significant challenge to maintain a safe environment for children in a dynamic institution. Vigilance is required to put systems in place and to frequently monitor and improve their performance against the Child Safe Standards. This standard will allow for organisations to identify systemic failures and will inform continued improvements to their child safe practices. Finally, the tenth standard is that policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe. A child safe organisation has policies and procedures that set out how it maintains a child safe environment. This is a crucial aspect of facilitating an institution's commitment to maintaining child safety. This standard will serve to provide access to easy-to-understand information that demonstrates a best practice model that will be championed by the organisation's leaders.

The adoption of the 10 standards will be mandatory for all child safe organisations. Child safe organisations as specified in schedule 1 to the bill include local health districts, non-government schools, approved education and care services, statutory health corporations, affiliated health organisations, NSW Ambulance, the TAFE Commission, any agency providing residential care for children, religious bodies that provide services to children or through which adults have contact with children, a club or other body providing programs or services of a recreational or sporting nature for children in which workers are required to hold a Working With Children Check and any other entity as prescribed by the regulations.

The implementation of this legislation will see new regulatory approaches for the Children's Guardian that will improve systems for the prevention, identification, response to and reporting of child abuse through monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Child Safe Standards by child safe organisations and child safe prescribed agencies. Under the legislation, prescribed agencies will also be required to work with the Children's Guardian to develop and implement a child safe action plan that covers the agency's full scope of child-related operations. The action plans will aim to build awareness in the community about child safety, to build the capability of child safe organisations to implement the standards, and to improve the safety of children. The Office of the Children's Guardian will also be given new powers that will allow it to investigate complaints and concerns about a child safe organisation's implementation of the Child Safe Standards. Additionally, the Children's Guardian will have enforcement powers to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards.

The bill has financial implications. Certainly the Children's Guardian will see a significant workload increase in relation to supporting agencies in developing child safe action plans, in the approval of those action plans and in the enforcement of the requirements of the bill. Child safe agencies have responsibilities to develop the action plans and to provide information and support to child safe organisations. Child safe organisations have compliance responsibilities in relation to the Child Safe Standards and ensuring that their operations implement those standards. The additional responsibilities that the bill places on the Children's Guardian, the agencies and the organisations have to be considered. It is incumbent on the Government to ensure that the Children's Guardian and child safe agencies are resourced appropriately, and we on this side of the House will be keeping an eye on that aspect and making sure it occurs.

Children should be protected from those who would seek to do them harm and the Government must ensure that every institution, organisation or business that has any dealing with a child is a safe place for children. A cultural change is required to ensure that children are valued and that their rights are respected by every organisation that delivers services to children. Creating a safe environment for children is complex and multifaceted, but I believe this bill does go some way towards achieving that. It is essential that the royal commission's recommendations are implemented. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:58):** I support the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 and I congratulate the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government on its introduction. All children in New South Wales have a right to live, grow and learn safely. As a community, we have a responsibility to make this a reality for our children. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that New South Wales' child protection framework continues to evolve to facilitate this right. The Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse heard evidence of the shocking and appalling abuse of

children by the very people who were supposed to care for and value them. We know that many trusted institutions, both government and non-government, failed to protect children in their care. This failure arose because of leaders in these organisations who did not put children at the centre of their operation and purpose.

These reforms deliver on the Government's commitment to ensure that gaps in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children are addressed. They build on the changes to the Children's Guardian Act 2019, which transferred the Reportable Conduct Scheme to the Office of the Children's Guardian. The OCG also administers the Working With Children Check scheme and has targeted regulatory functions for the out-of-home care and other sectors. The royal commission recognised that there could be significant benefits from having key child safe functions, including the Child Safe Standards, the Working With Children Check scheme and the Reportable Conduct Scheme sitting within the same agency. This will help streamline oversight of child-related organisations and enable the OCG to better influence and lead change to build the capability of organisations to be child safe in New South Wales.

These reforms are the culmination of a three-year process following the Australian Government's response, in June 2018, to the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Child Safe Standards recommended by the royal commission provide a best practice, evidence-based framework to guide child safe practice that puts children and young people at the centre of an organisation's operations and purpose. They are about improving organisational cultures, operations and environments to prevent all forms of abuse—including sexual, physical and emotional abuse, ill treatment and neglect—from occurring and to make sure it is responded to if it does occur. This means child safety will be a focus of regulatory oversight for many child-related organisations moving forward. The Child Safe Scheme will implement stronger, preventative oversight by enabling the Office of the Children's Guardian to proactively address identified gaps in an organisation's systems and processes to help prevent incidents of abuse.

Primarily the bill will insert the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the royal commission that will act as the framework to guide child safe practice in organisations across New South Wales. I will list the 10 areas of focus: the importance of leadership roles and governance in the safety of children; giving children the opportunity to express their views and concerns and that they be taken seriously; community and families are to be involved and adequately informed of the new Child Safe Standards; diversity and equity needs are at the forefront; those working with children are appropriate and suited to their role and are fully supported in their role; the complaints process is child focused and understood by children; staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and information relevant to child safety, as well as continual education and training to ensure currency; risks associated with physical and online environments are actively understood, and therefore the risks are minimised; the Child Safe Standards are actively reviewed and improved to ensure they remain relevant and adequate; and the Child Safe Standards policies and procedures are easily accessible and understood for organisations to uphold. These standards will be the basis of the child safety structure, which will make organisations safer for children.

The standards also focus on the responsibility and accountability of organisations where the safety and welfare of children are paramount. The undertakings include reviewing an organisation's current policies and processes as well as any information held by the Children's Guardian about the organisation and its employees. Heads of organisations will be required to complete a self-assessment to ensure the organisation is compliant with the Child Safe Standards. To guarantee organisations will undertake and complete the self-assessment tool, a small fine will be imposed by the Office of the Children's Guardian on organisations that do not comply. These changes will ensure that the Office of Children's Guardian will be better able to respond to noncompliance in a proportionate way through the availability of strengthened powers to monitor, investigate and enforce the Child Safe Standards. The new Child Safe Scheme means there will be an expectation that organisations continue in their efforts to keep children safe, meaning that they implement measures to protect children from harm.

Under new section 8D (2) the reportable conduct policy is implemented to ensure organisations are meeting the requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This scheme is put in place to help monitor organisations on how they investigate and report on types of conduct of their employees, volunteers and other staff and personnel providing services to children. This amendment will act as a vital component of the child protection system, as it will require organisations to give the Children's Guardian information about their policies and processes within a reasonable amount of time.

The royal commission also found that racism and a lack of cultural safety could be reasons for children not to speak up. The importance of cultural safety is paramount for Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people in ensuring they feel safe and protected. To ensure this, the bill seeks to amend principles of the Act that will embed connection to family and community into the Office of the Children's Guardian's decision-making process in relation to organisations. The ultimate goal is that children feel safe and protected in their identity, community and culture. The fourth standard of the 10 Child Safe Standards recognises equity. This will ensure that

organisations are able to actively respond to and cater for children's diverse circumstances and vulnerabilities. Access to support services, information and the complaints process is vital for children, especially when they come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, live with a disability or are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The complaints process has also been identified in this bill. Notably it is now child focused, so that the system is understood not only by staff, volunteers and families but also by the children themselves. Organisations must have an effective complaints system in place, where the policy and procedure clearly outline roles, responsibilities and obligations associated with handling and reporting the complaint. This will allow children to be aware of their rights and, importantly, ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and are therefore dealt with in an appropriate and prompt manner.

I note that feedback from stakeholders involved in the extensive consultations to develop the Child Safe Scheme has been overwhelmingly positive, with the majority supporting the intent of the Child Safe Standards and the objectives of the scheme. Stakeholders were particularly supportive of the intention of the scheme to be flexible. This means schools, religious organisations and early education providers will be able to implement the Child Safe Standards in different ways consistent with the needs of the children and young people, their environments and values, and the needs of the communities they serve.

The royal commission highlighted the systemic failures of institutions in both protecting children and responding to allegations of child abuse. This bill helps us all to do better and shows the focus and commitment this Government has to ensuring a consistent and systemic level of oversight regarding child safety in organisations that provide care and services to children and young people. These reforms deliver on that commitment and continue the implementation of the New South Wales Government's response to the royal commission. Our children are introduced to a multitude of organisations that are essential to their learning and development, which help to foster their growth and sense of community. However, it is our responsibility to ensure all children are kept safe and protected so that they can achieve the best possible outcome and experience from these organisations. The bill highlights the New South Wales Government's commitment to providing a strong framework for the protection of children and young people in all organisations across the State.

I thank and appreciate the department and the office of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for their work in putting this bill together. They have focused on putting children's rights at the forefront and setting out explicit guidelines for organisations to follow both in leadership and staff practice. It is about a child safe culture whereby practice and policies are clearly outlined and followed. The bill seeks to better serve children and young people in New South Wales and is a crucial step forward in achieving a child safe culture in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (11:08):** I speak in debate on the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021. I endorse the comments of the shadow Minister when outlining the purposes of the bill and what the bill is designed to do. The bill is a response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission reported in December 2017. In June 2018 the New South Wales Government responded to the commission's final report and accepted in principle all 24 recommendations for making organisations safer for children. I have spent time looking at the website of the Office of the Children's Guardian and reviewing the resources that have been put in place to assist organisations. I congratulate the office on its work, which is quite comprehensive. As a former school principal, I was concerned to look at how the scheme might be implemented and the support that exists. There is a wealth of information that is easy to read and quite straightforward. I congratulate the Office of the Children's Guardian on doing that.

I have some questions about implementation that I hope the Minister will address in his reply. I remember when the work health and safety guidelines were brought in for organisations. There was a lot of concern about who was responsible, particularly where there are penalties for noncompliance. I know that in government structures and in the non-government area—not-for-profits et cetera—large head offices produce a lot of resources in order to support organisations further down the line. But for some of the organisations that have been brought under the auspices of the bill, such as sporting and recreational clubs et cetera, the delineation of responsibility in individual clubs down the line becomes more difficult, particularly for those that work with volunteers.

I ask the Minister to provide details about the responsibilities of head offices and governing bodies and how that affects people at the volunteer level. That is important. We want the scheme to work because it is about protecting children, which is incredibly important, but it is all about the implementation. There are issues around whether small sporting clubs, for example, will be required to report in their annual reports on how they are implementing Child Safe Standards. A whole range of issues will produce extra work for those volunteer organisations. I am a member of a surf club and have served as a surf club president.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Hear, Hear! The best one.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Thank you.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Were you in the boat?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** No, I was not. I used to ride a motorised one. When the Working With Children Check first came in, putting the guidelines in place was quite onerous because every year when the parent volunteers changed we had to introduce a whole new regime of training people. The throughput was incredible. As I said, we want this to work, we want it to be embedded, but I raise that issue because it needs to be simple at that level. The shadow Minister talked about how the scheme would be resourced, which is important. Generally the office would undertake random audits to check how people are going because it cannot check everybody every year. Organisations become complacent and their compliance levels drop because it may be several years before they are audited. All of a sudden they get the call and they hit the panic button.

If the Child Safe Standards are to be embedded into the culture of organisations, the peak bodies must make sure that they are producing standard forms, rules et cetera that people down the line can use and that there is ongoing training and participation by those organisations. As the shadow Aboriginal affairs Minister, I applaud the emphasis on ensuring that organisations are looking at the scheme from a culturally sensitive point of view. That is absolutely essential. In the past some people not only in Aboriginal communities but also in multicultural communities have been reluctant to report incidents because they do not feel that it is culturally safe to do so. That is an important part of the whole process. We really need this to work. The incidents of the past are terrible. Words cannot explain what has happened and the effect not only on young people at the time but also on their families. In some cases, trauma has been created over generations.

We have said sorry and that we do not want such incidents to happen again, so this must work. It must be effective. My concern is how it works on the ground in smaller organisations. The other day I was listening to ABC radio about incidents that have happened in gymnastics training and the approach of coaches. I heard about how some coaches used traditional methods that are no longer appropriate and about how that message was interpreted by the young people who were subject to those standards or ways of training. A generational difference in how adults, in particular, interpret what is and is not appropriate in their own minds can often be the beginning of these problems.

Obviously, some things are never appropriate, no matter what. But we also need to make sure that we do not scare away volunteers and that they do not become so scared of things going wrong that they stop participating. That is a big concern. I raise it in the context of volunteer organisations and how that translates down. All members are involved with voluntary organisations; we meet with them every day. Most of the people I have discussed the scheme with do not know it exists because it has been talked about at a higher level. They are not sure how they will be able to work within it. I look forward to the Minister addressing some of those issues.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (11:16):** I support the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021. This important bill is another demonstration of the Government's commitment to ensuring the safety of children in this State. In November 2019 the New South Wales Parliament passed the Children's Guardian Act 2019. That Act consolidated key regulatory functions to create a new foundation for the oversight of child-related organisations and practices in this State. The introduction of reforms in the bill builds on the Government's commitment to keeping children safe in organisations and strengthening oversight to hold organisations to account for their child safe practices. The bill brings together, for the first time in any jurisdiction, the vision of the royal commission to have the same oversight body responsible for a regulatory child safe scheme, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and the Working With Children Check.

The Child Safe Scheme will put into action the key preventative and future-looking recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The reforms will embed the Child Safe Standards in the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to create a strong message about what it means to be a child safe organisation in New South Wales. The Child Safe Standards were recommended by the royal commission to improve cultures, operations and environments to protect children from harm. Child safe organisations will be required to implement the Child Safe Standards through their systems, policies and procedures. Importantly, the standards are principles based and focused on outcomes, not on prescriptive compliance. That means that organisations will be able to implement them in ways that are meaningful and achievable in their own contexts. Organisations are best placed to know and understand their children and young people, and their families. The Child Safe Standards recognise that children need support and encouragement to thrive. Key to that are their families and communities.

The foundation of the scheme is capability building and support, represented by the new division 4. This provision sets in legislation the important function of the Office of the Children's Guardian to build the capacity of organisations to be child safe through the provision of resources, training and other supports. These supports can be used voluntarily by all child-related organisations. The focus on capability building and support represents

the importance of education in changing attitudes and cultures that may make children more vulnerable to all forms of abuse, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse, ill treatment and neglect. Awareness and education about how organisations can be child safe, whether it is through improved identification of child abuse or a better understanding of how to respond to complaints or concerns, is critical to achieve long-term change.

To support organisations to identify how they can improve their child safe practice, the reforms enable the Children's Guardian to require the head of a child safe organisation to complete a self-assessment tool. The self-assessment tool will act as a health check for organisations by helping them understand what they could do to make their environment safer by implementing the Child Safe Standards and linking them to trusted resources and other supports. The results of those assessments will assist the Office of the Children's Guardian to identify areas for targeted capability building at the sector level, or compliance activity. The self-assessment tool will be mutually beneficial to organisations as it will provide valuable and reflective feedback to guide organisations in how to meet the standards.

The reforms strengthen the ability of the Office of the Children's Guardian to hold organisations to account for their implementation of the Child Safe Standards through new monitoring, investigation and enforcement provisions. Monitoring will view capability building through an enforcement lens, and investigation would be used where there are more serious concerns about child safety that require attention. As the overarching approach is to prioritise capability building, enforcement action will aim to build the capability of organisations to prevent harm to children. However, more coercive measures are needed and would be used for organisations that may be unwilling to be child safe, or where there are serious concerns about child safety. The reforms will go a long way towards building the capability of organisations and holding organisations to account, to make sure they are safe for children.

The reform will support the Government's commitment to taking action to keep children safe by requiring organisations to take action to prevent and better respond to child abuse in organisations, and by strengthening the oversight of certain child-related organisations to hold them to account for the implementation of child safe practice. The bill will introduce a new overarching framework into the Act by adopting the Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practice; requiring significant public sector agencies that are responsible for the provision of services to children to develop and implement child safe action plans; requiring the Children's Guardian to work with organisations to raise awareness of child safety and build the capability of organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards; and promoting the implementation of the Child Safe Standards more broadly.

It will provide the Children's Guardian with powers to monitor the implementation of the Child Safe Standards, with powers for the investigation of complaints and concerns about an entity's implementation of the Child Safe Standards; with additional functions arising from the adoption of the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme; and with enforcement measures allowing the Children's Guardian to issue compliance notices to child safe organisations and enter into enforceable undertakings with child safe organisations. Finally, it will 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 the Commonwealth. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:24):** I speak in debate on the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021. I acknowledge and thank the shadow Minister and member for Charlestown, Ms Jodie Harrison, for leading on the bill on behalf of the Opposition. Similarly, I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the new family and community services Minister, the Hon. Alister Henskens, who has carriage of this bill. I know that he will sincerely put children's welfare and protection at the centre of his tenure as Minister. I wish him well in this portfolio, now and into the future. Before I address the details of the bill and the reason it is before the Chamber today, I acknowledge victims of child sexual abuse. The pain and suffering that victims endured stays with them, and they are constantly reminded of those horrific events that occurred at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives.

Every single day there is a reminder for those children—whether it is debates in Parliament or stories in the media, particular times of the year, particular events, songs, discussions, or even feeling the wind or looking at the sun or the clouds moving on a particular day. I say to those children—and adults, as they may be now—that we will always think of them. Bills like the one before the House, which is the result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, demonstrate that we will do the best we can, particularly for children who were involved with institutions. We must think also of those individuals who were subject to child sexual abuse that did not occur in an institutional setting. I say to the Minister that, moving forward, we must keep in mind individuals who are abused outside institutions, in a private setting. I know that the Government and the Minister will continue to work on that. I know that the shadow Minister will continue to fight for the protection and welfare of all children across the State—no matter where they are.

The bill was introduced following the December 2017 report by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Government's response was to accept all 24 recommendations put forward by the report that will make organisations safe for children. It includes the adoption of the royal commission's Child Safe Standards, which all organisations that are involved in child-related work must meet. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to develop the Child Safe Scheme and to put in place the Child Safe Standards as recommended by the royal commission so that they may be the foundation that guides the practice of child safety in organisations in New South Wales. Labor supports the bill and stresses the importance of the Child Safe Standards in order to keep children in New South Wales safe.

It is incumbent upon the State Government to ensure that our children are protected, and I am sure the Government will continue to do so. Let's face it: It is sad that this bill needs to be introduced at all, but it is incumbent upon members, as legislators, and the Parliament to protect these children. Sadly, the protection of our children, particularly from child sexual abuse, was at the forefront in drafting this legislation. As a father of four, I support any bill that will provide safer environments for all children. As a former teacher, I know the importance of ensuring the safety of children in a school, in the public environment and in all the activities that children are associated with, inside and outside of a classroom.

I believe it is the responsibility of legislators to make sure that legislation exists to ensure that the safety of children is paramount. It is important that there exists a strong framework that allows no room for noncompliance. The Child Safe Scheme will adopt the Child Safe Standards and will require organisations to implement child-safe action plans. I note the comments by the member for Wyong regarding the fluctuations of volunteers coming in and out of small organisations and larger associations, and ensuring that they are on the right page when implementing the child safe action plans, and that there might be some hiccups along the way. We need to guide them along, particularly with volunteers, who are there to help children. I have witnessed situations that are distressing for all, where a child has been injured on a field or somewhere and there is apprehension in the eyes of the adults to assist the child.

What type of society are we when there is apprehension there? Yes, we have come a long way in protecting children, but it is sad that adults are apprehensive when dealing with children because they fear that if they pick up a child or assist a child it could be perceived in a malicious way. It is very sad that that is the case in society. The bill will require the Children's Guardian to work with organisations—this is very important, hence those comments about volunteer organisations—to make sure the Child Safe Standards are implemented and to raise awareness of child safety issues. Most importantly, the Children's Guardian will also have the power to monitor the implementation of the Child Safe Standards—which is a good thing—to investigate any complaints and to enforce the implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

Labor supported the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and consulted with various bodies on the legislation, including Fams, the Australian Community Workers Association as well as early childhood organisations. Those organisations have been largely supportive of the bill and we acknowledge and thank them for the tireless work they do in protecting our children across New South Wales. As such, Labor supports the bill in the interests of providing a strong framework for the protection of children. It is necessary, it is our responsibility and it is the reason why the NSW Labor Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:32):** I support the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021. As a father of two kids under seven, I say that it is important that legislators support a safer community for our children moving forward. The reforms are built on a strong evidence base about what it means to be a child safe organisation and how organisations should be held to account for their implementation. The reforms are the result of extensive consultation conducted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Office of the Children's Guardian. The royal commission's final report, released in December 2017, recommended that child-related organisations implement the Child Safe Standards. The commission also recommended organisations be held to account for their implementation by an independent oversight body taking a responsive and risk-based approach to regulation.

Those recommendations were based on a strong evidence base about what the royal commission heard through its research, public hearings and private sessions about what makes organisations safer for children and what an effective regulatory model should look like. In June 2018 the Government, in its response to the final report of the royal commission, accepted the Child Safe Standards as the framework to create child safe organisations. The Government also committed to further consultation to develop an oversight scheme for the standards. The key objective has been to design a scheme that promotes cultural change, prevents unnecessary regulatory burden or tick-box compliance and, most importantly, protects children from sexual, physical and emotional abuse, ill-treatment and neglect.

It is a forward-looking, preventative scheme that aims to build on the strengths of what organisations are already doing to keep children safe. The reforms are a combination of a two-year ongoing consultation facilitated

by the Office of the Children's Guardian. Over that time, the Children's Guardian released a discussion paper to identify the appropriate policy parameters of the Child Safe Scheme. The Office of Children's Guardian met with representatives from over 50 government agencies, non-government agencies, regulators and peak bodies that represent child-related sectors. It received 58 written submissions to its consultation paper. A total of 162 people provided feedback through their online survey. A consultation report was released outlining the key components of the Child Safe Scheme, which informed further conversations with stakeholders and the development of an exposure draft of the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021.

The Office of the Children's Guardian again consulted publicly on the exposure draft in 2020 and 2021 to further refine the legislative aspects of the scheme and to ensure that it could be adequately implemented by organisations in ways that met the objectives of the scheme. The Children's Guardian received over 100 responses to its request for comment, including submissions and survey responses. During those consultations, it was again confirmed that the reforms enjoy significant support from the community and organisations alike. The key components of the scheme, as we have heard from previous speakers, are to embed the Child Safe Standards in legislation, strengthen capability building and oversight, and utilise child safe action plans to promote sector-wide reform, which have been supported by stakeholders. Stakeholders consider that the implementation of the Child Safe Standards by government and non-government organisations will have a significant positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of children.

Feedback has been considered and the bill amended to further clarify its intended purpose and operation. For instance, the Office of the Children's Guardian received feedback from some religious stakeholders who expressed concern that guidelines made by the Children's Guardian under part 3A might be mandatory and potentially impinge on their right to religious freedom. It is not the intent of the bill to curtail or impinge on the right to religious freedom. Rather, it is the intention of the bill to support child safe practice, including the provision of support to organisations through the development of guidelines and resources to assist them to build capability. Many stakeholders expressed a desire for that type of support. Following consultation, the bill was amended to make it clear that guidelines made by the Children's Guardian are developed to provide guidance and support.

The implementation of guidelines and suggested action is not mandatory. Organisations will be expected to implement the standards, but it will be voluntary as to whether they use any guidelines developed by the Children's Guardian to support them in doing so. During the consultations, the Office of the Children's Guardian has been in constant contact with stakeholders and many organisations to prepare them for the introduction of the scheme. A recent survey identified that many organisations are already implementing the Child Safe Standards, with some excelling and others just beginning. I am confident that the Office of Children's Guardian will further support and hold organisations to account in their efforts to be child safe and that they have the support of the Parliament on both sides and the community in doing so. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:38):** I pick up from the comments of the member for Fairfield. The bill will not change what has occurred to victims of child sexual abuse but, hopefully, it is a step in the right direction to ensure that the horrific things they have gone through will not happen to others. Victims of child sexual abuse have told me that it never goes away—it haunts them forever—but the hardest part is that often the abuse occurred to them at the hands of a trusted person or someone from a trusted institution. That is the cause of additional hurt. This bill is a step in the right direction.

I acknowledge and thank new Minister Henskens. Having worked with him, I know that he cares about people and about children in particular. We have had discussions outside of this Chamber about many things. I am glad that this bill is the first thing that he brings as the new Minister. I congratulate him on his new role and wish him all the best. I also acknowledge the shadow Minister, and member for Charlestown, who has given us a great briefing. She has the same sense of compassion, kindness and care towards children. I cannot imagine that anybody in this Chamber or in the other place does not feel the same way.

Children are the most precious things that we have in this world. Those who are lucky enough to be parents know that although children might give you some headaches sometimes, they also give you an incredible amount of joy. Those who have not yet got their P-plates or who have not yet discovered that children can say no to you should count their lucky stars—that is when it gets really interesting. But the protection of children is the responsibility of all of us. This is a sensible and important bill; I imagine every member who speaks to it will say something similar.

I acknowledge and thank NSW Children's Guardian Janet Schorer, her team and all agencies that work hard to protect children and give them the best lives possible. That is important work. I will refer this to the Minister later, but my request is that we provide them with additional resources and support where we can—particularly with these changes coming in that other members have spoken about. People come from a good place in their hearts but they need support to be able to implement change. Some of the community organisations in the

electorate that I represent are fantastic, but paperwork is not their greatest strength. They need support so that they do not inadvertently find themselves having not done the reports or the training they are meant to do. I have no doubt that their intentions are good, but there is an opening there. We must make sure that organisations have proper education so that they can implement what this bill seeks to do: protect our children.

The best people in the world are schoolteachers. In this Chamber there are a number of former schoolteachers, including the member for Fairfield and the member for Wyong. Once upon a time I was also a teacher—not that I was any good. I wish that everybody could have the experience of being a teacher to understand how special it is. The member for Fairfield referred to something related to a sporting field; it could also happen in a school. There are times when you need to put your arm around a kid or hug them or console them. Children and the world are complex. If a kid has hurt themselves on a sporting field and somebody is worried about holding, picking up or consoling them, then we have to ask ourselves what we are doing as a society. What sort of society are we trying to create when people do not know what an appropriate human interaction is? I have used schools as an example because I heard from some teachers about what happened when schools reopened after COVID. The impact that closure had on children, particularly on those for whom school is an important place, is well known. Upon their return many kids just wanted to hug their teachers, but teachers were concerned because they thought they were not allowed to hug. There was nothing untoward in it; it was just a human interaction.

As is clear, the Labor Opposition does not oppose the bill. We think it is a sensible and important bill in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which reported in 2017. Anything to look after young children will always be commended. Anything that helps young people, especially those in vulnerable and high-risk groups, goes way beyond politics. The challenge for us all, no matter what political party we are in, is how we make it work. The safety and wellbeing of children is incredibly important, but we need mechanisms to ensure that young people are protected. Unfortunately, as we heard through the royal commission, many were not protected and they have suffered lifelong as a result. We cannot just dismiss it by saying it only happened to a local group. We must address this and put mechanisms in place to ensure that abuse either does not happen or that it is quickly identified and dealt with if it does. There is no such thing as a little incident. We must make sure that we deal with it as soon as possible.

In my previous role I was a mandatory reporter, so I understand that at times things need to be reported because they are not appropriate. I am glad that the Government is finally implementing changes to put these recommendations in place, including the child safety standards. My colleagues have spoken about the aim of the bill, which is to amend the Children's Guardian Act to develop this scheme as the primary framework. We have talked about the exposure bill and there has been a lot of consultation. This is not something that we want to muck up; we want to get it right. I commend the consultation process that has involved many people, including some groups that sometimes would not be considered. Importantly, the bill provides the Children's Guardian with the power to investigate complaints. I again implore the Minister to make sure that there is adequate support. People who work in organisations will want to implement the new expectations on them but they will need help to be able to do so.

Let us also look at things that we sometimes do not look at such as linguistically and culturally diverse communities. They will need different types of support, including people who can explain things to them in their native tongue and people who understand how those communities work. We should always start from a good place—namely, people want to do good. How do we help them to do good? We do want not people thinking that they are doing good but they are not meeting the requirements or have not written up the framework as it is meant to be. Some of these small organisations operate on the goodwill of volunteers. Sometimes they may not have the skill set required to meet all of the paperwork requirements, so let us help them out. The more that we can build a scaffold to assist, the better the outcome will be for all of the State. That is a pretty easy thing to do, and it would help the implementation. Nobody wants to see children abused in any way.

In this place we have done a good thing. I hope that this legislation will be passed. The next step is the implementation and the support. Giving support does not mean that we just give people more work. We must give them the resources and the funding. We must make sure that we can access all parts of the community, understanding that we have different ways in which we can communicate with people now. I thank everybody who works with children in whatever capacity but especially those who are vulnerable, have complex issues, are displaced or have been hurt by others. I talk about teachers being great, but those people are invisible heroes. Out of the goodness of their hearts they often do things that others would not do. They should be supported as much as we possibly can. I again congratulate the Minister on his appointment and on this important bill. I hope that we will get through this. Like everybody in this House, I hope that child and sexual abuse ceases to exist. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:48):** I make a brief contribution on behalf of The Greens and offer our support for the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill. I join with those who have already

referred to the new Minister in this place. I offer my congratulations and hope that in his new role the Minister is able to recognise the massive level of responsibility he has for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Although we have focused today specifically on the protection of children and young people, across the Family and Community Services portfolio there are many vulnerable people. Many of them are face intersecting issues of housing stress, family stress, trauma and abuse.

The ability to connect and listen to those people, as I have been able to, having such a large public housing area in the electorate of Newtown, means that you see the intersection between all of the elements of this portfolio area. It is a huge responsibility. I hope that we do whatever we can to bring to the Minister the voices of the people whom he will represent and make decisions for in this portfolio so that they can raise their concerns with him. As I said, The Greens support the bill. We recognise that the object of the bill is to embed the Child Safe Standards, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, as the primary framework that guides child safe practice in organisations in New South Wales. My colleague David Shoebridge in the other place may move some minor amendments. I have no doubt he will be reaching out and speaking to the Minister about those if he has not done so already.

While this is a complex area, it is important to recognise the need for this action. We do not want further delays, inquiries or other things in this space to focus on criticism from certain members who may have their own agendas to attack certain good members of the public service or of our community who are doing all they can to work in the interests of children and young people. We must all recognise the importance of standing solid and strong in our commitment and cross-party support of the bill and we must not allow certain members who might have agendas to derail any attempts to deliver the bill through both this House and the other place with speed.

In talking about child protection and safety it would be remiss of me not to address the real risks and challenges faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in New South Wales, particularly when it comes to issues around children being put into foster care and the loss of connection with community as a result of those decisions. I had the privilege of meeting with Grandmothers Against Removals yesterday in Parliament. They raised some pretty serious concerns. I understand they will be reaching out to try to speak directly with the new Minister and I hope he will receive their correspondence and find the time to sit down with them. They raised serious concerns about a lack of clarity in policy when it comes to foster carers being able to take children overseas and non-citizens who become foster carers being able to go back home with children. There is clearly not a connection between existing policies around ensuring that there is a restoration between those relationships if we are allowing children to be able to travel or be placed overseas.

We recently observed National Sorry Day. The cry, loud and clear, from the Aboriginal community, First Nations people and Grandmothers Against Removals was that sorry means you do not do it again. We have said sorry but we must recognise that there are ongoing challenges. When we talk about ensuring that children are safe we must also recognise that that includes ensuring we do not add to the trauma they will face into the future. That means making sure children have a connection to country and culture, and a recognition of the fact that they should not be displaced from those communities or, as we have seen in the horrific examples of the past, stolen from their families. When we are talking about children's safety and members discuss the need to protect children, we must also make sure that we are talking about the protection of all children, that we do not make a distinction between children who are citizens of Australia and children who are not.

I cannot speak in this place today without briefly mentioning the horrific situation that is happening with Tharni and her family, and the campaign that has been running to try to stop those last two children from living in detention. It is absolutely crucial for us to recognise that a vigil is happening tomorrow night for that family, calling for them to be allowed to go home to Biloela. If we in this place have genuine compassion in our hearts when we talk of looking out for children's safety then we have a responsibility to use our connections and voices to say that we are not just talking about children in the remit or care of New South Wales who are citizens of Australia; we are talking about all children. I am sure that there are members in this place who could pick up the phone right now or send a message to the Minister for Home Affairs and with a stroke of a pen we could see Tharni and her family returned home to Bilo. That is absolutely crucial. They are the last two children held in detention in Australia. I think all members would agree that detention is not a place for children to be held. I appreciate that this issue is outside the scope of the bill so I appreciate members allowing me to raise it.

I have heard reflections from other members about how crucial it is that we do all that we can to protect children, when children as young as four are held in mandatory detention at the hands of our Federal Liberal Government and we have a Liberal Government here in New South Wales. Perhaps Government members could take a moment to send a message to ask that this completely disgraceful situation of this detained family not being allowed to go home to Bilo is raised with their colleagues in Federal Parliament. I end where I started by saying that I acknowledge and congratulate the Minister on his new role. I hope that there are many opportunities for us

to bring to him the voices of people who are impacted by the portfolio that he holds to make sure that we do all that we can to improve the lives of people who are sometimes the most vulnerable in our community.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (11:56):** On behalf of Mr Gareth Ward: In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Holsworthy, Camden, Oatley, Charlestown, Wyong, Fairfield, Lakemba and Newtown for their contributions to debate on and support for the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill. I especially thank the member for Fairfield for his contribution and heartfelt words about victims of child sexual abuse, about which I think we are all in agreement. There were some comments that did not relate to the bill. I will address the issues raised by members that relate directly to the bill. The bill implements key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It contains amendments to the Children's Guardian Act that will protect children from abuse in organisations and will further strengthen the Government's ability to improve outcomes for children and young people in New South Wales.

The bill will also contribute to the Premier's Priority of protecting our most vulnerable children. The key aims of the bill are to adopt the 10 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 Child Safe Standards are a proactive approach to changing the culture of organisations to promote the rights, best interests and empowerment of children. The Child Safe Standards will require organisations to create an organisational culture where abuse of children is prevented, identified, reported and responded to. As the former Minister indicated in his second reading speech, the bill is the culmination of a three-year consultation process following the Government's response on 23 June 2018 to the final report of the royal commission.

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. We went out to the sector with an exposure draft of the bill and there was overwhelming stakeholder support for the scheme, the objectives of the bill and the various components of the scheme, including child safe action plans. There can be no doubt that the bill before the House today is a demonstration of the Government's ongoing dedication to keeping children in New South Wales safe.

The safety of children in organisations should not be optional. The Child Safe Scheme is viewed as a significant way to change culture, thereby reducing the risk of abuse occurring in organisations. Child safe organisations must implement the Child Safe Standards. The organisations within the scope of the scheme will be clearly set out in the bill. The Children's Guardian will have new primary functions arising from the proposed adoption of the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme. The Children's Guardian may take action to build the capability of child safe organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards and prevent harm to children; monitor, investigate and enforce the implementation by child safe organisations of the Child Safe Standards; and ensure the implementation of child safe action plans by prescribed agencies.

The foundation of the scheme will be support and capability building. The cornerstone of the capability building component of the scheme will be a self-assessment tool. The head of a child safe organisation may be required to complete a short self-assessment tool to evaluate the organisation's compliance with the Child Safe Standards. This will provide guidance on how practice can be improved to better protect children. Child safe action plans aim to promote sector-wide reform and embed child safety across existing regulatory schemes. Expectations around what agencies should include in their action plans will be commensurate with what they are reasonably able to achieve within their financial and resource capacity, and the expectations of their stakeholders.

The Office of the Children's Guardian will take a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation. Regulatory effort for most organisations will be light touch, focusing on education and building on the strengths of what they are doing already. More coercive interventions will only be contemplated in serious circumstances where it is necessary to correct behaviour that places children at risk. The educative approach to regulation reflects the importance of changing organisational cultures by changing attitudes and practices to better protect children from harm.

I take this opportunity to deal with some of the matters raised in the debate. The member for Charlestown quite reasonably raised the costs for organisations implementing the standards and the Children's Guardian. The Child Safe Scheme will be funded by the Office of the Children's Guardian. Reprioritisation of existing resources across the Education, Health and Stronger Communities clusters will assist with addressing the one-off costs in effect by allocating \$1.5 million, or \$500,000 for each cluster. This will contribute to the development of the self-assessment tool, which will be of benefit to child-related organisations in these key clusters. Addressing multifaceted problems such as child abuse requires a cross-government response. It is our collective responsibility to make decisions now that will improve outcomes for children and young people.

The member for Wyong raised his experience as a volunteer surf lifesaver, which gave him concerns about the possible burden on small voluntary organisations. The member for Lakemba raised similar concerns and also raised issues around linguistically diverse voluntary organisations. Bringing smaller, less-resourced organisations into the Child Safe Scheme is something that the royal commission and the Office of the Children's Guardian have grappled with. That is why the Office of the Children's Guardian will take a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation. It is also why the foundation of the scheme will be to support and build capability. This means that regulatory effort for the vast majority of organisations will be light touch, focusing on education and building on the strengths of what they are doing already. More coercive interventions will be utilised only in serious circumstances where it is necessary to correct behaviour that places children at risk.

The child safe action plans will also reduce opportunities for duplication and limit resource burden on agencies. These will allow the Office of the Children's Guardian to work with lead sector agencies to embed the standards into existing regulatory schemes. I believe that was a matter that the member for Wyong raised about how the small clubs would interrelate with their larger organisations. The member for Wyong also raised community groups and liability. Enforcement provisions and executive liability will be used only in the most serious of circumstances following non-compliance. The Office of the Children's Guardian will be taking a responsive, risk-based regulatory approach with a primary focus on supporting organisations to build capability. Because they are executive liability offences, liability will attach to a director or executive of an organisation incorporated under the Corporations Act or, where the organisation does not have legal status, the head of the child safe organisation.

Organisations in scope of the Child Safe Scheme will need to have a procedure that documents how the organisation deals with concerns or complaints of abuse, including how they are responded to and reported to external agencies such as the NSW Police Force. This is an essential element of implementing the Child Safe Standards, the objective of which is to improve how organisations prevent, respond to and report child abuse. However, as sport and recreation organisations are not part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, they will not be subject to reporting requirements under the scheme or additional oversight in relation to how they investigate complaints of abuse. Communities and families will be driving the change in culture within the organisations they work with. They will have a role in holding organisations accountable for implementing the standards. The Office of the Children's Guardian will be working to provide resources to families and communities to be able to do so. In reply to some concerns raised by a couple of members, the scheme is not about stopping adult and child interaction: It is about putting appropriate boundaries in place when that occurs.

The bill provides for the future expansion of the Child Safe Scheme to more organisations recommended by the royal commission, including statutory out-of-home care and the disability sector. While some organisations that were recommended for inclusion in the scheme are not currently in scope, the Child Safe Standards can be implemented by all child-related organisations and will remain voluntary for organisations outside scope. Capability building and support resources developed by the Office of the Children's Guardian will be available to all organisations for free. Subject to funding and further consultation, the Office of the Children's Guardian remains committed to expanding the scope over time. I acknowledge the dedication of the Office of the Children's Guardian in protecting children and young people in organisations across our State. I thank the many survivors who have come forward to tell their story, and I acknowledge their courage in doing so. These stories have motivated, and will continue to motivate, the Government and the Children's Guardian to bring the royal commission's recommendations to fruition, helping to prevent abuse in organisations from occurring in the future. Ensuring the care, safety and wellbeing of our children and young people stands central to who we are as a society. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Gareth Ward: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 8 June 2021.**

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The Minister has the call.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:09:1):** The Opposition has circulated a number of amendments to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021 that came to us late yesterday evening. I take a point of order under Standing Order 210 and seek a ruling from the Chair that all Opposition amendments on the following sheets be ruled out of order. For clarity, I refer to the amendments on sheets c2021-054A, c2021-054B, c2021-046C, c2021-048A, c2021-047C and c2021-049B. I seek the ruling based on the following reasons, particularly in respect of amendments on sheets c2021-054A, c2021-054B and c2021-046C. Mr Temporary Speaker, I draw your attention to the Deputy Speaker's ruling on 11 May 2021, which ruled some amendments to the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 out of order on the basis that these types of bills make amendments that are minor in nature and contain non-controversial proposals that do not effect significant change to legislation. The Deputy Speaker stated:

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

A miscellaneous amendment bill such as the one we are now debating is very similar to a statute law revision bill and its intent is similar—that is, it seeks to clarify and make minor amendments to a number of Acts to help ensure that laws operate as intended and to facilitate the proper administration of the law. The amendments moved by the Opposition on all three of the sheets seek to introduce new proposals to the relevant Act, none of which have any direct relevance to the subject matter of the proposed amendments being made by the amending bill. Each of the amendments on the three sheets would also effect a significant change to the operation of the underlying legislation.

I clarify further that in respect of sheets c2021-048A, c2021-047C and c2021-049B the amendments on all three sheets seek to amend Acts or instruments that are not even listed in schedule 1 to the amending bill. So they are amendments to instruments that we are not even debating in the bill before the House at the moment. Sheet c2021-048A inserts new provisions in the Property and Stock Agents Act to require the secretary to include details of certain past investigations in the register. Sheet c2021-047C contains an amendment to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, which is not being debated as part of the miscellaneous bill. Similarly, the Opposition amendment on the third sheet, c2021-049B, does not amend any Acts or regulations that are being dealt with by this bill. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask that you rule all six sheets of amendments out of order.

**Ms Julia Finn:** To the point of order: This is absolutely outrageous. Every single one of the Opposition amendments pertains to the Better Regulation portfolio and is a minor amendment. The Opposition amendments do not overturn the operations of any of the Acts in their entirety. Some of the amendments are about reporting requirements. The Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation claims some precedent in relation to a statute law revision bill. I remember that debate very clearly. It was made very clear that the Act to which an amendment had been sought was not within the scope of the statute law revision bill of that day. Every one of these amendments pertains to a piece of legislation within the Better Regulation portfolio. The amendments were provided to the Minister's office earlier yesterday, not late last night. I also discussed them in my speech yesterday. None of them are a particular surprise. Every single one of them is a commonsense proposal.

The effect of knocking out these amendments is that, first, the Auditor-General cannot capture more information about the operations of this portfolio—about which there are wild claims of savings that the Auditor-General has expressed concern are just not quantified. It also means that the portability of long service leave for contract cleaning is not replicated in the construction industry, even though there are huge issues in both industries about underpayment and non-payment. This is about improving compliance. It rejects a very simple proposition, which the Government confirmed when it advertised the Retirement Villages Regulation, that Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast would be treated the same as—

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Further to the point of order: The member for Granville is debating the merit of what we are talking about, not speaking to the point of order.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I agree with the Minister. That is a debating point. I am willing to make a ruling on the Minister's point of order. Under Standing Order 210, I rule that the amendments are out of order due to their non-relevance to the bill before the House.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:16):** I lend my support for the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. I will focus my contribution today on the amendments in the bill relating to the Associations Incorporation Act. That particular Act was introduced in 2009 to repeal and re-enact the old Associations Incorporation Act 1984. The current Act carries across the original intent of the 1984 Act to establish

a scheme for registration of associations that have been set up for small-scale, non-profit and non-commercial activities. They include things like local sporting groups, arts and crafts groups, pensioner associations, musical societies and other community groups. These groups make up an integral part of our community fabric. They are led by dedicated volunteers who perform their duties without any remuneration. There are many fine incorporated associations that make a really valuable contribution, certainly within my electorate and across the State.

The amendments in this bill seek to streamline and simplify a number of existing administrative procedures to enable these groups to manage their affairs with greater autonomy and ease. The bill achieves this by providing flexibility for the distribution of surplus property where an incorporated association has been wound up, simplifying the process to appoint persons to fill casual vacancies in committees where there are insufficient numbers to maintain a quorum, clarifying the powers of the secretary to issue a notice for information in relation to the affairs of a formerly registered association, and removing unnecessary penalties for failure to hand over documents when a person ceases to be a committee member or public officer.

First, I turn to the amendments in the bill seeking to increase flexibility for associations in their management of financial affairs. Under the Associations Incorporation Act, registered associations must keep records that correctly document their financial transactions and position. Specific reporting obligations are based upon an association's categorisation as a tier 1 or tier 2 entity, which depends on the total revenue and assets related to the association. When an association winds up or its registration has been cancelled by Fair Trading, the Act continues to govern the association's financial management. Sections 65 and 75 of the Act currently prescribe that any surplus property of an association that has ended is to be distributed in accordance with a special resolution passed by members of the association. In the majority of cases where an association has wound up, it is practically unfeasible to organise for a special resolution to be passed. As a result, many associations are unable to distribute their leftover assets that have been accumulated over the years.

Incorporated associations in New South Wales play a vital role in bringing people together for a common cause, providing real benefits for their members and adding meaning to the make-up of a community. When those associations come to an end, many members wish to distribute the association's surplus property to other organisations that serve the needs of the community such as charities, local schools, hospitals or councils. The bill will enable those associations to contribute to those entities by removing the impractical requirement for assets to be distributed in accordance with a special resolution. Instead, the remaining assets may be managed according to the constitution of the association if it contains provisions that address the distribution of surplus property. If the association's constitution does not provide for the distribution of surplus property, then it may be dealt with either by a special resolution if feasible or, if not, by a direction of the secretary.

The amendments will provide greater autonomy and choice for associations to determine the most suitable way to distribute their surplus property upon winding up. With that increased flexibility, the bill will allow associations to manage their assets more efficiently and ahead of time in order to leave a legacy in the community as they pass on their assets to be used or revitalised for a specific purpose. The bill further enhances the practicalities of running an association by improving the governance of committee operations. The Associations Incorporation Act requires registered associations in New South Wales to maintain a committee that oversees the association's financial affairs and ensures the association acts in accordance with its objects. Section 28 of the Act provides that a committee must include at least three members aged 18 years or more.

An association's constitution may include additional qualifications for its committee members. In addition, the constitution of an association must make provisions for the composition and function of committees, such as the election or appointment of new committee members, the grounds on which the office of a member may become vacant and the process for filling casual vacancies. To that effect, the model constitution, which is annexed to schedule 1 to the Associations Incorporation Regulation, establishes the governance framework for committees that may be adopted by associations. Specifically, rule 21 of the model constitution provides that committee members may appoint existing members of the association to the committee membership if at any time the number of committee members is less than the number required to constitute a quorum. In that case, the appointed member is to hold office until the next annual general meeting following the date of the appointment.

Given that associations may adopt their own constitution or a modified version of the model constitution, rule 21 is only applicable to those associations that have adopted the model constitution. The bill seeks to create a harmonised approach by inserting a similar provision into the Act to ensure that all associations registered with NSW Fair Trading have the capacity to fill casual vacancies by appointing additional members to the committee membership. Increased flexibility for committee operations will enable members to carry out their day-to-day functions with minimal disruption as they are able to maintain a quorum at all times. That in turn will strengthen community confidence in the affairs of associations, as the legal validity of the committee's decisions and governance oversight is upheld.

I now turn to another important amendment in the bill that seeks to increase accountability and public confidence in the operation of incorporated associations. As I mentioned earlier, the Associations Incorporation Act imposes certain obligations on associations, including the requirement to keep financial records and to lodge reports with NSW Fair Trading. Under section 85 of the Act, NSW Fair Trading officers may also issue notices for information compelling an association to produce documents or information in connection with the affairs of an association. Failure to comply with that order may attract a penalty of up to \$6,600. That enforcement power is currently limited to registered associations, which means that NSW Fair Trading officers are unable to obtain necessary information and documents in relation to the affairs of a formerly registered association.

There are occasions where the department needs to consider such information, including when the affairs of a former association are subject to investigation or when documents are needed in connection with legal proceedings. The bill will address that regulatory anomaly by inserting a new power into the Act to enable NSW Fair Trading to issue notices for information relating to the affairs of a formerly registered association. That will promote best practice by extending regulatory oversight to former associations and it will also reinforce the Government's compliance and enforcement powers. Finally, I speak to the amendments in the bill that seek to remove inconsequential penalties from the Act. Under sections 28 and 35 of the Act, a former committee member or public officer of an association must return all documents belonging to the association within 14 days of vacating office. A maximum penalty of \$110 applies to any person who fails to comply with that particular requirement.

In practice, the failure to hand over documents under those provisions usually arises where there is a dispute relating to a vacancy or a changeover in persons in official positions within the association. Those types of disputes cannot be resolved by NSW Fair Trading and associations would eventually need to commence civil proceedings to recover such documents. The existing penalty provisions cause unnecessary confusion and delays to the dispute resolution process for individuals and associations. Further, the current maximum penalty does not serve as an effective deterrent against noncompliance with those legal obligations. As such, the bill seeks to remove those penalties from the Act and provide greater clarity to the role of NSW Fair Trading in those types of disputes.

The amendments reflect the Government's commitment to customer service by simplifying regulatory schemes, removing unnecessary red tape and bringing certainty to the law. Associations operate across the State to bring people from all walks of life together through social, creative and community service networks. The amendments to the bill recognise and support the valuable contributions of associations to all of our communities by making it easier for them to operate and to comply with their legal obligations. I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for bringing the bill to the House and for implementing those important reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:26):** I contribute to debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. In particular, I draw the House's attention to the proposed amendments to the Retirement Villages Act and regulation. The proposed amendments to the Act and regulation, if adopted in their current form, will have the following effects: First, they will create an offence for retirement village operators who fail to provide residents with prescribed information relating to the sale of premises; secondly, they will clarify that a former occupant of a retirement village may apply for an exit entitlement order only at the end of the prescribed period, and may make an additional application at the end of a further six- or 12-month period; and thirdly, the proposed amendments will enable the Minister to delegate functions to the department in order to promote efficiency in the administration of the law.

The devil is most certainly in the detail when it comes to the proposed amendments. I will speak to the particular amendment that clarifies that a former occupant of a retirement village may apply for an exit entitlement order only at the end of the prescribed period and may make an additional application at the end of a further six- or 12-month period. People living in a retirement village in Newcastle will be able to apply for an exit entitlement order at the end of six months if their property fails to sell within that time. However, people living in a retirement village in Lake Macquarie or the Central Coast will have to wait 12 months before they can apply for an exit entitlement order simply because Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast were removed from the list of prescribed local government areas. Initially both LGAs were included in the list in the September 2020 retirement village reforms consultation papers.

I have spoken before in this place about the tale of two cities that the Government has inflicted on Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. It has created an artificial division between those two local government areas by naming Lake Macquarie a "regional" LGA and leaving Newcastle out of both the "regional" and "metropolitan" classifications. That division has a long and truly bizarre history of creating distinctions between Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, two LGAs that stand side by side and share suburbs—in fact, even streets. Lake Macquarie residents are able to access the regional seniors travel card, for instance, while Newcastle residents—some who

live just across the road from their Lake Macquarie neighbours—cannot. Lake Macquarie sporting groups are able to access regional grants, but the teams they play against in Newcastle cannot.

The changes to the Retirement Villages Act and regulation proposed by the bill will only deepen that division, further entrenching that tale of two cities the Government has been telling for years now. Dozens of constituents—residents of retirement villages in my electorate—have been in contact with me about the proposed amendments. They have raised their concerns, particularly on the matter of exit entitlements and recurrent charges. In March I wrote to the Minister expressing these concerns, and I acknowledge my colleagues the member for Granville, and the shadow Minister for Consumer Protection, and the member for the Entrance, who also wrote to the Minister raising these issues.

Thanks to our beautiful local environment and relaxed way of life, Lake Macquarie has an active retirement village market and a large population of retirement village residents. All of them have every right to feel let down by the Government's approach to this issue. I recognise that prior to the 2019 election those opposite committed to introducing time limits on when retirement villages could charge for general services and when they must sell or buy back a unit after the departure of an occupant. As I mentioned previously, Lake Macquarie was initially included within the greater metropolitan area, meaning exiting residents would be paid their entitlements by the operator within six months.

The decision to remove Lake Macquarie from schedule 5A is baffling to me and to retirement village residents in Lake Macquarie. Residents leaving retirement villages in Lake Macquarie should not have to wait twice as long to be paid as other people in the same situation in Newcastle. It does not make sense that people from places like Eleebana are treated differently to those less than five kilometres away in the Newcastle LGA. They are in exactly the same property market. This amounts to nothing less than a betrayal of Lake Macquarie retirement village residents. One retiree at Eleebana Shores wrote to me and said:

This is an onerous imposition on those in retirement, many of whom are on a pension, as should this stand, we would have to wait a year before the application of the exit entitlement.

Based on the September 2020 discussion paper issued by Fair Trading, residents had no reason to doubt that Lake Macquarie and, indeed, the Central Coast would be classified as "metropolitan" areas, as the City of Newcastle and the City of Wollongong have been. When I wrote to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation asking him to explain why Lake Macquarie had been left off schedule 5A, he informed me that the Government elected to use the Department for Regional NSW's classifications to decide which areas would be defined as regional and which as metropolitan. If that is the case, then the Department of Regional NSW's definition of regional and metropolitan is arbitrary and applied inconsistently. It seems strange. If Fair Trading had been using that definition from the outset, why would Lake Macquarie have been included in the discussion paper gazetted in September last year?

The decision to exclude Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast from schedule 5A is manifestly unfair. It should be addressed by the Government. Many other changes are being proposed in this bill, which the shadow Minister has addressed, as will no doubt many others. The changes to the Retirement Villages Act and regulation are of pressing importance to so many of my constituents. I join with my colleagues in calling for changes to the bill to ensure that its impacts, particularly with regard to the provisions I have talked about above, are fair. I sincerely hope the Government listens to the calls being made by the people of Lake Macquarie.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:33):** I support the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. I applaud the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for his work, which has led to the bill being introduced. An important role of this Government is to protect the people of New South Wales and to improve their quality of life. This commitment is enshrined in the Premier's Priorities, which seek to deliver key policies targeted at protecting vulnerable communities, improving education and health services, maintaining a strong economy, and breaking cycles of disadvantage. The bill supports the Government's efforts to put the customer at the centre by enhancing the State's protection of consumers and the broader public. Through minor but important amendments to the laws, these reforms will deliver positive outcomes for the New South Wales community, particularly in the building and construction industry and across our retirement villages.

Some of the reforms contained in the bill include strengthening compliance and enforcement powers of NSW Fair Trading in the building industry; creating a new offence for retirement village operators engaging in noncompliant behaviours; and expanding the powers of authorised inspectors under legislation administered by the Long Service Corporation to protect the interests of employers and employees in the building, construction and contract cleaning industries. To begin, I will speak to the amendments relating to the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. Members may recall that this legislation was introduced and passed by the Parliament last June. The primary objective of that Act is to prevent developers from carrying out building work which may result in serious defects to residential apartment buildings or result in

significant harm or loss to the public. To this effect, section 33 of the Act enables the secretary to issue a building work rectification order on a developer if they have a reasonable belief that building work was or is being carried out in a manner that could result in a serious defect.

A "serious defect" includes a defect in a building element that is attributable to a failure to comply with the performance requirements of the Building Code of Australia, the relevant Australian standards or the relevant approved plans. Once issued, the rectification order can require the developer to either carry out building work or refrain from undertaking building work to eliminate, minimise or rectify the defect. This important measure ensures the safety and quality of residential apartment buildings in this State. It sends a clear message to the community that any developers engaging in noncompliant or poor building practices will be held to account. However, the existing evidentiary threshold for this provision has created some practical barriers in the exercise of the secretary's power.

Currently, a building work rectification order can only be issued under section 33 if the secretary has a reasonable belief that building work was carried out in a manner resulting in serious defect. For this standard to be met, there needs to be evidence of the way the building work was performed. It may take time to gather sufficient evidence to establish the secretary's reasonable belief, particularly if buildings are a few years old. This poses a real risk of harm for tenants and the general public, who are exposed to serious building defects while evidence is sought. The Government has a public duty to safeguard consumers and the public from harmful and unlawful practices in the marketplace. This extends to any building work that has the potential to put members of the community at risk. These activities must be stopped immediately and any serious defects rectified promptly.

The proposed amendment contained in the bill enables this by lowering the standard of proof that needs to be satisfied before a building work rectification order can be issued. It will allow a rectification order to be issued so long as the secretary maintains a reasonable belief that a residential apartment building has a serious defect. This will enable appropriate enforcement action to be undertaken in a timelier manner to address identified public safety risks. If required, evidence relating to building works can be gathered as part of the collaborative process between developers, the Office of the NSW Building Commissioner and NSW Fair Trading in remedying the defect. Where a person licensed under the Home Building Act 1989 fails to comply with a building rectification order, the bill also makes amendments enabling Fair Trading to take appropriate compliance and enforcement action.

The proposed reform will clarify that Fair Trading can commence disciplinary action against licence holders who have failed to comply with building rectification orders without reasonable excuse, even after the time for compliance has lapsed. Practically, this will allow the regulator to press breaches of the order in disciplinary matters where the consumer has made an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The minor changes to the law will further promote the use of building rectification orders to effectively reduce and remove defects associated with building work. For the Government this will be an opportunity to publicly reaffirm its commitment to consumer protection, and to ensure the laws remain relevant and fit for purpose.

I now turn to the proposed amendments in the bill relating to the Retirement Villages Act 1999. In New South Wales there are more than 60,000 retirement village residents; that number is expected to almost double by 2023 as we become an aging population. According to a 2020 census conducted by PwC and Property Council of Australia, the average resident age on entry into a retirement village in New South Wales is 75 years. The average tenure of current residents is nine years. Keeping residents safe during their tenancy and protecting the longevity of the sector is a government priority, reinforced by the recommendations arising from the 2017 retirement villages sector review led by Ms Kathryn Greiner, AO.

Over the past three years the New South Wales Government has introduced a suite of reforms to the retirement village laws in response to the review. In 2018 amendments to the Retirement Villages Act prescribed annual contract check-ups, mandatory rules of conduct for operators and measures to increase transparency around marketing practices. Earlier this year further reforms were introduced to improve exit entitlement schemes and to remove the liability of former residents to pay recurrent charges after vacating the premises for 42 days. Those reforms have strengthened the rights and safeguards for residents while also balancing the needs of operators to ensure a vibrant and secure future for this industry.

This bill adds to the successes of those reforms by creating a new offence in the Retirement Villages Act that will improve operators' compliance with their existing legal obligations. Section 168 of the Act sets out rights and responsibilities of residents and operators during the sale process of premises. Under section 168 (5) operators who are appointed as selling agents must provide residents with certain information related to the sale upon request, including all offers to purchase premises and a monthly marketing report. However, there is currently no mechanism under the Act to enforce those requirements. Without an offence provision, residents seeking a remedy for a breach of section 168 (5) are required to go to the tribunal and seek a non-compliance order. [*Extension of time*]

The administrative complexity and costs associated with formal dispute resolution proceedings may prevent some wronged residents from seeking justice. The bill ensures proper remedy is provided in those circumstances by inserting a new offence into the provision for non-compliance. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Committees*

### LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

#### Reports

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:44):** It gives me great pleasure to address the House. I am delighted to make a short contribution on Legislation Review Digest No. 31/57, dated 8 June. In our deliberations on 8 June the committee considered five bills: Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021, Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021, Greyhound Racing Amendment (Whole-of-life Tracking) Bill 2021 and Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Bill 2021. We commented on three of those bills. The committee also considered 16 regulations, commenting on eight of those. I will not read them all out today. I will not go through in detail all of the legislation we considered, but as usual I encourage members to refer to the digest. It is a fine summary of the legislation before the House and addresses the requirement of the committee to comment on the aspects of the legislation that infringe upon the rights and liberties of the citizens of New South Wales, which is always something members should be mindful of.

The committee also noted that one of the staff who has served the committee well for many years, Elaine Schofield, is soon to retire. I am sure all committee members would join me in wishing her well in her retirement and thanking her for her high professional standards and exemplary service to the committee. The committee also noted that it had written to the Premier in August 2019 about the review of the Legislation Review Act 1987 conducted during the previous Parliament. The committee wrote again to the Premier in August reminding her that we had not received a response from the Government to the committee's review of the Act. The committee undertook to follow up on that correspondence and I look forward to seeing a response from the Premier. As usual I thank my fellow committee members for their attention to their duties on the committee, and I thank the staff who serve the committee well. I commend the digest to the House.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:46):** As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee regarding the thirty-first digest for this Parliament, tabled on 8 June 2021. In this digest the committee examined the five bills introduced in the last sitting week, beginning 11 May 2021. Three of those bills contained issues on which the committee reported. The committee also commented on eight statutory instruments. I now draw the attention of the House to some of the issues raised.

The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 establishes Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practice in organisations in New South Wales. This framework adopts the approach as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The committee identified that the bill provides for new circumstances in which the Children's Guardian may disclose information obtained in monitoring and enforcing compliance of child safe organisations with the Child Safe Standards. Specifically, the Children's Guardian may disclose information to an interstate or Federal agency with similar functions to those it exercises under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 if the information is relevant to the exercise of an interstate or Federal law or an undertaking being carried out jointly between New South Wales and another State or Territory or the Commonwealth.

The committee noted that those provisions may impact on an individual's right to privacy as the type of information that may be disclosed is not specified by the bill and there is no requirement that the Children's Guardian seek consent from or notify individuals who may be affected. However, the committee acknowledged that information sharing is limited to government agencies that have similar functions relating to child safety. The committee also acknowledged that the provision aims to facilitate cooperation between State, Territory and Commonwealth agencies to identify, prevent and respond to incidents and risks of child abuse. In those circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 makes a number of changes to building, design and electricity legislation, and is aimed at improving consumer confidence and enhancing compliance in those industries. Among the changes, the bill amends the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2017 to provide powers of entry to authorised officers of network operators and retailers to enter a premises to carry out work. This includes work such as preliminary investigations for a proposed installation or extension of electricity works

as well as reading, testing, maintaining or replacing electricity meters. Authorised officers may also enter for any other purpose as prescribed by the regulations. The committee identified that this power of entry may impact on a person's right to privacy and property by allowing authorised officers to enter a premises without the consent of the owner or resident. The committee noted that the power of entry is limited to the purposes of carrying out certain electricity works on the premises.

The committee also acknowledged that the bill provides some safeguards on the use of this power of entry by requiring that it occur during daylight hours, except where there is an emergency, and by use of an existing opening in the fence if possible. However, under the provisions, authorised officers may still damage a premises, although as little as possible, and enter a premises through a "new" opening that must be closed after the need for entry has ended. In these circumstances, the committee referred the provision to the Parliament for its consideration of whether it impacts on a person's right to privacy and property.

I turn to a statutory instrument examined in this week's digest. The Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (Miscellaneous) Regulation 2021 permits a correctional officer to require an inmate to undergo a breath test without a suspicion that they have consumed an intoxicant. The committee noted that this extends the circumstances in which this search power may be used by correctional officers and may impact on an inmate's right to personal physical integrity. The committee did acknowledge that the increased power may assist in dealing with substance abuse among inmates and may be considered necessary in some circumstances. However, the regulation does not include additional safeguards to mitigate risks arising from the broadened power. The committee referred the provisions to Parliament to consider whether they unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties, and whether they are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

I acknowledge the contributions of two committee members who have been discharged recently from the committee: the Hon. Trevor Khan, MLC, from the other place, and Wendy Lindsay, the member for East Hills. I welcome new members: the Hon. Sam Farraway, MLC, and the newly elected member for Upper Hunter, Dave Layzell. I wish them luck in joining the committee and hope they enjoy the work that we undertake. In considering their forthcoming contributions to the committee, we will no doubt feel the loss quite keenly of Elaine Schofield, Director, Scrutiny and Engagement, who is soon to retire. We have one more meeting with her before she leaves us at the end of July.

The entire committee thanks Elaine for her contribution. She has been a steadfast member of the parliamentary team that works in committees. She shows incredible skill and knowledge, particularly in the area of scrutiny itself, and in the work that the committee undertakes. Her contribution, guidance and support will be missed by all committee members, but most particularly by me. When I was first elected and appointed chair of the committee, I leaned on Elaine quite heavily in the early days to fully understand the work that the committee does. She will be missed and I am sure her shoes will be very hard to fill. The committee sends its best wishes to her on her sea change and tree change to Port Macquarie. We know she will love it, but we will miss her. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the public gallery my guests John and Helen Dwyer from Scouts NSW, whom I hosted for lunch today following their successful bid at a bushfire charity event. I welcome warmly the Hon. Thomas George, formerly of this place, and Andrew Young. I welcome the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, who are students in year 11 and year 12 at Heritage College Lake Macquarie. They are watching question time from the McKell Room.

I acknowledge participants in the Introduction to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly public sector seminar, who are viewing proceedings from the Jubilee Room. I trust that they are finding today's proceedings useful and informative, and I welcome them all to Parliament House. I thank the Government Whip, the Opposition Whip, the member for Newtown and the member for Lake Macquarie for presenting at the seminar. I also acknowledge Adam Hall from the Health Services Union, who is a guest of the member for Shellharbour.

*Announcements***KOORI KITCHEN**

**The SPEAKER:** I thank members and staff for their support of last night's Koori Kitchen event. This month six Aboriginal guest chefs are showcasing native ingredients on the Strangers' Restaurant menu.

**AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**The SPEAKER:** I thank members and staff who supported Australia's Biggest Morning Tea this morning in the newly accessible Speaker's Garden. I believe we raised over \$6,000 for Cancer Council NSW. I thank all the generous donors. I also thank Adam Johnston and the member for Gosford for helping to officially open the new ramp.

**DEATH OF MRS FRANCES GROVE**

**The SPEAKER:** With regret I inform the House of the passing on Friday 28 May of Mrs Frances Grove, wife of the former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Russell Grove. Frances was a steadfast and dedicated supporter of her husband and of the Parliament, offering much of her own time to various activities and engagements over the years. We extend our deepest condolences to Russell and their daughter, Sarah-Jane.

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:22):** Ostensibly I give notice of a motion to move dissent from a ruling given this morning by Temporary Speaker Evans, the member for Heathcote, in relation to amendments moved by the member for Granville, and the shadow Minister for Consumer Protection, to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. The amendments were circulated to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and the member for Tamworth, but were not moved. The Minister requested a ruling from the Chair that the amendments be ruled out of order on the basis that they were not within the scope of the amending bill.

The Opposition contends that until amendments have been moved, they are not in possession of the House and therefore have no status other than to assist in the efficient proceedings of the House. If amendments that have been circulated but not moved are able to be ruled out of order, a practical problem arises in that members might be minded to not circulate amendments, but rather to stand at the lectern and move them one by one, and argue ad nauseam about their validity and veracity. I do not think anyone wants that. If you were of a mind to make a ruling now, Mr Speaker, or to give a considered ruling now, I might not have to seek the indulgence of the House to move a motion of dissent.

*Rulings***AMENDMENTS TO THE BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
(MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

**The SPEAKER (14:22):** The matter raised by the member for Maroubra is the matter that briefly delayed the start of question time. I am happy to deal with the matter now. Prior to question time I spoke with a number of parties, including the member for Maroubra, and very briefly the member for Heathcote. I understand the member's point about setting a precedent. I clarify that under Standing Order 64, which provides for pre-audience by a member in charge of the order of the day—in this context, the Minister with the carriage of the bill—pre-audience does not override the right of a member to move amendments during consideration in detail of a bill.

Until such time as the amendments are moved and the question is put from the Chair, the amendments are not in the possession of the House and therefore should not be ruled out of order at that point. Whether or not amendments that have been proposed and previously circulated are in order remains a matter to be determined by the presiding officer, but only after they have been moved. It is my understanding that perhaps the amendments were being debated by the Opposition, which also was not appropriate. It would be confusing for a presiding officer if Opposition members were debating amendments that they had not moved. I hope I have clarified that situation and that the member is satisfied. No precedent has been set for the future.

*Question Time***HEALTH FUNDING**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:24):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Federal Government plans to make over 900 changes, including cuts to Medicare. Will the Premier join with me in seeking assurances

from the Prime Minister that no-one in New South Wales will have surgeries cancelled or be out of pocket due to those changes?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24):** The people of New South Wales would well know that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has presided over a period with record investment in health.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We have built or upgraded in excess of 100 hospitals or health facilities across the State. Last budget we announced an extra 5,000 frontline workers, whether they are nurses and midwives, paramedics and other frontline workers—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** During COVID we have invested extra billions of dollars not only to ensure the safety of our citizens but also to protect our frontline workers against the detriment of COVID.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Government has demonstrated its capacity to preside over a strong budget in order to increase health funding. Anybody who was involved in the budget process would know that every year Health has a growth rate, which we have to deal with every single year. We have done that in excess of what has been required. The New South Wales Government has always been vigilant in making sure that every year its investment in Health increases and continues to grow, and that will always be the case. When the Opposition was in Government, this State was in such deficit that Health spending actually decreased in real terms.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Rather than launching unsubstantiated fear campaigns, perhaps the Opposition should spend a second looking at the contribution of Health in relation to how this State has dealt with COVID. If the State Government had not invested in Health over the past 10 years, had we not established our local area health services and our local area health districts, I can tell you now that we would not have had the response to COVID that we had. That reform alone ensures a localised, swift and nimble response to any health issues that are raised. I commend all of our health workers and frontline workers, as well as the Treasurer and the health Minister, for ensuring that the New South Wales Health budget not only continues to grow, but also that it translates into better services, better hospitals and better resources for our health workers to beat this pandemic.

#### COST OF LIVING

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:27):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is reducing cost-of-living pressures for people across the State?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27):** I am not sure what all the excitement is about. I think it is a great question from the member for Holsworthy, who is representing a very strong community in south-west Sydney. We regularly make sure that we speak to the local community in the electorate of Holsworthy to understand their needs into the future. Mr Speaker, I am finding it difficult to hear myself.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, there is general chatter in the background. Members will remain silent.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not want to have to shout; I do not have a loud voice. In addition, I wanted to say that our Government takes—

**The SPEAKER:** If the member for Cessnock and the member for Keira want to talk, they should leave the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Unfortunately those Opposite do not seem to be interested in cost-of-living measures. Today, very pleasingly, the Treasurer, the Minister for Customer Service and I were able to announce a boost to the program that offers cost-of-living specialists to support those in the community who are in desperate need and want to make sure they are getting benefit from the 70 rebates our State offers.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know it does not interest those opposite, but this morning—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Today we met Jim from the suburb of Bradbury in south-western Sydney—I think it is in the electorate of Campbelltown. He outlined that he and his wife saved over \$2,300 just

from going to a Service NSW centre. Gwayne, who happens to live in Oakdale, also went to a Service NSW centre and managed to save \$1,500 a year from her household budget.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. There is deliberate chatter occurring in the Chamber. I know it is at a low level, but I ask members to desist from having private discussions. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time for talking while I was speaking. The Premier may continue.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I hope members opposite notwithstanding—Mr Speaker, I believe there is a deliberate attempt by those opposite to cause destruction and disruption in the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! When the Premier is being serious, I expect there to be silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I simply make this point: The biggest challenge we have in providing support to households and working families in this State is the public information about cost-of-living measures. That is why it is really important for all of us as local members of Parliament to ensure our community is aware of these measures.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We have over 70 schemes, which are working incredibly well. In the last little while our State has given away in excess of \$3.5 billion through those measures—whether it is Active Kids or people saving on their energy bills. As I said today, it gave us enormous pleasure. I do have to shout-out to Jenny from the Gregory Hills Service NSW centre, who was singled out by the two families that came to Parliament House today. In meeting with those two individuals, she was able to save them together in excess of \$3,500 just by giving them the information and advice provided.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will remain silent.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know that many communities crave the benefits of Service NSW. I acknowledge the member for Holsworthy. Because of her advocacy there will soon be a new Service NSW centre in Edmondson Park. We know that is a growing community; in fact, we are doing a lot of work in that community, which is in proximity of the south-west rail line.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury and the member for Lakemba should leave the Chamber if they want to have a private conversation. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As I was saying, on average, families are saving—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time. If you keep talking when I have asked you to be quiet, I will call you to order for a third time.

**Ms Anna Watson:** But the other side is talking, as well.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Shellharbour will remain silent.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In addition to the measures that we announced this morning, I am pleased to say that the New South Wales Government is looking to not only increase the footprint of Service NSW but also make sure we have mobile Service NSW centres going around. For many rural and remote communities the mobile Service NSW centre has proved invaluable especially in getting important information, which we can specifically target to communities that have specific disadvantage, or specific initiatives that will support them. I also acknowledge the extra staff who have come on board recently and thank— [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby and the member for Lane Cove will remain silent. Order! The Premier has not finished. I ask members on both sides of the Chamber to desist from general conversation.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Not only are we increasing the footprint but we are also keen to make sure that everybody across the State takes advantage of these extra rebates. I especially thank the Department of Customer Service. During the height of the stress of COVID—not to say that we are out of the woods, but in those dark days when many people lost their jobs—Service NSW hired around 1,000 extra people. Many of those customer service specialists came from the airline sector and hospitality sector. They were people who had otherwise been displaced.

I thank those workers who, for a period of time, worked in customer service. Some have gone back to their normal jobs because the economies have started to pick up. I thank that agency for providing not only extra information to our citizens but also that level of employment when people needed it most. It is an example of a government agency providing better attention and care to the citizens, and supporting jobs into the future. We know that for every dollar that households save, they reduce stress for themselves and they are able to put those dollars into other parts of the economy. Very pleasingly, people have used our Dine & Discover vouchers over

4.3 million times across the State. Today pleasingly, the Government announced that it will extend that for another month and we look forward to people taking up that offer. Whether it is in relation to cost-of-living measures, supporting jobs or supporting households and working families, we do so gladly because we are the party of the workers.

### HEALTH FUNDING

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:35):** My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier agree with the planned 900 changes, including cuts to Medicare?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (17:35):** I would not believe a single thing those opposite say. When they were in government—

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As I said in my response to a similar question—I am not sure if members opposite choose not to listen to our responses or just choose to reiterate the same question—when it comes to providing funding for Health, I make the point that our support for public health and public health policy has been demonstrated in the past decade. For instance, our chief medical officer has a direct line—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** For instance, our public policy health unit, including the chief medical officer, has received continued support over the past decade, not just in the past 18 months. With the establishment of our local area health districts, our health system underwent amazing reform when we came to government. These are all the things that have supported us in fighting against the pandemic.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We have been through scare campaigns before. New South Wales Opposition has launched these scare campaigns before. They have no merit. They have no validity. What the people of New South Wales know is we proudly—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Nobody needs me to say it, just look at the results. We have the best health system in Australia. I am proud of that. I am proud of our workers. I am proud of the people who support our hospitals and our workers. We are the party of the workers.

### ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:37):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's investment in roads is creating stronger connections and supporting travel to the regions?

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:38):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question. He is a member who understands how important it is to have a strong, reliable and safe road network across regional New South Wales. I also acknowledge the former member for Lismore, Thomas George, who is in the public gallery today. As you can see, Thomas, nothing has changed on the Opposition benches, mate. I also point out that the member for Clarence knows that it is critical to have a good, safe road network in the regions because it supports tourism and encourages people to get out and see what is the very best of regional New South Wales. It is because of the Liberals and The Nationals in government that we have a safer, stronger regional road network.

If you have a look at our investment every year, this year alone over \$8 billion has been spent on regional transport and roads. The Pacific Highway is a perfect example of what infrastructure has been delivered. There has been a \$15 billion investment into the Pacific Highway. That has cut about 2½ hours of travel time and reduced fatalities by 70 per cent. It has transformed the journey north for those who are travelling up the coast to visit beautiful spots like Yamba, Evans Head and Tweed Heads. That upgrade has turned what were once congested and unsafe streets in coastal towns into bustling tourist centres where pedestrians can cross the street without having to dodge heavy vehicles and holiday traffic.

It is also a great time of year to visit our State's beloved Hunter region, where the new member for the Upper Hunter is already busy at work. He knows the difference the billion dollars is making with the investment in the New England Highway. He knows that with the support of the Federal Government we are transforming communities from McDougall's Hill to Murrurundi. There have been projects such as the \$137 million Scone

bypass, which was delivered last year six months ahead of schedule, and the Muswellbrook and Singleton bypasses, which are on track to start work next year.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** These are projects that no-one thought were possible and they are being delivered by this Government. There is no better time to get out and explore regions such as the Hunter than right now with The Queen's Birthday long weekend coming up—there are only a few days to go. Speaking of royalty, I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, The Lion King of Kogarah, and his deputy, the member for Londonerry. I love the pics.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I congratulate them on what is their new brekkie TV show. Here it is. Move over Kochie and Nat. Here we are, we have got Chris and Prue.

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

**Ms Kate Washington:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about regional roads and those of us who live in the regions want to understand what the Minister is going to do, such as in Nelson Bay.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will continue, but he should be wary about using props.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member for Kogarah handed that to me as I was walking in. We are investing in a lot of roads around the State. I point out as the member for Bathurst, we are investing in the Great Western Highway. That project is going to ease congestion over the mountains and we are going to see those journeys being transformed. With Federal Government support, we are investing \$4.5 billion to upgrade and deliver a safer, more reliable and stronger dual carriageway for people travelling in, around and through the mountains. It is another project that was put in the too-hard basket for too long. But we are not afraid of the challenges, which is why we are delivering on our ambitious project of Australia's longest road tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley—an 11-kilometre groundbreaking project that will bypass the Victoria Pass. Last June long weekend more than 30 vehicles broke down trying to get up the pass to get home. Since then we have instituted traffic control to hold vehicles at the bottom until they can make the journey in one uninterrupted go. But motorists know that we are also delivering for the future. The Great Western Highway upgrade will bust the long weekend gridlock once and for all.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blue Mountains will remain silent.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We also have our record \$4.5 billion investment with the Feds in the Princes Highway, which is completely reshaping a journey that many locals have harrowing experiences of. That is why the community is eagerly awaiting the opening of a \$630 million Albion Park Rail bypass in a few weeks. [*Extension of time*]

If I just go back, the Opposition needs a slogan. The *Today* show has "I wake up with Today"; for the Opposition it is "I wake up with Labor". That is a terrifying prospect for the voters of this State. Just ask the people for the Upper Hunter. When they were presented with that idea, they ran in the other direction. Just in case that experience has put the Opposition off from going out into the regions, let me tell you that it is like spiders, it is like snakes: regional voters are more afraid of you, than you are of them. The investment this Government is making is transforming our communities. These major highways are making a huge difference and ensuring that these roads remain reliable, free flowing and safe every day, not just on long weekends.

I know that the Opposition leader is also going to have a very busy weekend drawing up his shadow Cabinet. I do not know why it is taking so long because it is good as it is going to get. He is sitting with the fresh faces that he is going to choose from. I cannot wait to see who is going to be appointed to the shadow Cabinet next week. The Liberals and The Nationals in government are building a stronger regional road network across this State. We will continue to transform lives and make our communities better in regional New South Wales.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:45):** My question is directed to the Premier. Today she told paramedics who are relying on a wage increase that she "can't reveal any more until the budget". If she plans on raising wages in the budget, why does she not sit down with paramedics today to avoid industrial action tomorrow?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:45):** I again place on record my gratitude to paramedics and frontline health workers and reiterate our Government's constant discussion and engagement with the paramedic representatives, in particular the Health Services Union. As the health Minister said, he met

with them last week. The Treasurer met with them this morning. I met with them personally about a month ago. I do not know where Opposition members have been—in fact, I do know. They have been focused on themselves. It took them two weeks to get an Opposition leader, four days to get a deputy and they still do not have a shadow Cabinet. That is their focus. Our focus is on the people of New South Wales.

I reiterate that I have met with union. The Treasurer has met with the union. The health Minister is in constant contact with the union. This is how we work as a government. We listen and make sure that we look at all of the issues we have to deal with in a budget, including running a government during a pandemic and after the bushfires and the drought. We know and appreciate what our workers contribute to this State because we are the party for the workers. But we also know how important it is to speak directly to those people representing the workers of this State. That is a constant process of engagement. In fact, I understand that discussions between NSW Health and the HSU have continued today. That will be ongoing. That is how good governments work. But a good government also is consistent, unlike the Leader of the Opposition. Do members remember his first speech and what he said about unions? Now he is their biggest champion. Rather than flipping and flopping all over the place, we on this side of the House stand for something. We stand for our workers. We stand for the people of this great State. We are focused on jobs and on people, not on ourselves as those opposite are.

**The SPEAKER:** It has been brought to my attention that somebody in the northern gallery has been taking photos. If you were taking photos, I ask you to delete them. Photography is not allowed in the gallery.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY ECONOMY

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:48):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's economic policy settings are strengthening western Sydney's economy and creating jobs?

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Keira and the member for Prospect that they are on three calls to order.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (14:49):** You will get your chance, Keira. You only have to wait till six months out. Then you can have your own leadership contest.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** What was that?

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I was merely reminding the member for Keira that he only has to wait till six months out from the election and he can have his own leadership contest. He will be able to participate in that one. I know he was so keen; it is the job he has really been craving.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** You didn't go to Princeton, mate!

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I know. We are from different schools. How do we compete with Ivy League? I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. One of the great things that this Government has implemented recently is its Jobs Plus policy initiative, which is about attracting investment into New South Wales and creating new jobs. Baxter, which is a fantastic business located in the Seven Hills electorate and a long-term investor in New South Wales, has been able to use Jobs Plus to support 600 jobs and bring on a new production line. That will create 80 new jobs in the Seven Hills electorate. The Jobs Plus package is about reducing payroll tax for businesses so that they can employ more people. What I am frightened of most is that those opposite will follow exactly what Labor has done in Victoria and increase payroll tax and follow a tax-and-spend mentality. That will drive down jobs growth in New South Wales, rather than increase jobs like we are doing in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cessnock will remain silent.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** We know that the impact of COVID has been substantial across the State. We lost over 270,000 jobs in a few months at the beginning of the pandemic, but in western Sydney we are now only 1.3 per cent below the employment numbers before COVID. That has been an incredible response from the western Sydney economy. We are seeing strong confidence in our economy and people reinvesting. In the data released in April nominal retail sales, consumer sentiment and business confidence went up and business conditions improved. Those datasets show us that the economy in New South Wales is recovering well from the pandemic. But it is not just a recovery from the pandemic; it is the strength of our policy settings over 10 years that has allowed us to create more jobs across western Sydney.

We have all heard the Premier say that we are the party of the worker. This Government is the party of the worker for this fundamental reason: since April 2011 there have been 240,000 new jobs in western Sydney. The Government is the party of the worker because it creates more workers and more jobs; it puts more dollars in the pockets of families in western Sydney and across the State. That strengthens our economy. The policy settings of

those opposite are about taking money away from the 90 per cent of people in the State who work in the private sector and did not get a pay rise last year and asking them to create pay rises for people—

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** The Industrial Relations Commission has said what we can afford. What is a prudent method for managing the economy through the course of this pandemic? Everyone has to tighten their belts and protect the jobs we have got to ensure that New South Wales is in a strong position when we come out of the COVID pandemic. Across western Sydney we are building new hospitals and roads such as the M4 with the new ramps that allow traffic to flow into the city more effectively. We are building metro rail lines across north-western and western Sydney as well as the light rail. We have built the fantastic M4 East tunnel. Those opposite argued over that for decades and kept residents of western Sydney trapped in their cars in Sydney's biggest car park: the M4. Now the traffic flows and people can get to their jobs and home to their families. These are the things that strengthen the New South Wales economy. These are the policy settings that ensure that more jobs are created in western Sydney. Last week I was able to support a number of western Sydney businesses and businesses from across the State that exhibited at the Land Forces expo. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bankstown and the member for Wollongong will remain silent.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** At the Land Forces expo we had companies from across western Sydney such as Thomas Global from Homebush, NNS from Silverwater, Burwell Technologies from Revesby, J3Seven from Penrith, Baker & Provan from St Marys, Precision Metal Group from Wetherill Park—doing a fantastic trade program with young Indigenous men and women—and Quickstep at Bankstown. These fantastic western Sydney businesses are creating new jobs and looking to take full advantage of the national endeavour of renewing and strengthening the Australian Defence Force. The Commonwealth will spend over \$400 million on new acquisitions and sustainment. We want to make sure we have that sovereign capability to have an advanced manufacturing job base in Australia, particularly in western Sydney.

I say to everyone in the Chamber and across New South Wales: Make no mistake, over the past 10 years we have strengthened the western Sydney economy and New South Wales is better for it. Members opposite are nothing more than snake-oil salesmen. People will hear promises galore from members opposite about how they will make life better and reduce the cost of living, but there is not one single policy initiative that we have heard from them that will improve the cost of living in New South Wales, create more jobs or put more money in the pockets of families across western Sydney. There are nothing but snake-oil salespeople on the other side of the Chamber. They are willing to promise the world to people, but look at their track record: 10 years of not being able to deliver a single thing. They have a new leader who cannot even pick a shadow team. God help us if he was ever under any real pressure.

#### CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES TRUST

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:56):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Last month the Minister said that the "OneCrown" model would "support consistent, transparent and affordable pricing ... better support consumers and ensure available land into the future". Does the Minister still think she was right to insist that the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust be closed down?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:57):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his question because at the heart of these conversations around cemeteries, burial and interment is price. It is the price for families who are at their saddest and lowest point. Being able to pay—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This is about affordable funerals for families. The Catholic Church has been an incredibly important part of that service to the people of Sydney for the past 150 years. We need to look forward on this issue to ensure that we have land supply. We will continue to have conversations with the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust. I assure the community that this is a conversation that we must have to ensure we have a downward cost for families at their time of greatest need and grieving. We have a situation where the Crown cemeteries in Melbourne are half the cost of many cemeteries across Sydney. That is the issue we are trying to resolve so that we can have accountability and transparency, and we can take the community with us.

I respect and understand that the Catholic cemeteries at Rookwood and Liverpool have important churches and places of worship. For many years families have attended the funerals of their loved ones at those cemeteries and there is an important part for them to continue playing, which is why there are many options in *The 11th Hour: Solving Sydney's Cemetery Crisis* report to continue that potential and ability to have the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust involved. We need to be able to make sure that happens as well as ensuring we have the supply into the future for all faiths—Catholic, Jewish and Muslim communities—and all people needing

that certainty. For some faiths, it is a certainty that needs to be delivered in a very short period. That is what we are dealing with. We must also ensure that we have the money to continue to care for and protect those graves so that those cemeteries are beautiful places to go to and people can sit at the headstone of their loved one and not be worried about who is or is not mowing the grass.

That is the type of reform that we are looking at across the sector. I acknowledge that we have been able to work with the other four trusts that we have amalgamated. Yes, I hear and respect the concerns of the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust. We will continue to have conversations because I can guarantee absolutely that faith—whatever faith people belong to—will continue to be at the heart of how people want to bury their families. As I have said, in regional New South Wales local councils own, manage and operate many of the cemeteries in the country. There is faith involved at those cemeteries. We have an obligation and a duty to continue those conversations with the Catholic Church and all other faiths as we deal with the situation of limited supply options. We must guarantee future supply and manage those gravesites forever across Sydney Crown land cemeteries. It is an important issue and I thank the member for his question. We will continue to have good conversations as we deal with this difficult issue. Faith will continue to be at the heart of everything we do at Crown cemeteries across Sydney.

### PRISON INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:02):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's significant investment of \$3.8 million to expand prison infrastructure? How is this creating jobs and keeping the New South Wales economy strong?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:02):** I have not had the opportunity to congratulate the new Leader of the Opposition. As with all new promotions, I thought it appropriate to offer him a gift. As many of you know, this box is very precious and dear to me. I cannot bring myself to give it away, so I can only offer the other thing I have in my purview to give. The Leader of the Opposition does not have one and I think it only fair that, like many of his colleagues, he should have one. The member for Cessnock has three, the member for Maroubra has one, the member for Auburn has four, the member for Gosford has two and his deputy, the member for Londonderry, has three. So I am proud to offer him a new prison in Kogarah. I can sense the new Leader of the Opposition is going berserk inside with excitement, jubilation and gratitude, but there is no need to say anything because I know the feelings and the words he would like to say but just cannot. I say to him: You're welcome. It will be a great opportunity to deliver great infrastructure to his electorate.

When we came into government in 2011 it is safe to say that the New South Wales correctional system was in a state of disarray. Prison infrastructure was in disrepair, prisons were devoid of future planning and overcrowding was causing significant pressure not only on inmates but also on the hardworking correctional staff across New South Wales. And yet, instead of addressing the pressing need, the Labor Premier and the Minister for prisons were fighting about a proposed \$500,000 ministerial office fit-out. The then Labor Premier eventually came out in defence of this grandiose refurbishment scheme, stating, "You can't expect Ministers to do their work in a caravan park".

The then Labor Premier said the Minister may be "entertaining prison Ministers from interstate or overseas". Seriously? Half a million bucks so the visiting prisons Minister from Tokelau could kick back and rest his feet on a leopard-skin Versace ottoman? Talk about the priorities of the then so-called party of the workers! How did that go for the Labor Party? I can tell Labor members: The workers voted for the actual party for the workers in 2011 and have re-elected them three times since. In 2016, the New South Wales Coalition Government announced its Prison Bed Capacity Program for better prisons.

**Mr David Elliott:** Like the next one, it was ahead of the game.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I acknowledge the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. It was a program of infrastructure reform, renovation, innovation and expansion, which included an astonishing \$3.8 billion investment in modern, secure, fit-for-purpose prisons across the State. As I look around the Chamber, there are members everywhere whose communities have benefited from this program. In the electorate of the member for Auburn we have invested over \$300 million in expanding the Metropolitan Reception and Remand Centre, and the Mary Wade Correctional Centre, resulting in an additional 230 jobs in that electorate. In the electorate of the member for Cessnock we have invested over \$450 million building the Hunter Correctional Centre, and also expanding the Cessnock and Shortland correctional centres, bringing more than 400 Corrections jobs to the region and employing more than 500 people through construction—most of whom came from the local area. Indeed, as the member for Cessnock knows, despite the best efforts of his council, we are also building a road for his community.

In Londonderry we have invested \$225 million in expanding and refurbishing the Dillwynia women's prison and the Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre. This investment resulted in an additional 129 Correctional roles for the complex and over 250 people—locals—working on the expansion. In the Bathurst electorate—the centre of the universe—we made a \$146 million investment in an expansion to the Bathurst Correctional Centre. The expansion saw 167 people working on the construction and resulted in 90 additional corrections jobs at the centre. In Dubbo—great Dubbo—we invested \$188 million building the 400-bed Macquarie Correctional Centre. Over 200 locals worked on that project and the correctional centre now employs an additional 220 people from the local area.

In Riverstone—the great Riverstone electorate—we invested over \$210 million expanding Parklea Correctional Centre, which saw over 160 people employed during the design and construction of the project. In the Cootamundra electorate we have expanded the Junee Correctional Centre by 480 beds—the result of an almost \$300 million investment—and the centre now employs an additional 130 people in the region. In the electorate of the member for Oxley we have seen a \$180 million expansion of the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre at Kempsey, with more than 110 people employed in the design and construction of the project. [*Extension of time*]

The expansion has resulted in an additional 116 people being employed at the centre. In fantastic Goulburn we invested \$47 million expanding the High Risk Management Correctional Centre, resulting in an additional 46 people being employed at that correctional complex. In fantastic Clarence one cannot go past the \$700 million building of the state-of-the-art, 1,700-bed Clarence Correctional Centre.

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

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** More than 1,000 jobs were created during construction and the centre employs 600 Correctional officers from the region. This investment is expected to inject approximately \$560 million into the local economy over the next 20 years. The Premier has said it, the Treasurer has said it, most of the Ministers have said it and the people of New South Wales have said it: We are the party for the workers. We are the party creating jobs across New South Wales. We are the party keeping the New South Wales economy strong.

#### SOCIAL HOUSING

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:09):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. The *NSW Intergenerational Report* the Treasurer released this week predicted demand for social housing would increase by 68,000 households by 2060. Currently there are 50,000 applications on the waiting list. Given the Treasurer has previously acknowledged the benefit of investment in social housing for the economy, what is the Treasurer's plan to invest in social housing to address this crisis?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:09):** I thank the sensible member for her sensible question. We are on a unity ticket when it comes to social and affordable housing because no-one has done more in this space than the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

**Ms Prue Car:** You're on a unity ticket with The Greens.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us take up that interjection. Whilst we certainly might agree on the social outcome but disagree on the funding source, I think we can all say that investing in social and affordable housing and providing support, particularly for vulnerable people right across the State, is a sign of any good government. On this side we know that we have been able to increase that investment because strong financial management and strong social outcomes are two sides of the same coin, and that is what the State has seen from our Government.

I am pleased that the member for Newtown has read the intergenerational report. She is probably the only person, outside of Clayton, on that side of the House who has. But I agree with the premise of the question; I think we have certainly seen that during COVID. Early on, with the Minister, we made substantial investments as part of our stimulus package and one of the key areas that we focused on was social and affordable housing because they were projects in the short term that would be able to drive employment, drive jobs growth and, at the same time, ensure that we had a great social outcome at the end. We saw that firsthand when the \$2.3 billion support package included \$34 million to prevent homelessness, \$14 million for emergency accommodation and \$20 million in rental subsidies. But to the question: It is probably more important that we put the \$60 million into maintenance and upgrades.

We saw firsthand at the start of the pandemic that within six months that maintenance investment had provided employment, but importantly we saw people being able to move into that housing. There is no doubt that, as pointed out in the intergenerational report, this will become a more substantial issue going forward and governments will continue to need to look at ways to address it—whether it is through social impact investment,

which we have done in the past, or whether it is through asset recycling, which I know those opposite oppose—because it helps unlock capital that we can drive into future housing. What you will see in the upcoming budget is continued investment in housing to provide permanent, long-term support for the needy in our society. As the intergenerational report shows, if there is no policy change, if we continue on current trends with population growth and home ownership declining, there naturally will be a greater burden on social and affordable housing in this State.

The purpose of the intergenerational report is to provide advice to government on what that future could look like so we can avoid those trends and not just tackle investing in social and affordable housing in isolation, but also housing generally so there is not that pressure going forward. The demand for housing, as the member pointed out, could cost the State around \$12 billion over that period, and there are significant consequences to the State if that demand is not met. What we need to do going forward is to continue the work that we have been doing in this space. In 2016 this Government set up the Social and Affordable Housing Fund with \$1 billion and we will continue to work in that space to unlock capital that we can invest in housing right across the State. Since May 2017 the Social and Affordable Housing Fund has delivered over 1,300 social and affordable dwellings and work is currently underway to deliver close to 3,500 more.

The Communities Plus Ivanhoe Estate renewal will transform 250 social housing properties into over 3,000 socially integrated properties, with over 900 social and 100 affordable rental properties. On the capital side of things, we will continue to invest in the Land and Housing Corporation, \$600 million there and more capital stimulus in addition to the \$250 million. We put \$150 million new capital into the Claymore and Bradbury areas. That should not just occur in isolation but obviously with Aboriginal housing as well—that is a crucial part. We put \$212 million into that, for the member's information. I say to the member for Newtown, I completely accept the premise of the question. This Government has done more than the previous government but that is a pretty low standard. When it comes to investment in social and affordable housing we should do more and we will continue to do more to ensure that when we get 2061—Brad won't be here, but we will.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Why won't I be here in 2061?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I think he knows why. We will be making sure that the most vulnerable people in our community have access to the housing that they deserve.

#### WATER MANAGEMENT

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government's management of water is benefiting regional New South Wales and why regional water strategies are so critical?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:15):** I thank the member for Dubbo for his question. In the midst of the drought, he had Burrendong Dam down to 1.5 per cent of capacity; today it is 57.9 per cent. Things have turned around. He is also very much fighting on behalf of his community to see the capacity at Burrendong Dam increase the full supply level to give security in the next inevitable drought. He is also working very well and showing the right leadership for the communities on the Gin Gin Weir, a project that will have enormous environmental benefits—getting rid of that dreadful old concrete weir—with a weir that will allow fish passage and improve environmental outcomes and water recovery. I thank the member for Dubbo for that.

This is all part of the work of our regional water strategies. Because we know that there will be another drought and we need to ensure that we have the infrastructure, the planning and the conversations with our community to ensure that we have the projects ready to ensure sustainability and to ensure that we can keep more water in the system for the next drought. There are a lot of learnings out of this drought. Thirty-eight towns nearly ran out of water. Dubbo was one of them. There were many others. We have never seen such a low rainfall for three years in the northern basin. We need to take those learnings and move forward so that we can ensure, whether it is the North Coast, the South Coast or the Central West, that we have water. That is at the heart of what we are doing. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the former shadow Minister for water, Chris Minns, on his elevation to the frontbench.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** To the leadership.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Sorry, to the leadership—the fourth one that Barra and Gladys have seen off. I do mean that genuinely because I think it is a good thing that the Leader of the Opposition has been out to the regions and got his fingers involved in some water policy. I acknowledge that in February 2019 he had some meetings in parts of regional New South Wales and he pointed out that it was wrong that we had not regulated and were not measuring flood plain harvesting. I agree with him. We are on a unity ticket with that one. I look

forward to the point where the Leader of the Opposition actually appoints a shadow Minister for water and we deal with that issue.

**Ms Kate Washington:** We have one. He is sitting right there.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will remain silent.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I do not want to make any comment on Clayton because I do not want to cruel his chances. But the point is the Leader of the Opposition has a very unique opportunity to do what he says—not just to say no all the time, as oppositions do. But this will be a very important point in terms of ensuring that New South Wales has the proper procedure in terms of measuring and managing our water. Labor started flood plain harvesting in 2004. We want to get it through the upper House and Labor's support will enable that to happen. I look forward to working with the Leader of the Opposition on that.

The other issue that I cannot be on a unity ticket with him about is not being able to stop forced buybacks. Our Government has successfully lobbied the Federal Government and we have a commitment from it that there will be no forced buybacks in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Leader of the Opposition actually had the decency to say to a public meeting that he cannot be sure what Labor would do in government federally. That is honest. But he can be assured that we are not going to do forced buybacks or encourage them from our side of Parliament and we are on a unity ticket with the Federal Government on that as well. That is important to sustainability and our regional communities. With climate change and with the challenges we have as a nation, we need to be able to ensure that we have water security for the next drought. The best thing we can do is, when we have huge rainfalls—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** When we have storms like we have seen in the past 12 months, we need to be able to capture water to ensure that the next drought is not as severe as the one we have gone through. Water harvesting, dams and building lakes—all those issues are very important to sustain our communities. There has never been a stronger step in the communities of regional New South Wales than right now. [*Extension of time*]

If we want to sustain that energy, those jobs, the investment and the positivity around regional New South Wales, water security is at the very heart of it and that is the Leader of the Opposition's challenge—to show his support for regional New South Wales on very important policy issues.

#### *Members*

### INAUGURAL SPEECH

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Upper Hunter, I acknowledge a number of people who are in the public galleries. I ask those who are not booked in for this inaugural speech to leave the galleries and that those who are booked in to come into the public galleries. I suggest that some of those in the northern gallery may want to move into the Cooper Gallery; we have capacity for a few more. There might be a better view from the top gallery at the back. I know it is a popular occasion, but I ask that members space themselves further apart, particularly on the Opposition frontbench.

I warmly welcome those seated in the upper galleries who are here to watch the inaugural speech of the member for Upper Hunter. Although the numbers are constrained, a healthy number of attendees are present, some of whom I will acknowledge, though I am sure the member will acknowledge others in his speech. In particular I acknowledge David's wife, Rachel Layzell, daughters Mia and Emily Layzell, father, Jim, and mother, Mary Layzell, former members George Souris, Andrew Fraser and Thomas George, and other distinguished guests. The most distinguished person here today who we are all waiting to hear from is the member for Upper Hunter, whom I now invite to give his inaugural address.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:25):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is quite a moment. It is a great honour to be here in this Chamber to give my first speech in front of my new parliamentary colleagues, my campaign team and my dear friends and family. Today on 9 June 2021 in our New South Wales State Parliament, which is the oldest Parliament in Australia, I stand here and I soak up the enormity of this occasion. A faith has been beholden in me by the people of the Upper Hunter. They have given me their trust and I feel the weight of this commission on my shoulders, but it is a weight I know everyone around here shares with me. I walk into this historic place in the same footsteps as many great people; in particular the Hon. George Souris and his wife, Vassy. Together they have spent their lives working and representing the people of the Upper Hunter. They are both forces of nature. Through their mentorship they have given me great energy and focus. They are an awesome team.

I start by acknowledging my parents, Jim and Mary Layzell. I thank them both for their constant support and love. Both have taught me the importance of hard work, honesty and integrity. My mother, Mary, came to Australia from Scotland and worked as a nurse. My father, from Wales, worked as an engineer. Both were here on working holidays nearly 50 years ago and, luckily for me, they met, married and settled down on the mid North Coast. Like many migrants to this country, they fully embraced the Australian way of life. My brothers and I remember the sacrifice they made for their children. We are so proud of them. We have always been told that Australia is the lucky country. They taught us that the sky is the limit and we were given every opportunity to reach our dreams. I have a deep sense of respect for the institutions built by generations before us. My parents have ensured that the lives of their children are now ensuring that the lives of their grandchildren are full of promise, love and enjoyment. They have successfully passed down those values and a sense of family.

These lessons in life are bestowed from one generation to the next. I still feel the presence of my Papa when I use the sharpening steel as he did when I was a kid. I still feel the presence of my Grandad when I am using my hammer to drive down those nails. Somehow their love and connection is still with me today. I see it in my own children when we are working in the cattle yards and my father-in-law and good friend Robert Gowing takes a moment to teach my daughter a new lesson. These are the special family moments that last forever. My parents believed in a great education. I was lucky enough to attend The Armidale School. There I found a world of different experiences. The boarders soon took me out into their world of remote and regional New South Wales, along creeks and back paddocks, running tractors in dusty cattle yards, hectic shearing sheds, and sleeping in swags underneath the clear night skies. I discovered Banjo Paterson's romantic sense of the bush. But it was an education that no classroom can provide. It broadened my world to see what a hard life, yet a really rewarding life, it can be for those people who toil on the land.

That was just the start of my love of agriculture and farming and, most importantly, the people who live in regional New South Wales. After school I attended the University of New South Wales and the residential hall of Baxter College, a place that was full of young men and women from all over regional New South Wales. It was a formative time. The bonds between us all are strong. We have a group of friends that have lasted the test of time. I acknowledge my long-time friends Jimmy and Lucy Hamill, who join me here today. During that time both Jimmy and I entered the fray of university politics. I am not sure it prepared me to come into the Parliament today, but it certainly prepared me for life in the community. It was during those early college days that a woman turned my world upside down. I was captivated. My wife, Rachel, this independent, strong-willed woman from Muswellbrook, entered my life and together we have taken on many of life's adventures.

I still remember clearly the day I knew we would spend the rest of our lives together. We were working in the United Kingdom and it was in a Cambridge bookshop. We decided to start planning a trip across Africa. Within a month we had bought a Land Rover, we had a plan and about 20 years ago, during those scary months just after September 11, we took off and headed for Cape Town from London. We saw firsthand many of the beautiful cultures in Africa, particularly in Ghana, where we worked for a couple of years. That has given us a lifetime of stories, and it was such a special time that we shared together. That was a journey that was life changing, a journey where we got married and a journey where we started our family. It led us into the greatest adventure of our lives: having our four wonderful daughters, Emily, Mia, Ashley and Indi.

Rachel has been the rock in our family and to her I give every credit for the young women we are introducing to the world. Everything she does is to remind us about the importance of family. I can only hope that my actions today and in the future remind them that I love them all dearly and provide inspiration for them to serve their community, because our community is like a family. I have spent a long time reflecting on what it means to represent a community as large and diverse as the Upper Hunter and, more importantly, how I can best serve those people. For it may be diverse and wide, but it really consists of a network of small communities all with their own different cultures, identities, shared interests and similar challenges. Of course the tasks that bring people together in the Upper Hunter are challenging, but they are most definitely achievable. A community champion who has pulled us together for the past 31 years is our own ABC Upper Hunter radio presenter Mike Pritchard, who retired just last Friday. They say there is a lot in common between journalism and politics, so I am sure there is a lesson to be learned from someone who finishes their career with a reputation as a gentleman. He is the gold standard and I wish him well in the future.

Let me describe to you all a bit about the Upper Hunter. Up in the eastern part of our Upper Hunter we have the beautiful agricultural area around Gloucester. From that region we are joined today by Graham Forbes, who is a passionate advocate of the dairy industry—an industry we need to support and grow to ensure it survives into the future after what has been a very tough time for dairy farmers. Joining us from that region is Councillor Karen Hutchinson from the historic town of Stroud. I invited her today as one of the great role models in my life. She is the definition of a community champion. She is truly inspirational in the way that she leads and works with her local community. I thank Karen for her service.

Also in the east is my hometown of Clarence Town and the surrounding Dungog, Vacy, Paterson and Gresford. We are all situated in the rolling foothills of the Barrington Tops. It is a beautiful place to live, work and play. I feel so blessed to call that area my home. In the centre of the electorate are the industrial hubs of Singleton and Muswellbrook. These regions are the backbone of the coalmining industry in New South Wales. These mining towns carry a proud, hardworking tradition in the region. As we venture further north, we have Scone with its agricultural heritage and the thoroughbred horse breeding industry. It is second only to Kentucky in the United States. This industry goes from strength to strength. I intend to support that growth. Joining us here today from Scone is Duncan Macintyre, a local champion who is well known for stepping up to almost every committee in the community. Thank you, Duncan.

In the north and west of the electorate are the strong agricultural areas of Quirindi and Merriwa. Both areas make a huge contribution to our agricultural sector and are the backbone of the export industry that protects our standard of living. I also pay tribute to the many towns that sit in between. They form a web of communities all through our electorate. My vision for the Upper Hunter is for it to be the economic powerhouse of New South Wales. Our industries are the backbone of economic development in the State and support so many businesses. I believe that small business is the most important layer in our economy. Whether you operate as a printer, a tradie, a butcher, a farmer or a welder, your small businesses are the real job creators. Small businesses are truly deserving of our support because they in turn support our regional communities. Small business will remain a policy focus during my time in the Chamber.

It is the people in the region who make it special. They form those communities that give us such a bright future—and our future is bright. The pandemic has changed us forever. More than ever we are seeing a resurgence in regional New South Wales. People can work in all types of industries, they are working from home and they are starting businesses. Most importantly, they are moving to the Upper Hunter. There has been never been a better time to decentralise government departments into regional New South Wales. We should make the most of that opportunity. To ensure we have strong communities, the formula is simple. We need to have jobs and the social structures to ensure our families are well supported. We need to make sure the sporting clubs, the progress associations and the various other committees are supported. These volunteer organisations make a real and lasting difference in our communities. They are the social structures that enrich the lives of our families.

The Upper Hunter is a diverse electorate of many different industries. While much was written during the by-election of the challenge of land use management, it is a challenge that we have been managing for 100 years. To succeed, we need to make sure that everyone continues to act as good neighbours. It is a simple philosophy: Succeed in this challenge and life in the Upper Hunter will continue to be as good tomorrow as it is today. My working career has been in construction and building community infrastructure like hospitals. It has been an incredibly rewarding career. The construction industry is full of hardworking people who bring large groups together to create something tangible. Sometimes it is pretty tough but, on the whole, when you have a great team, you can achieve. I acknowledge Jim Stavropoulos, who is in the gallery today, and thank him for our years working together, which have now sadly ended. We achieved a lot over the years and no-one I know has a better work ethic than Jim. He has taught me a great deal about people.

Building the bricks and mortar of community infrastructure is just the start. The New South Wales State Government needs to be all about delivering services. This is where the rubber hits the road. Government policy needs to make sure that services are maintained in regional areas. It is far too easy for services to be drained from small towns to those urban areas under the name of economics. We need to remember that we need police stations to make communities feel safe, not just to fight crime. We need strong regional hospitals because help should be close to home when we really need it. These services are critical for strong communities to thrive. It is too easy to forget the tyranny of distance that hinders service delivery in regional New South Wales.

I know I share this goal with the National Party. So at this point I wish to acknowledge our National Party parliamentarians, who all work hard for their electorates and in their roles representing the regions. They have all worked so hard to ensure that I can join you here today. I especially wish to thank the leader of our party, the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro. He has led this party with distinction. He is a passionate and fearless team leader and he has a great team. More than anything, I thank him for being a friend to me and my family and to the whole of regional New South Wales. We are a better State as a result of his efforts, and I applaud him for it.

To our great Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, let me speak on behalf of the people of New South Wales to thank you for your service. You are truly loved in our region, not to mention the fact that you managed to turn the Scone Cup day from the biggest day in the Upper Hunter to the biggest day in the State. Please come again next year. On behalf of my family, I thank you for your support, especially during this campaign. To the Treasurer, Dom Perrottet, who by tag teaming with the Deputy Premier at our industry roundtables showed how a Government that listens and engages can deliver benefits for all. And to our Coalition partners in the Liberal Party,

may our shared values and common purpose achieve good things for the good people of New South Wales for many years to come. I thank you and I look forward to working with you all in the future.

I would like to acknowledge my friends in the Upper Hunter who have worked so hard to support my campaign. There were hundreds of volunteers, and I wish I could thank them all. In particular I highlight the tireless work performed by Brett Wild, Andy and Emily Lane and Allan Lane. Thanks also go to Brett Sprague and Jocellin Jansson, who both gave me such solid advice throughout this journey. I would like to acknowledge the campaign team, who worked almost around the clock to keep the campaign moving at a cracking pace. I thank Jock Sowter, who performed a huge job keeping the team together as my campaign manager; Lachlan Barnsley for being so focused and professional; Bec Treloer for her policy advice; Sam Farraway for his strategic thinking; Bronnie Taylor for being the wife whisperer; and the many others in the background who also helped.

I lastly acknowledge the National Party itself, led by current chair Andrew Fraser. His leadership kept the campaign in smooth waters, strongly supported by State director Joe Lundy and the good people in our head office. The National Party is truly a family. It is a party of vision and values—of a commonsense approach to life's challenges. It is a party of individuals but with a shared set of basic beliefs, a party that is built on geography much more than fixed ideologies. I thank the National Party, its members, its volunteers and its supporters. The Nationals and the Liberals came together with such focus and purpose. I can think of no better memory to keep from my whole campaign, and I am really proud to call myself a member of this team.

The role of a parliamentarian is to seek to build trust in our communities and to create a better tomorrow for our children. We are here to represent the community and we need to represent the whole community, those who support us and those who do not. Our job is to speak out on issues that affect our patch. It is to seek the commonsense solutions that improve the lives of many. We should never forget the special privilege that is bestowed upon us here to represent the people of our State. It always needs to be about the good people and about our communities. It is on this basis, as God is my witness, that I take the oath to be the member for the people of the Upper Hunter first and foremost. Thank you and God bless.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The SPEAKER:** I join with other members in congratulating the member for Upper Hunter on his inaugural speech.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 8 June 2021 the Hon. Peter John Poulos, MLC, was elected Chair of the Committee on Children and Young People.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following paper petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

#### **Clarence Valley Mining**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly stop exploration or mining within the Clarence Valley and surrounding government area, received from **Ms Janelle Saffin**.

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

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

#### **Culcairn Multipurpose Service**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly address the lack of a visiting medical officer at the Culcairn Multipurpose Service, received from **Mr Justin Clancy**.

### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to electronic petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. David Elliott—Firearms and Weapons Legislation—lodged 5 May 2021 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—Edmondson Park High School—lodged 4 May 2021 (Ms Prue Car)

*Bills*

**BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:52):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. I note the object of the bill is to amend various Acts and repeal a regulation administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, who has just left the building. I refer to the comments made by my shadow Ministers the member for Granville and the member for Charlestown. I support their comments and Labor's position on the bill. I direct my comments specifically to schedule 113, which deals with amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999. I note the tremendous concern that has been expressed by constituents in my electorate and residents of retirement villages across the Central Coast who have contacted me about this amendment, as well as other amendments and changes to the Retirement Villages Act and regulations, and the impact it has upon them.

I recently attended a meeting of over 120 residents at the Glengara Retirement Village at Tumbi Umbi. They voted unanimously to seek improvements to the regulation of their circumstances in retirement villages on the basis that they strongly believe that the regulation that currently applies does not comply with the promises they had communicated to them prior to the last election by this Government—promises to make fairer the Retirement Villages Regulation 2017 and the rights and liberties of residents of retirement villages. They are strongly of the view that what they thought would happen has not happened for them, particularly on the Central Coast. I have also received a whole bunch of representations from residents at Henry Kendall Gardens retirement village. There are four proposed amendments to the Retirement Villages Act in the bill. One goes to the distribution of surpluses in a retirement village and another, the one I will mainly speak on, to exit entitlements. The bill proposes:

... to clarify that if a former occupant of residential premises in a retirement village applies for an exit entitlement order and the Secretary does not make the order, the former occupant may not make another application for an exit entitlement order until the expiration of a further prescribed period or a longer period approved by the Secretary ...

It also proposes to make other changes to provisions around penalties regarding the selling of residential premises and changes to regulations as to information valuers are to provide, again in relation to the selling of residential premises. The changes that are proposed in terms of the ability of residents to apply for an exit entitlement order will simply entrench an inequity that this Minister has delivered upon residents of the Central Coast, and delivered in a way that was certainly not expected by my constituents when the original amendment bill was debated in this House in 2019.

At that time exit entitlements were to be treated in two ways. Residents of those retirement villages in the Sydney metropolitan area were to be enabled to apply for their exit entitlement if their premises had not been sold by the operator within six months of the resident exiting the retirement village. If they were in regional areas that was to be 12 months. At the time the Minister's department circulated a discussion paper. That was the information that members had before them when we were debating the bill in this House in 2019. On page 13 of that discussion paper there is a map of what constitutes the Sydney metropolitan area. I have the map here. It quite clearly shows that the Central Coast is contained wholly within what would be defined as the Sydney metropolitan area in terms of regulation under the Retirement Villages Act.

On that basis I proceeded to say in this House that I thought the bill was a good one and it would be welcomed by my constituents. Lo and behold though, following passage of the bill, the devil became something of the detail and the detail was in a mountain of regulation. A feature of this Government is that it sets up a framework of legislation and then goes off and has more inquiries and then it goes off and has more consultation. The promises the Government has made to the people of New South Wales at an election get curtailed because the operators got in the Minister's head and said, "No, this is going too far. You have got to water it down using the regulations." And he did.

The Minister did what the operators wanted. He watered down the promise made by his Government in the lead-up to the 2019 election, to the detriment of my constituents, who thought they were going to get their exit entitlement within six months of exiting a retirement village. But, no, the operators got in his ear and when he made the regulation in February he excluded the Central Coast from the Sydney metropolitan area. What a dog act by this Minister. It is such a dog act that I have been inundated by my constituents over the issue. As I said, a meeting of 120 residents at Glengara Retirement Village said, "You need to fix this because we were promised

by this Liberal-Nationals Government." I said, "I know what they are like but maybe now you are all learning what they are like as well. I will do my best."

We saw today what this Minister's view of this House is: He will try to curtail the democratic process. The shadow Minister, to her credit and in accordance with the way we operate in this House under Westminster democracy, foreshadowed a set of amendments that we on this side want to move to try to fix this problem made by this Minister and deliver the promise that this Government made before the last election to the people on the Central Coast. We see the Minister, in a dog act, trying to get those amendments ruled out of order before they have even been presented to the House. I welcome the shadow Minister moving those amendments later today to try to correct an injustice to my constituents in retirement villages. They were promised something. If this Minister has any self-respect, he will amend the Act to deliver what was promised to the residents of retirement villages on the Central Coast and in my electorate.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:00):** I make a contribution to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. I support the sentiments expressed by the member for Granville on behalf of the Opposition. Nothing I say should be seen to be, either expressly or by implication, inconsistent with those remarks because that is what I am bound to do. I do though wish to make reference to two provisions within the bill. The first relates to the amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009, where the Minister proposes to add a new section 28A to address some concerns about the legal capacity of committees to appoint additional members.

I make this observation and I make it without any criticism of NSW Fair Trading or the Government: Whilst it is desirable to have legislation for the Associations Incorporation Act for many community-based organisations, because operating as unincorporated associations causes considerable difficulty, it must be clearly understood that these organisations, often sporting organisations, some charitable, do not have the resources to be able to comply with a statute of relative complexity—not only the understanding but also the ability. Most community-based sporting organisations are lucky if they have more than one person doing everything. To have statutory requirements of returns or statutory requirements with penal provisions causes a considerable burden.

The reality is that most of these organisations—for example, a community-based soccer club—have got enough trouble getting their kids on the park with a coach, let alone filling out the paperwork that is needed under the Associations Incorporation Act. It might be different for an association that employs staff and has somebody who is on a salary but most of these community-based organisations spread throughout the State are lucky to have more than one person. So these provisions—for example, to enable one of these incorporated associations not to have the required quorum of committee members because they cannot elect that many or cannot fill all of the positions to enable clarity and lawfulness of the decisions—are important amendments.

Say, for example, an association is required to have six or seven people as members of its governing body and it can only get four people elected to those positions and only three people can get together to make a decision and the quorum is four, then there is some doubt as to the lawfulness of the decision. So the amendment certainly helps. It is important for a variety of lawful reasons that they be incorporated associations and it is important that there be some structure, but I would like Fair Trading to provide a service to these organisations so that some poor soccer coach who is running a club for an incorporated association has people in Fair Trading who the club can approach to assist them in having that documentation completed. All that is going to happen in respect of the Associations Incorporation Act is the Minister is going to have to keep coming back to the House to remove the requirements of the legislation because it is quite clear that most of those community-based voluntary organisations cannot comply with the statute.

Miscellaneous provisions bills usually do not have significant changes within them—otherwise they are normally their own bill—but this bill contains a very important and significant provision that one has to read carefully to find. I do not know the purpose of doing that and I have no issue with the provision; in fact, I commend the Minister for so doing. It relates to amendments to the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 whereby it is proposed that if a registered practitioner is a body corporate, the secretary may take disciplinary action under part 6 of the Act against the director of the body corporate, including actions intended to prevent the director from being the director of another registered body corporate. It also contains a provision to consolidate the concepts of "equivalent authorisation" and "relevant authorisation" using that Act under the Design and Building Practitioners Regulation 2021 by inserting a single definition of "relevant authorisation".

The effects of those proposals are significant because they, in effect, pierce the corporate veil. It is important that they pierce the corporate veil because, as part of the reforms in the legislation that sought to address disciplinary oversight of those practitioners, practitioners require registration through a comprehensive registration regime. That requires designers, engineers and all people contracted to do building work to be bound and registered as a registered practitioner. All those people may well be responsible for building defects. One of the chief problems sought to be addressed in the Shergold Weir report was to hold all those people who

participate—building practitioners—accountable for defects but historically part of the problem in the building industry has been that corporate entities have been able to escape liability. They escape liability by incorporating a company and having that company engage services. That company is then liquidated and the victims of the building defects, for example, have no particular remedy.

To address that, the provision pierces the corporate veil by enabling action to be taken against the directors of those corporations so that there is no ability to escape and they cannot then sit on a variety of other corporate organisations should disciplinary action be taken. It is an important and significant amendment. Earlier this morning there was some debate about the Opposition's amendments and reference to an earlier ruling of the Deputy Speaker in relation to what may or may not be in order based upon the insignificance of what is generally contained in miscellaneous provisions bills. This is not an insignificant provision. In fact, this is an important provision. It is a provision that means all those who participate in the building industry—from designers to engineers and builders—are not able to hide behind a corporate entity. In effect, it allows the corporate veil to be pierced. In this country it is very rare for legislation to be enacted that enables the corporate veil to be pierced, and it is only done sparingly. This is a case where it has to be done. I compliment the Minister on seeing it and repairing the Act by doing so. It is no trifling miscellaneous provision. It is a significant provision; therefore, it is contained in the bill and the bill should be so regarded.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:10):** I lend my support to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. I applaud the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and his team for their work, which has led to the bill being introduced. An important role of government is to ensure that legislation remains up to date and that provisions are still fit for purpose and in line with the original policy intent. The bill does just that. It makes changes that clarify legal requirements and correct drafting anomalies in legislation to reduce the potential for misunderstandings and disputes. The bill makes amendments to a number of pieces of legislation, including providing a new regulation-making power in the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to require additional information to be included in a valuer's determination, and requiring any surplus in the annual accounts of retirement villages to be distributed to each residence, not resident, to provide for the more equitable distribution of funds.

First, I speak to the amendments in the bill that seek to harmonise the definitions of persons considered to be qualified auditors in the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and Funeral Funds Act 1979. As the State's regulator, NSW Fair Trading can require certain individuals and businesses to undertake or be subjected to independent audits. Regular audits are essential to maintaining credibility in the financial affairs and statements relating to a business or association. To ensure that audit work is conducted accurately and objectively, a number of pieces of legislation administered by Fair Trading prescribe the necessary qualifications for an auditor. For example, in the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003 and the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 audit work can only be performed by registered company auditors and authorised audit companies, within the meaning of the Corporations Act; by members of a professional accounting body, within the meaning of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 of the Commonwealth; and by any other persons approved by the secretary.

Registered audit companies, authorised company auditors and members of a professional accounting body must also hold a public practice certificate in order to conduct the audit. While these Acts recognise a range of qualifications for undertaking audit work, the Associations Incorporation Act currently only authorises registered company auditors or persons approved by the secretary to undertake audit work for incorporated associations. For audits under the Funeral Funds Act, the scope is further limited to registered company auditors. The bill seeks to provide greater consistency across the portfolio by harmonising the definition of "qualified auditors" in the Funeral Funds Act and the Associations Incorporation Act with other Fair Trading legislation. That will be achieved by expanding the definition of persons considered to be qualified auditors in these Acts to automatically include authorised audit companies, within the meaning of the Corporations Act.

The amendment will also expand the definition in the Associations Incorporation Act to include a member of a professional accounting body, within the meaning of Australian Securities and Investments Commission law. That will include CPA Australia, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, and the Institute of Public Accountants. By providing access to a broader epistemic community of auditing professionals, this bill will enhance choice, resulting in savings in time and costs for community organisations and volunteer groups. Having been involved with many not-for-profit organisations, on committees and also working in that space, this will no doubt be well received by volunteer committees and organisations across the State. These amendments will also support the Government's commitment to strengthening the local economy through boosting opportunities for skills development.

Also in this bill are amendments to the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998. I turn to these amendments in the bill that relate to the tow truck industry. The Government has previously introduced broad reforms to improve the

governance of the New South Wales tow truck industry in several key areas. The key objectives of those reforms were to improve the regulation of the tow truck industry by reducing red tape and providing stronger protections for customers and drivers, especially at accident scenes. This bill builds on those reforms by strengthening the regulation of tow truck operators' dealings with motor vehicles in holding yards. Currently the Act imposes licence conditions on tow truck operators to provide owners of vehicles access to holding yards to collect items from their vehicles. However, there is no legal authority for vehicle owners and their agents to remove the vehicle from holding yards.

In these circumstances, NSW Fair Trading has identified issues where rival companies fail to provide access to vehicles that have been towed to a holding yard. If a consumer wishes to have a new tow company come in and move their vehicle, they can come up against barriers or refusals of access. This results in the consumer paying longer holding fees while the dispute continues. The bill will also provide greater protection to consumers by enabling owners and their agents to remove motor vehicles from holding yards, as needed. Under these reforms, operators will be required to clearly disclose charges to be paid before removal of the vehicle and will be prevented from unilaterally removing the vehicles for the purposes of repair. These reforms will clarify the policy intent of the Act and strengthen regulatory oversight to ensure operators' dealings in holding yards are fair and lawful.

Another important amendment contained in this bill is to broaden the circumstances in which payments can be made from the Tow Truck Industry Fund. The Act provides for the establishment of a Tow Truck Industry Fund and prescribes the circumstances under which moneys may be paid from the fund. These include payments required to meet expenditure incurred in the administration or execution of the Act and the regulations. The bill broadens these circumstances to enable payments to be made to fund the prosecution of tow truck operators for offences under other legislation, such as the Crimes Act and the Australian Consumer Law. This enables proper cost recovery for enforcement expenses from the specific industry fund to hold to account any operators involved in unconscionable or illegal conduct in the course of undertaking their business. This amendment reinforces the Government's stance against industry misconduct and will support the department's ongoing efforts to increase consumer confidence and safety in the sector. The amendment will also free money from the compliance and enforcement general budget to enable Fair Trading to target other areas for which no industry funding scheme exists.

The bill further contributes to improving customer outcomes for proposed building work rectification orders. This occurs by making minor amendments to the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. The bill will simplify the procedural fairness provisions so that the secretary does not need to consider written representation in respect of proposed building work rectification orders from the Registrar General. The procedural fairness requirements of sections 45 and 46 of the Act currently provide that the secretary must notify persons listed in section 45 that the secretary is considering making a building work rectification order. This includes notifying the Registrar General that a written submission may be made with respect to a proposed rectification order. In practice the Registrar General rarely makes representations in response to a notification of a proposed building rectification order served on a third party. The proposed amendment will accordingly remove the existing requirement for the secretary to notify the Registrar General about a proposed rectification order and to consider any representations made in response.

I understand this amendment will not affect the Registrar General's standing to have the decision reviewed. It will also not impact any other notification obligations under the Act, including the requirement to inform the Registrar General of any prohibition orders that will prevent registration of a strata plan. The proposed changes will, however, simplify the process for issuing building work rectification orders to ensure remediating work can commence as soon as possible so as to not unduly impact the end consumer in accessing their property, free of defects. These reforms further enshrine the Government's commitment to place the customer first by transforming the building sector into an industry that is focused on the quality of construction. Overall, I am confident this bill delivers useful and necessary amendments that are in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (16:20):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021, particularly the members for the electorates of Miranda, Coffs Harbour, Albury, East Hills, Dubbo, Charlestown, The Entrance, Granville and Heffron. As previously stated, an important role of government is to ensure that legislation remains up to date and provisions are fit for purpose and in line with the original policy intent. The bill achieves this by modernising regulatory schemes and government processes, ensuring laws remain relevant and fit for purpose, strengthening community and consumer protection and clarifying the legal requirements to improve customer outcomes.

Reforms to the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020 and the Design and Building Practitioner Act 2020 improve the administration of building and construction laws and are

an important step towards enhancing consumer protection in New South Wales. The bill also makes important amendments to reduce operational barriers for small businesses and licensees in New South Wales, including providing greater flexibility and autonomy for associations to comply with their legal obligations. I thank members for their contributions. I am confident that this bill delivers the meaningful administrative amendments for the citizens of New South Wales. The bill demonstrates this Government's continued commitment to protecting the rights of citizens in New South Wales by reducing and removing unnecessary red tape and providing greater clarity and certainty in law. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Julia Finn.**

#### Consideration in Detail

**The SPEAKER:** Leave having been granted, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:22):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-049B:

No. 1 **Report on saving achieved by Better Regulation Amendment Acts**

Page 2. Insert after line 11—

#### 4 Report on savings achieved by Better Regulation Amendment Acts

- (1) The Auditor-General must, within 18 months after the commencement of this Act, prepare a report (the *audit report*) on whether any savings have been achieved as a result of the amendments made by the Better Regulation Amendment Acts in the reporting period.
- (2) The Auditor-General must, within 1 month after completing the audit report, submit the audit report to the Minister.
- (3) The *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*, sections 13 and 14 apply in relation to the audit report in the same way as they apply in relation to the annual report of a Department.
- (4) In this section—

*Better Regulation Amendment Acts* means the following Acts—

- (a) this Act,
- (b) *Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020*,
- (c) *Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019*.

*reporting period* means the period—

- (a) starting on the day that is 12 months after the date of assent to the *Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019*, and
- (b) ending on the day that is 12 months after the commencement of this section.

In moving this amendment, first I will address its admissibility. Standing Order 210 enables the moving of this amendment as follows:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders and practice.

The long title of the bill states:

An Act to amend various Acts, and to amend or repeal regulations, administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation; and for related purposes.

The amendment on sheet c2021-049B amends the bill itself, so it is clearly within the long title of the bill. As its name implies, the bill covers the Better Regulation portfolio and reporting on Better Regulation legislation is relevant to the subject matter of this bill. The amendment is a consequential amendment relating to the passage of this bill. It does not amend other legislation but amends the bill itself. Once passed by the Parliament, the provisions in this bill will be administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. Quite clearly, the amendment meets the requirements of the standing order and may be moved.

In his second reading speech, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation said that this bill would cut red tape. I also note that in debates on similar legislation, the members for the electorates of Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Heathcote, North Shore and Riverstone claimed in their contributions that red tape and administration burden would be reduced by the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. No evidence was put

forward before the passage of the 2020 bill to justify those claims and no evidence has been provided since it commenced. I fear that again the Government will make claims without evidence.

We know that the Government has been caught out on this issue previously. The Government committed to cutting red tape costs by \$750 million between 2011 and June 2015 and then claimed that that target had been exceeded by \$146 million. The New South Wales Auditor-General had a different view and found that there was no proof to back up the Government's claims that it saved around \$900 million in red tape costs for business. The Audit Office report also found that the estimated savings by various agencies were not supported by evidence and data nor adequately verified and that cost transfers were sometimes claimed as savings. It also found that overall the New South Wales Government's initiatives and processes to prevent and reduce red tape were not effective.

With that in mind, my amendment will improve transparency and integrity. The amendment will require the Auditor-General to provide a report on the savings achieved by the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019 and the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020 and for the report to be made public. The Auditor-General has scrutinised red tape reduction costs previously and is ideally placed to undertake the work. The public should have a right to know about the effects of the amendments put in place by the Government, and they should expect the Government to be truthful when it claims to exceed its own red tape reduction targets.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 210 and seek a ruling from the Chair that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-049B is out of order. The Opposition amendment does not involve any amendments to Acts or regulations dealt with by this bill. The intended effect of the amendment is to amend the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019 and the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020 to impose an obligation on the Auditor-General of New South Wales to prepare audit reports outlining any savings achieved as a result of the amendments made by the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019, the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020 and this bill. The amendment moved by the Opposition introduces a completely new requirement for the Auditor-General that is not relevant in any respect to this bill.

**Ms Julia Finn:** To the point of order: As I outlined, the amendment is absolutely relevant to the bill. It amends the bill itself. It relates to savings that the Government claims to have achieved within this portfolio area over a number of years which have been utterly unsubstantiated. It is requiring that the Auditor-General report on the savings achieved by the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2019 and the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Act 2020 and that the report be made public. We are also referring to the current bill, not just to the previous Acts.

**The SPEAKER:** Having just come back into the chair, I will consult with the Clerk to seek some advice. I want to get this right and make sure that my understanding of it is as thorough as it needs to be. I will adjourn the sitting for a brief period.

**Ms Julia Finn:** This probably will be happening multiple times.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that, which is why it is all the more important that I get it right. The House will resume on the ringing of a long bell.

*[The Speaker left the chair at 16:30. The House resumed at 16:40.]*

#### *Rulings*

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE BETTER REGULATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

**The SPEAKER (16:40):** I rule that the amendment as proposed is in order. It relates to the requirement that the Auditor-General undertake an audit report which relates particularly to this legislation and measuring the impact of the bill in 18 months' time. I am sufficiently satisfied that that is within the scope of what is allowable under an amendment. As I indicated to both sides of the Chamber, I am also inclined to rule out of order some of the other amendments that may be moved if they do not relate specifically to the legislation that is covered in the list of Acts and regulations as amended by the Better Regulation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021.

#### *Bills*

### **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (16:41):** My information on Opposition amendment No. 1 stands. The Government does not support the amendment.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-049B be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....12

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

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

**PAIRS**

Chanthivong, A	Griffin, J
Hornery, S	Wilson, F
Lalich, N	Williams, R

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:53):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-054A:

No. 1 **Records and information**

Page 6, Schedule 1.3. Insert after line 19—

[1] **Section 58 Power of entry and inspection**

Insert at the end of section 58(2A)(b)—

, and

(c) to take copies of or extracts from, or make notes from, the book, record or other document.

[2] **Sections 58AA and 58AB**

Insert after section 58—

**58AA Power to take possession of records to be used as evidence**

- (1) A person (the *record inspector*) to whom a record is produced under section 58 may take possession of the record if the record inspector considers it necessary to do so for the purpose of obtaining evidence or protecting evidence from destruction.
- (2) If the record inspector takes possession of the record under this section, the record may be retained by the record inspector until the completion of proceedings, including proceedings on appeal, in which the record may be evidence.
- (3) The person (the *record owner*) from whom the record was taken must be provided, within a reasonable time after the record is taken, with a copy of the record certified by the record inspector as a true copy.
- (4) A copy of a record provided under subsection (3) is, as evidence, of equal validity to the record of which it is certified to be a copy.
- (5) A person does not contravene a provision of this Act if the person is unable to comply with the provision because a record inspector retained possession of a record under this section.

**58AB Exchange of information**

- (1) The Corporation may enter into an arrangement (an *information sharing arrangement*) with a relevant agency, or the head of a relevant agency, for the purposes of sharing or exchanging information held by the Secretary or the agency.
- (2) The information to which an information sharing arrangement may relate is limited to information that assists in the exercise of the functions of—
  - (a) the Corporation under this Act or the regulations, or
  - (b) the relevant agency.
- (3) Under an information sharing arrangement, the Corporation and the relevant agency are authorised—
  - (a) to request and receive information held by the other party to the arrangement, and
  - (b) to disclose the information to the other party.
- (4) In this section—

*long service agency* means an agency of the State, the Commonwealth, or another State or Territory, that exercises functions under legislation with respect to long service schemes, or employers or employees in relation to long service leave.

*relevant agency* includes the following—

- (a) a long service agency,
- (b) another agency of the State, the Commonwealth, or another State or Territory,
- (c) a local council,
- (d) a person or body that exercises functions, in the public interest, to protect the interests of long service schemes, employers or employees,
- (e) a person or body prescribed by the regulations.

**[3] Section 59 Disclosure of information**

Omit section 59(1). Insert instead—

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), a person who is, or was at any time, authorised under section 58, 58AA or 58AB must not disclose any information—
  - (a) obtained by the person in the course of administration or execution of this Act or the regulations, and
  - (b) that relates to—
    - (i) manufacturing or commercial secrets, or
    - (ii) working processes.

Standing Order 210 enables the moving of this amendment, as amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or are relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the standing orders and practice. The long title of the bill states:

An Act to amend various Acts, and to amend or repeal regulations, administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation; and for related purposes.

The amendment on sheet c2021-054A amends the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act. This Act is within the Better Regulation portfolio and is amended by the Government's bill. The amendment is clearly within the long title of the bill. The amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the bill since it

replicates similar amendments contained within clause 1.3 of schedule 1 to the bill concerning the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Scheme) Act 2010. Quite clearly, the amendment meets the requirements of the standing order and may be moved.

The bill contains two schedules to amend provisions relating to the regulatory functions of the Long Service Corporation. As the Minister said, 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. Several of the provisions for each of the two Acts are similar, but the bill proposes a power to take possession of records to be used in evidence and exchange of information for the contract cleaning industry but not for the building and construction industry. In his second reading speech, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation said:

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 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.

It is understood that this measure is intended to improve compliance and to assist in pursuing noncompliance. It is supported by employee and employer stakeholders. It would seem reasonable to include similar provisions in both Acts so that similar measures will be put in place to improve compliance in the building and construction industry. Accordingly, my amendment seeks to put in place provisions similar to new section 47B and new section 114A in the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Scheme) Act. Section 59, disclosure of information, of the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act, requires that a person shall not disclose any information relating to any manufacturing or commercial secrets or working processes obtained by the person in connection with the administration or execution of this Act or the regulations. My amendment to section 68 is a consequential amendment to ensure no conflict between the existing and proposed new information exchange power.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (16:56):** The Government opposes Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-054A. It materially departs from the proposed reforms in the bill to the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act by introducing provisions that will significantly expand the powers of authorised officers under the Act. The amendment seeks to establish an information sharing arrangement between the Long Service Corporation and prescribed agencies such as a long service agency, a local council or any other person or body that exercises functions to protect the interest of long service schemes, employers and employees. The amendment has no direct relevance to the subject matter of the proposed reforms in the bill in relation to that Act, which strictly details the issuing of penalty infringement notices.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:57):** The Greens offer our support for all the amendments that the Labor Opposition is putting forward in relation to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021. We do not oppose the amendments. It is concerning that with the first amendment we were considering the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation attempted to prevent debate and discussion by having it ruled out of order. It is important to put that on record as that is not a good way for us to behave in this place. It is important for us to debate amendments on the floor. Mr Speaker, I appreciate that you wanted to take advice and we had a short adjournment, but I understand that earlier you said you had spoken to both parties in relation to these amendments and had received advice during question time. I want to remind you, Mr Speaker, that there are more than two parties in this Chamber and if there is advice given in informal conversations it would be great if the crossbench could be included in those discussions.

**Business interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate*

## **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the current housing crisis in New South Wales.
- (2) Notes that housing costs in New South Wales and in particular regional areas have skyrocketed over the past year.
- (3) Notes that rental vacancies in some regional areas are at their lowest levels in decades.

- (4) Notes the rising number of homeless and that social housing is in drastically short supply.
- (5) Calls on the Government to take immediate steps to improve housing affordability in New South Wales and urgently increase investment in social housing in regional areas.

There really is no dispute that parts of this State are currently experiencing a housing crisis which they have not seen for many decades, possibly not since the Great Depression. House prices are skyrocketing, young people are facing the prospect of never being able to afford their own home near any of our major cities, rental vacancies in regional areas are at historic lows and more people are being left without a roof over their heads at all. While some are benefitting massively from huge capital gains, more and more people are being left behind and unable to get into the market, unable to afford a roof over their family's heads or unable to even find a home to live in. We are not just in the midst of a house price boom; we are in the midst of a housing crisis.

Some of the most recent data on housing affordability includes that in Sydney the median house price is now well over \$1.3 million. In 156 Sydney suburbs, every house sold so far this year has sold for more than \$1 million, including in two suburbs which are 70 kilometres from the city centre. In 39 Sydney suburbs the median house price is now \$3 million or more. In the first few months of this year house prices in Sydney rose by roughly \$50,000 per month. The median house price in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie has just surged past \$700,000 with growth rates outstripping those anywhere else in the country. Rental vacancies in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie are currently moving between 0.2 per cent and 0.7 per cent. The average cost of rents in the entire Hunter region are up 7.8 per cent this year. Those rent hikes are reflected in regional areas throughout the State; they have increased by an extraordinary 25.7 per cent on the South Coast over the last year, 18.8 per cent in the Central Tablelands, 15.7 per cent in the Riverina, 11.6 per cent in the Murray region, 12.5 per cent in Broken Hill and Dubbo and 20.4 per cent on the North Coast.

The NSW Intergenerational Report released this week shows that the percentage of New South Wales residents who own their home will decline significantly over the coming decades. This will increase demand for social housing, which the report says will cost the government an additional \$12.1 billion over the next four decades. The great Australian dream will more likely become a nightmare for many over the coming decades. I was contacted only last week by a constituent whom I will not identify directly but will refer to as Melissa, although I should add that Melissa is among many in my electorate who have desperately reached out for housing assistance over the past few months. Melissa and her partner have five children. They are a good family—lifelong locals who work hard and enjoy being part of their local community. One of the children is captain of their local school and another is in year 10 studying for his school certificate.

Last year the couple had to move several suburbs away because the owner of their rental home wanted to sell. Since then Melissa has driven the extra miles to keep the kids stable at their schools and sporting clubs. They were paying \$450 a week in rent. Four weeks ago they were given an eviction notice again because the owner of the home they were renting wanted to move in. Since then Melissa has spent every waking hour trying to find a new place to rent. She has applied for four homes every day, queued up with hundreds of others at rental inspections and has even offered up to \$600 a week in a bid to secure something, but without luck. She has the bond money saved, has a good rental record and a stable income and is prepared to take even a two- or three-bedroom home for the sake of keeping a roof over her family's heads. But she is four days away from being without a place to live because there simply is not the housing stock available within a 25-kilometre radius of the kids' schools. This is the heartbreaking reality being faced by thousands of people in regional New South Wales every day.

We know that much of the crisis in regional New South Wales has been caused by people leaving Sydney during the pandemic. Many have understandably cashed in on Sydney's housing price boom and moved to a place where their housing dollars buy a lot more home. They are the people who no longer need to work from a city office or who can no longer afford the big city rents and are being driven into the cheaper regional areas. There is not much anyone can do about that, but we have to respond to the pressures and negative impacts that this significant shift is having on housing affordability in regional areas and on social housing which is already in short supply. Waiting lists for social housing, particularly in regional areas such as Lake Macquarie, are extraordinarily long. The current waiting time for a two-bedroom property in Lake Macquarie is more than 10 years. The waiting time for a studio or one-bedroom property is between five and 10 years.

Yes, social housing is a difficult and complex issue for the Government to solve. I acknowledge the Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which was established in 2016 and which recently delivered 94 new apartments at Cardiff in my electorate. But conservative estimates suggest that we need to be building 5,000 new dwellings each year for the next decade if future demand and current shortages are to be met. The Treasurer will be delivering the Government's 2021-22 budget in two weeks' time. I call on the Treasurer and the Government to use the opportunity to significantly invest in affordable housing throughout New South Wales. I also call on the Government to consider ways of making housing more affordable. Whether social housing, rental

or by ownership, we have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to the safety and dignity of an appropriate home.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:07):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie very much for putting forward this motion. His speech perfectly summed up the story not just for his electorate but for many electorates across the entire breadth of New South Wales. Melissa's story is profound. It is a challenge at a time when we have seen genuine property growth, which is appreciated by those that are in home ownership but is putting pressures on other areas. Our Government is responding. Over the past decade we have increased the amount of social housing by 10 per cent. But we know that there is so much more to do.

Today I had the privilege of meeting with the member for Cootamundra and the manager of Argyle Housing in the Riverina-Cootamundra-Young area. Wendy, who works for Argyle Housing, is out in that community making a difference. I acknowledge that the member for Wagga Wagga would know Wendy well. They are in their communities and talking to the councils. A proposal in front of us today is council-bought land. Argyle Housing wants to go in and build properties. I just have to get my agency to make a change in the ownership of one of the properties and find some accommodation. With just one property, we will get how many in?

**Ms Steph Cooke:** Seventeen.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We will get 17 new properties. The member for Lake Macquarie has 94 new properties at Cardiff. I was with our fabulous new Minister—and we are going to do incredible work together—at Redfern on Monday to view a 17-storey building. I acknowledge the work of the City of Sydney council in giving that land to the St George Community Housing project for \$15 million rather than the market value of \$53 million. We built a 17-storey building over nine months during COVID. Our Government is well aware of the challenges we face. That is why, for the first time in the history of New South Wales, in recent weeks I released an end-to-end housing strategy for the next 20 years. That will deal with the need we will have across the sector.

Sadly, some members on the other side of the House derided me for using the words "property developer". But builders, plumbers and electricians—all those people—as well as those in the community housing sector and in social services must be at the table to deliver the supply chain, not only for social and affordable housing but also for first home owners. The member for Lake Macquarie touched on the fact that everybody has a hope and a desire for their children and for those who are close to them to own their own home. Under this strategy, all the silos will work together to ensure that supply going forward.

New South Wales is capturing most of the money from the Commonwealth's \$2 billion National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation fund. We are devouring that money because community housing providers are putting in submissions for funding. I am prepared to work with whomever, whether it is legacy or religious groups, to utilise and work on their land and to show them the way forward with assistance from local councils. There is capacity in regional areas, and Temora has certainly shown the way. I am very excited about the work we are doing in Kempsey, in particular, which is in my electorate. I cannot stand here and say that every box is ticked and ready to go because there are challenges, but with the uplift and positivity in regional New South Wales at the moment we have a spring in our step.

I have talked to people who have had record harvests; the farmers and shop owners are happy. But with that comes people who are left behind, like Melissa, and we must be creative on their behalf. There are many people across the districts like Melissa. I would be happy to talk to any group about any solutions, but I urge members to work with community housing providers and with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation. We have made a policy change so that a direct deal can be done with a community housing provider on land that we own under the value of \$6 million without having to go through a very long probity process, which can take over 12 months. The probity is in place and direct deals can now be done so that we can be nimble, we can move quickly and we can work on projects in Temora, Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Lake Macquarie. The work we are doing in the inner city is incredible. I am proud of what the Government is doing. There is a lot more to do. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing his motion to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:12):** This is a timely debate. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for moving his motion. I note at the outset that today in question time the Treasurer completely accepted the premise of the question from the member for Newtown about the need for social housing and its important role in looking after the vulnerable, which our society has a duty to provide for. I note that the housing Minister also spoke in support of that notion in her contribution. As we are talking about social housing, I include in that debate the needs of Indigenous housing, which is sometimes provided under a separate administration. The member for Lake Macquarie spoke about the pressures on housing, and that is certainly reflected in my electorate. At the end of April the rental vacancy rate in Wagga Wagga was 0.7 per cent, in Tumut it was 0.3 per cent and there were no vacancies in Lockhart.

This year the business round table in Wagga Wagga identified housing shortage as a major issue. The Snowy Valleys Council area lost more than 200 houses in the fires and only 20 per cent of those have been rebuilt. That council also faces pressure from the expansion of the Snowy Hydro. In Lockhart the shire council described the availability of rental properties as "little to none". The pressure on housing supply affects those who seek affordable housing. Anglicare's annual survey of rental costs, which was released in April, found that Wagga Wagga had just one listed property that was deemed affordable for an unemployed couple with children. According to Shelter NSW, there is a shortage of affordable housing across New South Wales. Many people on lower incomes are struggling to find anything in the private rental market.

In regional areas that means families and children have had to move, which is disruptive both for them and for their communities. The shortage of affordable housing then puts pressure on social housing. Over the past decade there appears to have been no growth in social housing supply in my electorate. New housing has been constructed but only at replacement levels. The waiting list for social housing jumped from 317 to 409 in 2021, while wait times remain between two and five years. Infrastructure Australia has identified the New South Wales social housing deficit as a priority project in its Infrastructure Priority List. It stated:

Across NSW, demand for social and crisis housing is growing faster than supply. Growth in maintenance costs for the existing housing stock is also constricting available Commonwealth and state investment for new houses. The past decade has seen a 37 per cent increase in unmet priority social housing demand and a 70 per cent increase in homelessness across NSW.

Those figures are quite disturbing and they relate not only to social housing but also to Indigenous housing. Clearly there is an issue with the provision of social housing, and with that pressure we also have the potential for an increase in homelessness. Non-government agencies in Wagga Wagga and Tumut report real difficulties in finding emergency accommodation and there is real pressure to find homes for homeless people. I was told by Department of Communities and Justice representatives in my electorate that older women who have recently divorced or separated have become a very significant demographic for homelessness services. That worrying trend has emerged over the past few years and relates in part to the lack of available housing.

A performance audit of the *NSW Homelessness Strategy* indicated that Together Home will not meet demand as a standalone response and that additional funding is required. There is a need for more housing, and the Government has recognised that. I acknowledge and appreciate the presence in the Chamber of the housing Minister and the communities and justice Minister. But the fact is that the need and the pressure is now greater than ever. More investment will be needed not only to catch up with the problem but also to tackle it. I make two further comments before I finish. In terms of investment, we must look to new models and innovation. The housing Minister mentioned the work of Argyle Housing in Cootamundra. They have also done great work in my electorate by providing a new model of wraparound health and support services for homeless people.

I also acknowledge the announcement of the Tolland Renewal Project, which plans to revitalise a major housing precinct in my electorate. Not only will it replace houses, but also it will rebuild houses with a mix of affordable and private accommodation in a new precinct with wraparound services that are tailored to the people who live there. Finally, there must be a better relationship between the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and the Department of Communities and Justice. There is a disjunction between the people who manage the properties and the people who manage the tenants. That issue has come up on countless occasions in my electorate. I ask the housing Minister and the communities and justice Minister to work together better to tackle this problem.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:17):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for moving this motion, which deals with one of the very important issues of the moment. The member knows of my family's strong connection to his electorate. My mother grew up in his electorate and my grandfather built his GP medical practice there over about 40 years. The story that he told about Melissa was a heartbreaking and very salient example of the problem at hand. I also thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his contribution.

I have spoken before in this place about the current decentralisation that we are experiencing, such as flexible working arrangements, which was driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. That is both a challenge and an opportunity for our regions, which for many years have had difficulties getting people into the area and helping the regions to thrive. But now it is happening at a pace that is creating its own problems. It is an important shift both for our cities, in terms of making them more livable, and for our regions, in terms of making them stronger. But it is vital that this growth does not leave people behind and that communities can still flourish in our regions.

The New South Wales Government has a 20-year vision for better housing outcomes across metropolitan and regional areas to 2041. The strategy looks across the housing spectrum from crisis accommodation to social and affordable housing to private rental and home ownership. I recognise the contribution of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing to the debate and her work in delivering the Housing 2041 strategy. It is important to recognise a bit of background. The New South Wales Government has a strong record of investment in social housing and homelessness services to break the cycle of disadvantage. The 2020-21 budget committed \$1 billion

to housing and homelessness programs through the Department of Communities and Justice. That included \$291.8 million for homelessness services and programs—double what it was in 2013-14.

We have increased also the number of women's refuges across New South Wales from 76 in 2014 to 86 today and have scaled up programs like Staying Home Leaving Violence and Start Safely, which provide safe and stable homes for women and families escaping domestic violence. We also established Link2home, so that anyone facing homelessness across the State could call 1800 152 152 at any time of the day or night to be connected to accommodation and support. New South Wales has the largest supply of social housing in the country. It is continuing to grow in partnership with our community housing providers through programs such as the \$1.1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund and the Community Housing Innovation Fund. Those funds delivered the 94 units in Cardiff that the member for Lake Macquarie referred to. The New South Wales Government is fostering a strong and diverse community housing sector, which now manages more than 50,000 properties across the State.

As Minister Pavey said, on Monday we went to Redfern where we saw one of the largest social and affordable housing projects—162 new units delivered by the St George Community Housing through the Social and Affordable Housing Fund. We met some of the people who have benefitted from these programs. The fund gave Tavita, who had to move out of Redfern into western Sydney, the opportunity to return home. Through the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, this year we expect many new tenants in regional areas. Tenants will move into new homes in Cowra, Parkes, Dubbo, Teralba, Mount Druitt, Minto, Gosford, Cardiff and Gerringong, and there are more projects in the pipeline. In fact, New South Wales has one of the strongest pipelines ever with respect to delivering more housing. I note that the first round of the Community Housing Innovation Fund has had a strong focus on regional projects. I expect to announce the outcomes of the first round of funding in the coming weeks. In closing, the Government has a strong record on housing and homelessness, but there is obviously more to do and we will continue to do it.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:22):** I support the motion moved by the member for Lake Macquarie. I offer The Greens' support of the call for the Government to take immediate steps to improve housing affordability in New South Wales and urgently increase investment in social housing in regional areas. It is very important for us to realise and recognise that not enough is being done at the moment to address this crisis. It is not that the small programs being delivered are not working. In many cases during COVID we saw that when we had the resources, the ability for agencies to work together and the urgency to solve the problem, we could actually solve it. But we know that every time the Government announces an initiative—often at the instigation of someone in the sector who says they have a solution to the problem—we have a scenario where the Government it will take it and roll it out as one small test case: one example of 17 properties here or 50 new properties there, or one example of one initiative in one location or another. We do not see a response that addresses the mass scale.

I note that the new Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services is in the Chamber. I offered my congratulations to him earlier today on his new role. It is important to highlight a couple of issues, and they were touched on briefly by the member for Wagga Wagga. The reality is that the housing Minister does not have full control over the housing crisis issues that New South Wales faces. The families and community services Minister has a very challenging task. I just checked the inner-city area we have been talking about. There are 792 applications currently on the waiting list. An additional 335 are priority applications on that waiting list. Then applicants can expect to be on that waiting list for between five to 10 years. I can tell the Minister now that in many of those cases those priority applications on the waiting list are people who are already in some kind of other problematic housing situation, or they have been living in a completely dysfunctional place run by public housing that is badly maintained, managed and repaired.

The Minister deals with the challenge of having to move people out and deal with unsatisfied tenants on a daily basis because the housing Minister, who heads up the Land and Housing Corporation, has failed to look after the public housing stock. But it does not sit with her. The housing Minister in fact is not given the funding and the investment by the Treasurer to maintain our public housing stock in the first place. We have a basket-case situation where the only way that the Land and Housing Corporation can fund the maintenance of existing public housing stock is to sell that stock on the private market. Imagine if we said to the people of Erskineville and Lidcombe, "We cannot afford to upgrade your train station at Lidcombe, so we are going to sell off the station at Erskineville to upgrade it." That is exactly how we are allegedly funding the public housing stock in this State. I also raise two issues. The families and community services Minister pointed out the Link2home program, which is a crucial initiative in trying to drive people from homelessness and get them into temporary accommodation.

The sad reality though is that the amount of access people have to temporary accommodation is limited to a certain number of days. It is two days at a time. I do not know when was the last time anyone tried to find a rental property within two days but it is not possible. Every two days one has to go through the process again—and we are talking about some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Once those people use up their

temporary accommodation—because it is nowhere near the five-year waiting period that has been on the department's website for how long—they go back to that vulnerable situation on the street. Then we pay people to do homelessness assertive outreach to go out there and put them back into temporary accommodation, and then they find themselves back on the waiting list. They finally get into a public housing property, and it has mould all over it. So they put in an application for priority transfer because it is destroying their health. It is a broken system. The final thing I will say is that the suburb of Redfern is in the electorate of Newtown. I look forward to joining Ministers the next time they open social housing in my electorate.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:28):** I congratulate the member for Lake Macquarie on moving this motion. My electorate of Charlestown adjoins Lake Macquarie. I am sure the member hears the same kinds of stories that my office hears. His staff would hear the same kinds of stories I am sure every person who has spoken on this side also hears. We have the same kind of experience with housing affordability, the rental crisis and a lack of supply of social housing. Firstly, it was remiss of me when I spoke earlier today on the children's guardian bill not to congratulate the new Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the member for Ku-ring-gai. I congratulate him on his new role and look forward to working with him to deal with issues of families, communities and homelessness in my electorate.

This housing crisis is being experienced on three fronts. The first is home ownership. In the past 10 years, the decade that this Government has been in power, home ownership rates have continued to decrease because people just cannot afford to get into the property market. In the Charlestown electorate the median house price rose from \$443,051 in May 2011 to \$730,758 in May 2021. That is an increase of 60 per cent in just one decade. Increasing house prices might sound like a good thing if one owns own property or is an investor, but more and more people are giving up on ever owning their own home—more young people and more people who have had changes in family circumstances. They are giving up on the security and stability that home ownership brings and are resigning themselves to being forever renters.

That brings me to the second part of the housing crisis, and that is rental property availability and affordability. In some parts of my electorate rents have increased by as much as 30 per cent in just 12 months, and this surge in rents is being driven by the lowest sustained rental vacancy rate in decades. The current rental vacancy rate in the Charlestown electorate is the incredibly low and difficult 0.4 per cent. People in full employment with great rental references are lining up with dozens of others.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Can't find it.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Absolutely, they cannot find a rental property. If they can, they have to line up with hundreds of other people, apply and eventually find out that their application is unsuccessful. In February I spoke in this place about a constituent of mine—whom I will call Mary—who is 79 years old and who received a no-cause eviction. She was unable to secure another rental property for her and her 52-year-old disabled son. She is still unable to find a rental property. Last Wednesday her story was featured on the front page of the *Newcastle Herald*. Next month she turns 80 and she is still looking for somewhere to rent. Sadly, she is not the only older woman who has reached out to my office seeking assistance following a no-cause eviction. In fact, women over 50 are the fastest growing cohort of people facing homelessness. That is backed up by local specialist homelessness services, such as Nova for Women and Children in my electorate.

When someone cannot afford to buy a home and cannot find one to rent, they have only one option left and that is social housing. Social housing is the third front on which this housing crisis is being fought. In the 10 years that this Government has been in power it has sold off \$2.1 billion worth of social housing while reinvesting far less. I know this because those figures were provided by Ministers to my questions on notice. Clearly, about half a billion dollars less has been spent over that time. The Government's current asset recycling approach to fund social housing is not sustainable and is resulting in far fewer social housing beds for people who desperately need them. The wait for social housing in my area is longer than 10 years.

When someone cannot afford to buy, cannot afford to rent and cannot afford to wait 10 years for social housing, it is highly likely that they will be facing homelessness. Just last Friday afternoon three people, all unknown to each other and all facing homelessness, arrived in my office. One was couch surfing, one had been homeless for seven years and arrived at the office with her luggage, and the third was desperately trying to extend her temporary housing accommodation budget allowance so that she would not be thrown out of the hotel room she had been living in. There truly is a housing crisis in New South Wales, particularly in regional areas. It is terrifying to see and absolutely emotionally exhausting to deal with. The problem has been years in the making and the Government needs to fix it. I support the motion.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (17:33):** I recognise the member for Lake Macquarie for moving this important motion. The Public Accounts Committee under his stewardship is looking at parts of this issue at the moment, particularly contracts around maintenance. There is an opportunity throughout the remainder of this Parliament to

deliver what I think would be a bipartisan strategy and policy around investing in public housing on a scale we have not seen before. Federal Labor has outlined a positive plan to do this. I think there is a spirit of willingness on this side of the Chamber to work with the Government to deliver landmark investment in public housing. I have been in the Homelessness portfolio for a long time now—several years. Every single report, every single study I have examined and every single piece of research, whether from here or overseas, says one thing loud and clear: It centres around the provision of safe, affordable and accessible housing.

This is not only critical to addressing the homelessness issue—which is very important; I am not playing it down—but also an opportunity, as we come out of COVID and deal with the economic consequences of the past 18 months, to stimulate every single micro economy in New South Wales through investment in public housing. It is smart for jobs; it is smart for local economies. The return on investment is strong. I have spoken to the former Minister for Family and Community Services, and we know that putting people in temporary accommodation—all of us congratulated the Government on its response during COVID to ensure that people were protected, and I congratulated the Minister personally a number of times—is very much a temporary solution. It is very expensive and wraparound services are not delivered easily.

The member for Newtown and I visited a woman in my electorate who is in a shocking situation. She was struggling with family challenges and living in what I consider to be an unsafe house. Unfortunately, this is replicated right across our communities. I say to the Government today that there is an opportunity for Labor, the crossbench and the Government to put down the political sticks for a moment, to agree that we are at a crisis point and to bring together this Parliament and the best minds around policy development in this space. Investment in public housing goes a long way towards addressing homelessness. It does not eliminate it, but it goes a long way. All the research, particularly from overseas, says that when you get people into stable housing you can begin to provide those wraparound services and start to change their life. They can then contribute to societies—which everyone wants, including them.

As we emerge post COVID—and we still have not dealt with all the economic outcomes that this terrible pandemic has caused—there is an opportunity to drive that investment going forward. It is not about selling off two three-bedroom homes and replacing them with two or three one-bedroom homes. We have to be fair dinkum; that does not make sense. That does not result in more housing for people. But those debates are important. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie. I know that he is genuine about this issue, and I say to the Government that we all are. If we are honest, we will agree that this issue affects every single one of the communities we represent in this place. There is an opportunity for this Parliament to rally around and work together to put forward strong policy investment in this area.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:38):** In reply: I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for their contributions and for being here to participate in the debate in this important area of their portfolio responsibilities. I particularly acknowledge my colleagues on the crossbench, the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Newtown, and also the member for Charlestown and the member for Keira. I think we all understand that there is a crisis out there. Very real problems have manifested and been thrown into sharp relief in this COVID period.

The member for Charlestown and I share similar communities. Our demographics cross over and we have similar work areas and recreational areas. We are one and the same, split by an artificial electoral boundary. But even though Newtown is different and Sydney is different, every member would have similar experiences to ours. I talked to the member for Sydney about his work. I talked to Clover Moore about what the City of Sydney is doing. The experiences are slightly different. But do you know what is not different? We all see people in our electorate offices—young mothers and young families—who are really doing it tough. They do not have much income, they have kids and they do not know where their children will be sleeping tonight, tomorrow night or next week. There is that immediate fear, but they are almost embarrassed sometimes. I feel so much for them because they feel ashamed that they cannot provide for their children in the way they think they should.

The answer is that we need to come together, and we have been hearing some of that said here. There will be differences around policy but we can come together. Both Ministers spoke about how the 20-year strategy is coming into place, but we have to bring along other players in that space. Faith-based organisations, charities and local government will come together to work. As the member for Keira said, bring the Commonwealth along. It has so much money; it has the capacity. We have to stop tinkering around the edges. We have to change the paradigm. Let us do a major reset. The only way we can really do that is if we all come together. It is a big job and I wish the two Ministers all the best because they are working for our communities and their communities. I thank them very much for being here, and I thank everybody for participating in this important debate.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills*

**BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021**

**Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-054A be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
 Noes .....48  
 Majority..... 12

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

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

**PAIRS**

Chanthivong, A	Wilson, F
Hornery, S	Williams, R
Lalich, N	Griffin, J

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:52):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c20201-048A:

No. 1 **Requirements for reporting investigations relating to property and stock agents**

Page 13. Insert after line 3—

**1.11A Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 No 66**

**[1] Section 220 Register**

Insert after section 220(1)(b)—

- (ba) investigations under this Act relating to a person—
  - (i) failing to comply with a requirement or obligation imposed on the person under this Act, or
  - (ii) carrying out activities or exercising functions without a license or certificate of registration,

**[2] Schedule 1 Savings, transitional and other provisions**

Insert at the end of the Schedule—

**Part 9 Provision consequent on enactment of Better Regulation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Act 2021**

**41 Secretary to include details of particular past investigations in Register**

For the purposes of section 220(1)(ba), the Secretary must make all reasonable efforts to include the details of all investigations completed in the period—

- (a) commencing on 1 January 2014, and
- (b) ending on the commencement of this clause.

**1.11B Property and Stock Agents Regulation 2014**

**Section 50 The Register**

Insert after section 50(2)—

- (2A) The Secretary is also to enter and keep in the Register details of the following particulars in respect of each investigation referred to in the Act, section 220(1)(ba)—
  - (a) the name and business address of the person subject to the investigation,
  - (b) if the person is the holder of a licence or certificate of registration—
    - (i) the number of the licence or certificate of registration, and
    - (ii) date of issue and expiry of the licence or certificate of registration, and
    - (ii) if the licence is a corporation licence—the name and business address of each director of the corporation,
  - (c) the outcome of the investigation, including details of disciplinary or other action taken against the person.

Standing Order 210 enables the moving of this amendment. It states:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders and practice.

The long title of the bill is:

An Act to amend various Acts, and to amend or repeal regulations, administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation; and for related purposes.

The amendment on sheet c2021-048A amends the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, an Act within the Better Regulation portfolio. The amendment is clearly within the long title of the bill and it is relevant to the subject matter of the bill since it is about information contained within a register. Amendments concerning registers in other Acts are also amended by the bill, including schedule 1.4, concerning a register in the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, and schedule 1.8, concerning a register in the Fair Trading Act 1987. I note that a proposed Government amendment to the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 at schedule 1.6 refers to investigations by a government agency. This amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the bill since it requires a register to include details of investigations under the Property and Stock Agents Act. In May the Attorney General claimed that the long title of the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 meant that the Opposition could not move its amendment. For clarity, the long title of that bill is:

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

The long title of the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021 is:

An Act to amend various Acts ... administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation.

It does not say "certain" Acts or imply that it covers only named Acts within the bill. The Property and Stock Agents Act is one of the various Acts administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, but it is an Act the Minister is seeking to amend in the bill. Quite clearly the amendment meets the requirements of the standing orders and may be moved. At budget estimates the Opposition asked about the scenario of a person who was widely reported to have facilitated the sale of a property to receive a commission. We asked the better regulation Minister what sort of licence that person would have required in a situation where he was getting a commission. Would he have required a real estate licence? The Minister answered:

I am not completely aware of what licences he would require. I am happy to take that on notice.

We asked the Deputy Secretary of the Better Regulation division and Commissioner of Fair Trading, who answered:

I think we would have to take that on notice and get some legal advice about interpreting the real estate agents Act, but we can do that.

In answer to the question taken on notice, the Minister said:

NSW Fair Trading does not know the full extent of Mr Maguire's involvement in this sale and there is a lack of sufficient information in the transcript to determine if a real estate licence would have been required.

Fair Trading has not received any complaints or enquiries about this matter.

The individual I am referring to is the former member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire. One would assume Fair Trading would watch the TV news and read the daily newspapers in which this matter was widely reported, and yet it says it has not received any complaints or inquiries. It was widely reported that in one of his text messages to the Premier, Daryl Maguire stated:

One of my contacts sold a motel for 5.8 million I had put her in contact so I should make 5K

As is well known by now, the Premier replied:

Congrats!!! Great News!!! Woo hoo

It is odd for the Minister to say that Fair Trading has not received any complaints or inquiries about this matter since, as he would be aware that section 194 (2) of the Property and Stock Agents Act already provides that disciplinary action may be taken under part 12 of the Act, whether or not a complaint has been made. Any such disciplinary action would only be taken after an investigation. To this day, it would appear that no-one has investigated this matter, despite it being widely reported and raised at budget estimates. Accordingly, my amendment adds a requirement that the register established under section 220 of the Act will also contain details of persons investigated for not complying with the Act as well as the outcome of the investigation. The provision is retrospective, so it requires Fair Trading to include whatever historic action it may have taken or not taken in relation to this matter. In answer to a supplementary question at budget estimates, the Minister said:

NSW Fair Trading has a dedicated program team of 16 inspectors providing statewide regulation to the property industry, including real estate sales and property management, strata and community living management, residential tenancy, residential parks communities, and retirement villages.

Whether that number of inspectors is sufficient for a State the size of New South Wales is another question; however, the requirement to include details of investigations of unlicensed operators on the register is not too onerous or burdensome and should be undertaken. We are entering the period of a boom market. Every time there is a boom in the property market, we see a rush of people entering the market to start selling properties. It is really important that we know that Fair Trading is making sure that all those people are properly qualified and is taking action for those who are not. There is always a huge number of complaints in this area and it is a very important area of public policy. We are talking about the biggest investments people make in their lives. If we cannot answer the question of whether an investigation was undertaken into somebody who did not hold a licence back in 2014, where are we, seven years down the track?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:58):** Under Standing Order 210, I seek a ruling from the Chair that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-048A is out of order. I would like to provide some background in relation to why the Government is seeking that order. The amendment that I have just outlined seeks to amend an Act or an instrument that is not listed in schedule 1 to the amending bill. It relates to property and stock agents, and they are not listed in the miscellaneous bill at all. It inserts new provisions in the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 requiring the secretary to include in the register details of certain past investigations. The Property and Stock Agents Act is not one of the Acts and instruments identified in schedule 1 to the bill and there are no existing proposals in the bill that relate to the reporting on investigations under any legislation within the Better Regulation and Innovation portfolio.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:59):** I spoke at length at the commencement of the Consideration in Detail stage about my belief that this is within the scope of the bill. The Better Regulation Legislation Amendment

(Miscellaneous) Bill 2021—unlike the statute law revision bill, which refers to certain Acts—refers to various Acts within the Better Regulation portfolio. The amendment is clearly within the long title of the bill and I believe we should be dealing with it. It also pertains to information contained within a register, which is the subject matter of the bill. As I mentioned before, schedule 1.4 refers to a register in the Building Products (Safety) Act and schedule 1.8 concerns a register in the Fair Trading Act. I believe the amendment is entirely relevant.

**The SPEAKER (18:00):** I rule the amendment out of order. I refer to Standing Order 210, which states:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill, provided that they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the standing orders and practice.

I further state that although the long title of the bill refers to an Act to amend various Acts administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, it does not extend to every Act that is administered by the Minister. I am satisfied that the Act which is proposed to be amended is not within schedule 1. There is a fairly extensive list in schedule 1 but it does not include the Property and Stock Agents Act. I therefore rule the amendment out of order.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:02):** I seek leave to move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C and amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-047C in globo.

**Leave not granted.**

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Granville wish to move the amendments separately?

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I will move them separately.

**The SPEAKER:** I foreshadow that I am inclined to rule amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-047C out of order. I am inclined to hear further arguments about amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C. That may assist the member for Granville, but it is up to her as to how she wishes to proceed.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I will deal first with Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C. By leave, I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C in globo:

No. 1 **Fair Trading NSW—Requirements for investigators and reporting**

Page 11, Schedule 1.8. Insert after line 10—

[1] **Section 11**

Omit section 11. Insert instead—

**11 Annual report**

The annual report of the Department prepared under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* for a financial year must include a report on the following—

- (a) the operations of the Secretary during that year,
- (b) the budget for Fair Trading NSW for that year,
- (c) the number and type of employees employed within Fair Trading NSW for that year.

[2] **Section 18 Office and identification of investigator**

Omit section 18(1). Insert instead—

- (1) The Secretary may, by written order, appoint an employee as an investigator for the purposes of this Act and of any other legislation administered by the Minister.
- (1A) However, the Secretary must not appoint an employee as an investigator for the purposes of this Act or the Australian Consumer Law unless the Secretary is satisfied the employee has qualifications or experience appropriate for the purpose of exercising the functions of an investigator under this Act or the Australian Consumer Law.
- (1B) The Secretary must provide each employee appointed under subsection (1) with a certificate of identification as an investigator.

No. 2 **Fair Trading NSW—Transitional arrangement for investigators**

Page 11, Schedule 1.8. Insert after line 14—

[4] **Schedule 5 Savings and transitional provisions**

Insert at the end of the Schedule, with appropriate Part and clause numbering—

**Part Provision consequent on enactment of Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Act 2021**

**Appointment of particular investigators ends on 31 December 2021**

- (1) This clause applies in relation to the appointment of an employee who, at the commencement of this clause, is appointed as an investigator under previous section 18(1) for the purposes of this Act or the Australian Consumer Law.
- (2) Despite the terms of the employee's appointment, the employee's appointment as an investigator for the purposes of this Act or the Australian Consumer Law ends on 31 December 2021.
- (3) The termination of the employee's appointment does not prevent the Secretary from appointing the employee as an investigator under amended section 18 for the purposes of this Act or the Australian Consumer Law if the Secretary is satisfied the employee meets the requirements for appointment under amended section 18.
- (4) In this section—  
*previous*, in relation to a section, means the section as in force before the commencement of this clause.  
*amended*, in relation to a section, means the section as in force from the commencement of this clause.

Standing Order 210 enables the moving of amendments Nos 1 and 2 to the Fair Trading Act. I will not go through Standing Order 210 at length again, but the long title of the bill captures this. The Opposition amendments amend the Fair Trading Act, which is referred to in schedule 1.8 to the bill. The amendments will improve transparency in the Better Regulation portfolio. There is no longer any information contained in the budget papers about the number of staff employed in the Fair Trading Customer Services Group and no information about the income or expenditure of the group. The figures are clustered within the Better Regulation Division of the Department of Customer Service to hide the truth of the cuts that this Government has made since 2011.

Fair Trading and SafeWork staff do crucial work in this State. It is important that consumers, workers and employers know the budgets and staffing complement to deliver customer protection and work, health and safety. We know that this Government has a long-term agenda to deskill those staff and make them jack-of-all-trades positions. We know that this Government cut the Fair Trading budget by \$13 million in 2012, and the creation of the Department of Customer Service has enabled the Government to hide further details within clusters. We know from scrutinising the Minister at budget estimates about the current number of Fair Trading inspectors. I quote the full exchange:

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY:** And how many do we have in Fair Trading?

**Ms HOGAN:** Oh, you did ask me for that.

**Ms WEBB:** We do not actually define inspectors in quite the same way in Fair Trading.

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY:** Well, what is the headcount for that directorate?

**Ms WEBB:** That directorate, Mr Whitton's team, I do not know. It is about 100.

In answer to a question taken on notice, the Minister said that there are 331 SafeWork NSW inspectors. In answer to another question on notice about how many inspectors there are in regional areas, we were told that there are currently 26 NSW Fair Trading inspectors based outside the Sydney metropolitan area and SafeWork has 306 staff based outside the Sydney metropolitan area. It should not require a question at estimates to extract this information. With more than half a trillion dollars, New South Wales is Australia's largest economy and yet this Government has only about 100 Fair Trading inspectors. This has a very real impact on individual industries.

For instance, we all know that electricity can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property. That is why we have strict electrical safety laws. But in answer to a question taken on notice about electrical matters, the Minister said that there are eight NSW Fair Trading investigators and 18 SafeWork NSW inspectors who respond to requests relating to electrical matters across New South Wales. At budget estimates we asked about forming a general inspectorate or combining multiple inspectors from different agencies into a central division of some form. The justification we were given by the Deputy Secretary of the Better Regulation Division and Commissioner of Fair Trading was:

I think at this time last year we had just done our realignment. The inspectors from SafeWork, Fair Trading and Liquor & Gaming are now all in one string together that Mr Williams looks after. Underneath that there are individual directorates—so there are a number of SafeWork directorates, a Fair Trading directorate and a Liquor & Gaming directorate. So at the director level, the inspectors are clearly defined in those particular roles. There are a few areas where there is a cross-delegation. Mr Williams mentioned that SafeWork directors have been delegated paths to look at Fair Trading licences. We are working together but in very distinct, individual directorate teams.

Make of that what you will. But we know the roles are being generalised so that expert staff with years of specialised experience are being realigned into a situation where they may have a cross-delegation for SafeWork or for Fair Trading or for Liquor & Gaming. The objective of this amendment is to ensure transparency on budgets and staffing so that we in this Parliament can hold the Government to account for its budgetary decisions and the

flow-on effects on the capacity of staff to deliver. If it continues to be less than transparent and hide the truth, consumers, workers and employers will be worse off.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:07):** The Government opposes amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C. They propose further changes to the Fair Trading Act that have no direct relevance to the proposals in this bill. The proposed amendments to the Fair Trading Act in this bill are minor and largely administrative in nature and seek to clarify the operation of existing provisions. The amendments moved by the Opposition introduce a new proposal that increases administrative burden and complexity by, first, amending section 11 of the Act to require certain particulars relating to budget and the number and type of employees within Fair Trading to be provided in the annual reports; secondly, amending section 18 (1) of the Act to require Fair Trading investigators to hold appropriate qualifications or experience; and, thirdly, inserting a new part in the savings and transitional provisions of the Act requiring all current investigator positions to be reviewed and reappointed at the end of the year. The proposed amendments have no direct relevance to the subject matter of the bill and are largely inconsistent with the intended objectives of the bill to remove the administrative burden and ensure the effective operation of the law. These Opposition amendments neither improve nor modify existing proposals in the bill relating to the Fair Trading Act, and we oppose them.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:09):** My understanding is that the objective of the Better Regulation portfolio is to remove unnecessary administrative burdens from businesses and consumers across New South Wales, not from NSW Fair Trading. We are asking for a headcount. The Minister cannot tell us how many staff he has. He is looking at creating a situation where over time, again and again, inspectors will retire or be restructured out and replaced with jack-of-all-trades inspectors who can be called on to do all sorts of things and who do not know what they are doing. We want to know how many people work in Fair Trading and how many people do this work. That is not too much of an administrative burden. In fact, most organisations would find it very helpful to know how many staff members they have and what they do.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-046C be agreed to.

Ayes .....35

Noes .....49

Majority.....14

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

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

## NOES

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

O'Dea, J  
 Pavey, M  
 Perrottet, D  
 Petinos, E

Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Upton, G  
 Williams, L

## PAIRS

Chanthivong, A  
 Hornery, S  
 Lalich, N

Wilson, F  
 Williams, R  
 Griffin, J

**Amendments negated.**

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the member for Granville may have withdrawn one of her amendments.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Yes, I withdraw Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-047C, which relates to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

**The SPEAKER:** That leaves us with one potential amendment. I invite you to address that now.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:22):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-045B:

No. 1 **Prescribed local government areas with 6-month waiting periods for making exit entitlement applications in relation to retirement villages**

Page 16. Insert after line 18—

**1.13A Retirement Villages Regulation 2017****Schedule 5A Local government areas**

Insert in alphabetical order—

Central Coast

City of Lake Macquarie

The amendment pertains to the Retirement Villages Regulation 2017 and relates to prescribed local government areas with six-month waiting lists for making exit entitlement applications. Standing Order 210 enables the moving of this amendment. It states:

**210.** Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders and practice.

The long title of the bill is:

An Act to amend various Acts, and to amend or repeal regulations, administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation; and for related purposes.

The amendment amends a regulation subordinate to an Act amended by this bill. Schedule 1.13 to the bill amends the Retirement Villages Act 1999. The regulation this amendment seeks to amend is subordinate to an Act being amended by this bill. The long title of the bill refers to amending regulations, so it is appropriate that this amendment of the regulation is moved rather than an amendment to the Act. Quite clearly, the amendment meets the requirements of the standing orders and may be moved. NSW Labor, other members of the Legislative Council and stakeholders have called on the Government to provide an explanation for changes to retirement village exit entitlements on the Central Coast and in Lake Macquarie. At the 2019 State election the Berejiklian Government committed to introducing time limits on when retirement villages can charge for general services and when they must sell or buy back a unit after departure of a resident. In an answer to a question on retirement villages in question time on 11 November 2020, the Minister stated:

There will be a six- month time frame in metropolitan areas and a twelve-month time frame in regional areas. That will provide the opportunity for the operator to market that particular property and be active about it. It does not want that asset sitting on its books. It is costing money and the operator wants to move it on, plus the resident wants to access their money so they can move on to the next phase of their life.

The Central Coast and Lake Macquarie areas were initially included within the greater metropolitan area, which meant existing residents would be paid their exit entitlements by the operator within six months. I note that the Government's September 2020 retirement villages reforms consultation paper very clearly deemed both Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast as metropolitan areas. At the time, based on the September 2020 discussion

paper, residents were in no doubt that both Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast were deemed metropolitan areas and were surprised that, without warning, they were not included in the regulation when it was gazetted. Retirement village residents have long faced unreasonable delays to receive exit entitlement money before their unit sells, but recent changes were made to the law to ensure exit entitlements are paid within defined periods of time. Just when people on the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie thought they would be paid their exit entitlements by the operator within six months, the Government has let them down by blowing out the time frame to 12 months—and with no explanation.

Residents leaving retirement villages in Lake Macquarie should not have to wait twice as long to be paid as other people in the same situation in Newcastle, where they are in exactly the same real estate market and it takes very similar time frames to sell properties. Residents on the Central Coast should not have to wait twice as long to be paid as other people in the same situation in Sydney. There is no way people in Lake Macquarie and on the Central Coast who are selling their units in retirement villages are in a real estate market more similar to that in Brewarrina and Bourke rather than that in Newcastle or Sydney. Retirement village residents are furious that they will have to wait six months longer than first proposed. They were led to believe they would be treated the same way as people in Sydney and Newcastle, but the Government has left them behind and is making them wait six months longer to be paid their exit entitlements. The Government has reversed its position and now wants to treat Lake Macquarie differently from Newcastle. Why the Government wants to treat the Central Coast differently from Sydney is anyone's guess. It is yet to publicly explain to the residents of Lake Macquarie the reasons for its about face. Threatening these residents with the withdrawal of the regional seniors travel pass, which is well beyond the scope of the Better Regulation portfolio, does not cut it as an explanation.

There are multiple situations in which residents of Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast are treated the same as residents of Sydney and Newcastle, and some in which they are different. The current real estate market conditions in the metropolitan areas are comparable with those in Lake Macquarie and on the Central Coast. Homes do not take twice as long to sell in Lake Macquarie and on the Central Coast, so operators should not be given twice as long to sell them. While I acknowledge that the Government has moved on some of the issues that led to Labor giving notice to move disallowance motions in the Legislative Council, the Government has still not adequately or convincingly explained why Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast are being treated differently. I have raised this matter directly with the Minister. I wrote to him on 6 April about our concerns with the Government's regulations. We asked the Minister to remake the regulations in light of these significant issues. A new amendment regulation was made, but there has been no progress on metro and regional categorisation. In the Minister's reply, dated 27 April, he blamed the Department of Regional NSW [DRNSW] for the classification of metropolitan and regional areas. He stated:

I note data has been provided to the Government in relation to the number of retirement villages and dwellings in the Lake Macquarie and Central Coast local government areas. While I appreciate the work undertaken to prepare this data, the Government did not rely on this data as it dealt with the total number of premises rather than the time it takes to sell a property, which was a critical element in the development of the exit entitlement order scheme. Ultimately the Government elected to use the classifications adopted by the Department of Regional NSW to classify the areas defined as "regional" and "metropolitan" when making the regulations. Under these classifications, both the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie local government areas are defined as regional. This is despite the Minister's own document, the September 2020 discussion paper, in which Lake Macquarie and Central Coast were both defined as metropolitan areas. It is still not clear if NSW Fair Trading relied upon the definition of "regional" from DRNSW, but the definition changed between the release of Fair Trading's September 2020 discussion paper and the gazettal of the regulations. In a meeting with me and in correspondence to members of this place, the Minister told us:

Under these classifications both the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie local government areas are defined as regional. The New South Wales Government relies upon these guidelines for a number of programs that have been of significant benefit to citizens in the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie, such as the regional seniors travel card and regional road funding. Should you wish the Central Coast to be reclassified as metropolitan under the Department of Regional New South Wales guidelines and your constituents excluded from these initiatives you may wish to write to the Deputy Premier as the Minister for Regional New South Wales.

I have never heard of anything so ridiculous and I am not sure how the Minister manages to threaten us with legislation administered by other Ministers. There are umpteen different classifications of residents of the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie in different Acts. It is within this Minister's power to treat them as metropolitan for the purposes of this Act and it is a commonsense approach that recognises that we are talking about the real estate market. It is ridiculous to threaten to take away pensioners' travel cards. As we have seen today, the Government's approach is all over the shop. I note that the application of DRNSW's definition appears inconsistent and arbitrary. Not even DRNSW appears to be bound by its own definition.

For example, DRNSW's regional road fund allocates the following funding to metropolitan areas: Metro Newcastle, \$500,000 for Wallsend active hubs, Federal Park Wallsend; \$591,677 for Blackbutt Village, Orchardtown Road public domain revitalisation; \$5 million to upgrade Newcastle Beach community facilities; Metro Sydney, \$34,000 for a new mobile tower at Sackville North in the Hills council; \$34,000 for a new mobile tower in Kurrajong in the Hawkesbury; \$54,000 for a new mobile tower in Webbs Creek and also in the Hawkesbury; \$156,000 for a new mobile tower at Colo Heights; \$167,000 for a new mobile tower in St Albans;

and \$34,000 for a mobile tower in the Blue Mountains National Park; South in Wollondilly, various moneys for new mobile towers in Nattai, Buxton and Mt Hunter, as well as over \$2 million for the Picton to Tahmoor shareway construction; Metro Wollongong, \$1.6 million for the Helensburgh Town Centre revitalisation project; \$339 for the Grand Pacific Walk at Clifton; \$250,000 to upgrade the Snake Pit, the Illawarra regional basketball facility; \$138,000 for video histories and Wollongong history tours; and \$352,000 for the Cringila Hills master plan implementation pump track.

If the Government wants to take away the regional travel cards of pensioners in Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast, will it be re-categorising the Hills, Hawkesbury, Wollondilly, Wollongong and Newcastle as "regional"? Or did the Minister for Regional New South Wales make a mistake and will he demand that the Hills, Hawkesbury, Wollondilly, Wollongong and Newcastle councils repay their grants? Will they downgrade the position of Lord Mayor of Newcastle to mayor, and Lord Mayor of Wollongong to mayor? Given the detriment to retirement village residents in Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast as well as the inconsistency of the application of DRNSW's own definition, I have moved this amendment to correct this inequitable error and thereby include Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast in schedule 5A as originally committed by the Government.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:32):** Under Standing Order 210 I seek a ruling from the Chair that Opposition amendment c2021-045B is out of order. The proposed amendment seeks to include certain local government areas prescribed in schedule 5A of the Retirement Villages Regulation 2017. The bill before the House today only contains amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 and not to the regulation. The proposed amendments in the bill do not involve any matters prescribing local government areas or other entities for the purpose of the Act. The Opposition's amendment to the Retirement Villages Regulation 2017 falls beyond the scope of amendments permitted under Standing Order 210 and is out of order.

Further, there has been a lot of discussion in relation to the exit entitlements of six months and 12 months, with metropolitan areas being six months where an operator of a retirement village must sell the resident's accommodation within six months or they must then pay that money to the resident. For regional New South Wales, that extends to 12 months, given that it is a little more difficult to sell property in regional New South Wales than it is in metropolitan areas. The Government went out to consultation and the result came back that the Central Coast and others that were part of the Department of Regional New South Wales at the time accepted that they were happy to be part of regional New South Wales. The reforms were accepted, including by the Retirement Villages Residents Association NSW, that Central Coast and Lake Macquarie were part of regional New South Wales and part of the 12-month exit buyback.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to contain his comments to whether or not the amendment is out of order, rather than speak to the amendment at this stage.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Certainly. I believe the amendment is out of order, given that it falls beyond the scope of amendments, as I said earlier. The proposed amendment does not involve any matters prescribed in the local government areas other than for the purposes of the Act. The Government seeks to amend the Act. The Opposition seeks to amend the regulation. The amendment falls out of scope. It has already been debated and accepted. Parliament has already passed that the exit entitlement fees for six months and 12 months and the boundaries stand.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:36):** The bill before the House deals with the Retirement Villages Act, but more specifically it deals with exit entitlements and the period of those exit entitlements that will apply to residents and operators of retirement villages. This is a matter that the Government has created. It is a creation of the Government's structuring of the Act. A resident and an operator cannot know the period of the exit entitlements without referring both to the Act and the regulation. That is the construction of it. It is not a simple matter of referring to the Act, and the regulation prescribes some fees or the amount of some penalties. One cannot work out how to operate in this environment as a resident or an operator unless the Act as well as the regulation are referred to. Only by referring to the regulation can one determine what the period is. That is the important point here.

The bill before the House goes to the period of the exit entitlement. The amendment moved by the shadow Minister goes to that point—what the period will be for certain people in certain local government areas. The structure of the regulation which falls under the Act groups certain local government areas in a six-month period where they can access their exit entitlement, rather than a 12-month period which would apply to regional areas. The two are linked in such a way that people really cannot understand their obligations or entitlements without referring to the two things. The Opposition cannot seek to amend those circumstances without using the mechanism that we have, and that is going to the regulation. It is the way the Government has structured this Act and regulation. They are linked together. We can only attack it to correct an issue on the Central Coast and Lake

Macquarie by referring to the regulation. They are linked in a way that means that the objection of the Minister is inaccurate and cannot be allowed to stand.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:38):** I maintain that the amendment is outside the scope of the bill, given that the Opposition seeks to amend the regulation. We are amending the Act. The fact is that the Parliament passed this under the reforms. After the reforms, a campaign was started by the Opposition and that is where we find ourselves today. It suits the member for The Entrance to go down this path purely because all of a sudden he wants to be part of the city, whereas I note that he classed himself as being a regional member.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:39):** I am not seeking to do anything that I was aware of at the time and neither is the member for Charlestown. When we were debating the amendments to the Act that is being further amended today, a map produced by the department clearly put the Central Coast in the Sydney metropolitan area. Proceeding in that way, I thought the Act was a step in the right direction. I then found out that the regulation down the track did something completely different with the Central Coast. When we were debating the amendments to the Act in November, the information before the House put the Central Coast in one location. The regulation made by the Minister in the following February took the Central Coast out of that location. The only way for us to correct that, which goes to period and exit entitlement, is the way we are choosing to do it today. We are simply not able to amend the regulation. The Minister's objection is wrong. We are not seeking to agitate something new. We are agitating on the basis that we had bad information to start with.

**The SPEAKER (18:41):** I remind members of Standing Order 210, which reads:

Amendments may be moved to any part of the bill provided they are within the long title of the bill or relevant to the subject matter of the bill and are otherwise in conformity with the standing orders and practice.

Two questions are effectively posed in my mind. One is whether or not an amendment to a regulation is essentially to be treated differently from an amendment to an Act that is otherwise referred to in the amending bill. I am convinced by the argument of the member for The Entrance that in this case the Act and the regulations should be seen as intertwined to such an extent that construction of the Act requires reference to both the Act and the regulations. Indeed, the amendments in the bill that the Minister has moved reinforce that rationale in that they refer specifically to aspects that are prescribed by the regulations. Furthermore, in order to give sense to what is a differing period that applies before exit entitlement orders may be made, the regulations need to be referred to inherently because of the difference in approach to geographical areas. The fact is that the regulations currently address that matter and, therefore, it is appropriate to treat an amendment to a regulation as though it is an amendment to the Act. That is not an issue.

The second question is whether or not the subject matter in a broad sense, and indeed the long title of the Act, encompasses an amendment to the Retirement Villages Act in this case. The mere fact that the Retirement Villages Act is listed in schedule 1 is not sufficient. If it was not listed in schedule 1, I would have ruled it out of order in accordance with my earlier ruling. The mere fact that it is listed does not make it within the scope of the bill. However, the amendments in the bill relate specifically to an exit entitlement order and the amendment moved by the member for Granville also relates specifically to an exit entitlement order. In those circumstances I am going to rule that the amendment is in order even though it is not as clearly within the scope. It could be argued otherwise, but I am going to err on the side of allowing the amendment and the debate. I will now hear any arguments for or against the amendment.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:43):** The Government opposes Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-045B.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:43):** I speak in favour of the amendment, which includes the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie local government areas in the six-month exit entitlement period. There has been a considerable amount of concern and angst in relation to this from certain people who own residential units in my electorate. They were of the understanding that they would be treated in exactly the same way as people in the Newcastle and Sydney local government areas. These people are in the same kind of property market as people in the Newcastle local government area. I spoke in the debate on the bill earlier today. We are talking about five kilometres distance. A person who lives in the Newcastle local government area, which is five kilometres away from Eleebana in the Lake Macquarie local government area, is somehow entitled to a six-month exit entitlement but people in Lake Macquarie are not. It is unfair and it is nonsensical. I do not think we should be allowing unfair and nonsensical legislation in this place. I wholeheartedly support the amendment moved by the shadow Minister.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:45):** I cannot underline clearly enough that when we debated the reforms where the Government was seeking to change the Retirement Villages Act to deliver on its election promise, the communication that I gave to my constituents, who were terribly in favour of those reforms, was that the Central Coast would be considered part of the Sydney metropolitan area and, therefore, a six-month exit

entitlement would apply. After I supported the bill on that basis, the Minister and his department promulgated the regulation and the Central Coast was taken out of the Sydney metropolitan area. As a consequence, a 12-month exit entitlement period would apply. With the changes today to the bill, once a resident in my electorate applies and is knocked back on obtaining their exit entitlement after 12 months, they will have to wait another 12 months, which further compounds the injustice. This amendment corrects the injustice. The information that we had when we debated these changes originally was that the Central Coast would be part of the Sydney metropolitan area.

I heard what the Minister said about whether we are regional and about what I have said in the past. What I have said in the past is that the Central Coast is a separate and distinct region. This Government and all governments have treated the Central Coast as part of the metropolitan area under certain circumstances—most recently during the pandemic when it was included in the Sydney metropolitan area for restrictions and lockdowns. The Central Coast is separate and distinct, with its own regional identity. It has characteristics of a metropolitan area as well as a country area. That is what makes the Central Coast such a distinct regional location. It should be treated as a separate region as issues arise. I support the amendment. It corrects an injustice and takes us back to the position we thought we were in when we made these changes to the Act originally.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:48):** This amendment is incredibly important to people living in retirement villages on the Central Coast and in Lake Macquarie. If adopted, it will give them the certainty that they believed they had from September last year in the Government's way forward. They believed that they would be treated in the same way as residents of Sydney and Newcastle, which is in line with the way that they are treated in the broader property market. It is ridiculous to make analogies to the Department of Regional NSW when from time to time the Department of Regional NSW awards grants to local government areas that are not prescribed by it as being regional New South Wales, including the Hills, which is next to the local government area where I live in Parramatta.

This is very important for affected residents. They have been waiting for years for these changes. We have supported the Government's changes up until now, but this one is incredibly important. We should not be short-changing people in their thousands by making them wait up to an additional six months to sell their units when they live in Eleebana, which is five kilometres outside the city of Newcastle. It is a beautiful area where it does not take very long to sell houses. It is tightly held and people are keen to get into that market. Yet those people—and I met dozens and dozens of them, with the member for The Entrance and the member for Charlestown—want to be treated exactly the same way as people down the road in Newcastle are treated when it comes to the property market. That includes the sale of units in a retirement village.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-045B be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....38  
 Noes .....43  
 Majority.....5

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

Anderson, K	Gulaptis, C	Provest, G
Ayres, S	Hancock, S	Roberts, A
Barilaro, J	Hazzard, B	Saunders, D
Berejiklian, G	Henskens, A	Sidgreaves, P

## NOES

Bromhead, S	Kean, M	Sidoti, J
Clancy, J	Layzell, D	Singh, G
Conolly, K	Lee, G	Smith, N
Constance, A	Lindsay, W	Speakman, M
Cooke, S (teller)	Marshall, A	Stokes, R
Coure, M	O'Dea, J	Taylor, M
Crouch, A (teller)	Pavey, M	Toole, P
Davies, T	Perrottet, D	Tuckerman, W
Dominello, V	Petinos, E	Upton, G
Elliott, D	Preston, R	Williams, L
Gibbons, M		

## PAIRS

Chanthivong, A	Williams, R
Hornery, S	Wilson, F
Lalich, N	Griffin, J

**Amendment negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that clauses 1 to 3, and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 to 3, and schedule 1 agreed to.****Third Reading**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.****LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT (COMMISSIONERS) BILL 2021****Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (19:02):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government has now completed its statutory review of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] Act 2016. The report of that review was tabled on 11 May 2021. The report recommends that the Act be amended to remove the office of Commissioner for Oversight from the commission. That role has been vacant since January 2020. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Bill 2021 will amend the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 consistent with that recommendation. Apart from the single recommendation to amend the LECC Act to establish a two-commissioner model, the report concluded that the policy objectives of the Act remain valid. Neither the statutory review nor any of the stakeholder submissions received identified any other amendments to the Act that are required at this time.

The LECC Act was passed in November 2016. The LECC itself was established on 1 July 2017 when the Act substantially commenced. The LECC has consisted of Chief Commissioner, Commissioner for Integrity and Commissioner for Oversight from its inception. The decision to implement a three-commissioner model reflected the recommendations of the report prepared by Andrew Tink, AM, in 2015. That report was the result of the Tink review on police oversight and led to the establishment of the LECC. The Tink report recommended that the LECC be structured with separate integrity and oversight divisions. The report recommended each division be headed by a deputy commissioner who is able to exercise powers and functions that reflect the division's distinct responsibilities. This structure was intended to support a smooth transition to the new oversight model. This was particularly important given that the LECC combined the functions of the former Police Integrity Commission, the Police Division of the Ombudsman and the Inspector of the Crime Commission.

The Tink report recommended that a chief commissioner and two deputy commissioners form a deliberative commissioners' council, with the chief commissioner having the final say on matters that could not be resolved by consensus. There is a slight difference in the statutory functions of the Commissioner for Oversight

and the Commissioner for Integrity. The difference is that only the Commissioner for Integrity or the Chief Commissioner is authorised to hold an examination pursuant to section 62 of the Act. This means that the Commissioner for Oversight cannot conduct an examination. The necessity for this distinction was questioned by the Committee on the Ombudsman, the LECC and the Crime Commission in its *2018 Review of the Annual Reports of Oversighted Bodies*. The parliamentary committee recommended that the Act be amended to give the Commissioner for Oversight the power to undertake private examinations. This was after it heard evidence from the then Chief Commissioner, the Hon. Michael Adams, QC, that the inability of the Commissioner for Oversight to undertake private examinations, despite professional qualifications to do so, was inappropriate and inefficient.

The lack of substantial statutory prescription in the respective roles of the commissioners for integrity and oversight has meant that the current Chief Commissioner, the Hon. Reg Blanch, AM, QC, has been able to successfully manage the affairs of the commission in the absence of a Commissioner for Oversight since 15 January 2020. Members of the parliamentary committee in this place will be aware of the Chief Commissioner's evidence to the committee in February 2020 that the LECC is working well with only two commissioners. The parliamentary committee accepted this evidence and recommended in its *2020 Review of the Annual Reports of Oversighted Bodies* that the Premier and Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts clarify the position of the Commissioner for Oversight. The recommendations from the committee included that the Act be amended to delineate the roles of the chief commissioner and other commissioners.

The Government is introducing this bill in recognition of the successful operation of the LECC with only two commissioners. The bill reflects the feedback from the Chief Commissioner and the Inspector of the LECC during the statutory review process that this is the most desirable structure for the commission moving forward. As I stated previously, the bill will abolish the Commissioner for Oversight. The consequence of that proposal is that certain provisions of the Act are required to be reconsidered in light of the structural change to the commission. Moving to a two-commissioner model requires considering how decisions are made by the commission. Certain key decisions currently require collective decision-making. Those decisions are required to be authorised by the chief commissioner and one other commissioner. A new mode of decision-making will be required with the move to a two-commissioner model. Section 19 (2) of the LECC Act currently specifies five key categories of decisions of the commission that must be authorised by the chief commissioner and at least one other commissioner.

Those decisions are, first, a decision to investigate conduct that is, or could be, serious misconduct, serious maladministration, police misconduct, Crime Commission officer misconduct, officer maladministration or agency maladministration; secondly, a decision to hold an examination into serious misconduct or serious maladministration; thirdly, a decision that an examination, or part thereof, should be held in public; fourthly, a decision that there are reasonable grounds to issue a search warrant; and finally, a decision to delegate a function of the commission. The Government received feedback that a requirement for consultation rather than for unanimous decision-making under section 19 (2) of the Act was preferable. That is, decisions under section 19 (2) of the Act should be made by the chief commissioner following consultation with the other commissioner. This is consistent with the chief commissioner's authority regarding matters relating to the commission and removes the possibility of a deadlock in relation to those key decision-making areas.

Turning to the bill, the bill removes the office of the Commissioner for Oversight from the composition of the LECC under section 18 and renames the Commissioner for Integrity as simply the "Commissioner". The bill makes other minor consequential amendments to the Act and other Acts to reflect the two-commissioner model as well as the change in title of the Commissioner for Integrity. In terms of the five categories of key decisions under section 19 (2) that are currently required to be made by the chief commissioner and one other commissioner that I discussed earlier, the bill amends this requirement so that the decisions can be made by the chief commissioner following consultation with the other commissioner.

The bill preserves the appointment of the current Commissioner for Integrity, Commissioner Lea Drake, as the commissioner for the balance of her term. The bill retains the current requirements that the commissioner may only be appointed with the concurrence of the chief commissioner and that a person cannot be appointed as commissioner if they are a police officer or former police officer. The bill also contains a clarification provision to ensure that the commissioner can continue investigations that had been underway prior to the removal of the office of Commissioner for Oversight and renaming of the office of Commissioner for Integrity. These provisions are to avoid any question of the authority of the commissioner.

Lastly, I note that the bill was amended last night in the other place with respect to the terms of office for the commission. The effect of the amendment is to extend the term limit from five years for the offices of chief commissioner and commissioner combined to five years for each individual office. While the Government opposed these amendments, it will not insist on their removal. The bill ensures that the LECC remains a

fit-for-purpose organisation with a structure that best enables it to deliver on its statutory mandate in overseeing law enforcement in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (19:10):** I lead for the Opposition on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Bill 2021. The Opposition does not oppose the bill as amended in the other place. The object of the bill is to amend the principal Act—the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016—to remove the office of Commissioner for Oversight and to rename the office of the Commissioner for Integrity as the Commissioner, and for related purposes. The bill also has provisions relating to the number of terms the commissioner or chief commissioner can serve. The principal Act resulted from a report by Andrew Tink that was tabled in 2015. The principal Act did not adopt all of the Tink recommendations but the three-commissioner model it adopted was certainly based on Tink's report.

The three-commissioner model provided for a Chief Commissioner, a Commissioner for Oversight and a Commissioner for Integrity. I thought at the time that a three-commissioner model was a bit top heavy and certainly senior people at the Police Integrity Commission, whose opinions I value, thought the same. Since the sacking of the oversight commissioner, Patrick Saidi, in January 2020, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] has been operating with two commissioners—Chief Commissioner Reg Blanch and Commissioner for Integrity Lea Drake. The LECC has told the Government that the two-commissioner structure has been working well and there is no need for a third commissioner. Both the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner Drake have told the oversight committee, the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission, of which I am a member, that they support the two-commissioner model.

The oversight committee has endorsed the proposal. The statutory review of the principal Act carried out by the Government has also recommended this change. It is also supported by the Inspector of the LECC. The case for the change contained in this bill is pretty powerful. Some other things flow from this change. There will no longer be a Commissioner for Integrity and a Commissioner for Oversight. There will now be just a Commissioner. The title of the role of Chief Commissioner is unchanged. The decision-making process about five important topics set out in section 19 of the principal Act is changed. Presently, a decision is achieved by the chief commissioner and one commissioner. If that remained the case, there was theoretically the possibility of an impasse if the chief commissioner did not agree with the commissioner. That has been changed so that decisions are made by the chief commissioner after consultation with the commissioner. I also note that there are transitional provisions relating to the position of the commissioner.

There are also changes to schedule 1 to the principal Act relating to the terms of the commissioner and the chief commissioner. Presently, the maximum length of the term of either of these positions is five years. They cannot be reappointed. This poses a problem of some real significance next year for the LECC. As I understand it, Chief Commissioner Blanch's term expires in January 2022 and Commissioner Drake's expires in April 2022, that is, the two most senior people in the organisation will be leaving within a few weeks of each other. The organisation faces the loss of very considerable skills and knowledge, and that can only be damaging to a public body that is doing very important work. I should emphasise that the LECC is now doing good and valuable work. I note particularly its multiple reports on police strip searching, its reports on the Suspect Target Management Plan and its work on Operation Monza.

Given that it is doing such significant work, it would be regrettable if it was put at risk by so much experience going out the door so quickly. The changes to schedule 1 will allow for multiple terms. This will give the Government the option, if it so chooses, to have some flexibility allowing continuity of leadership at the LECC. The contrary argument is that the LECC should have the same five-year maximum term that the Auditor-General and ICAC have. I do not think that comparison stands up. The LECC does incredibly important work but the probity and integrity issues, especially as relating to government, are not as acute as with ICAC and the Auditor-General. I also note that the LECC and ICAC are now not identical. The ICAC retained the three-commissioner model while the LECC now has a two-commissioner model—and of course the change to schedule 1 does not compel the Government to go down that path. It is merely providing an option if it so chooses to use it. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:15):** My colleague on the oversight committee, the member for Liverpool, made some good points about the impact of the chief commissioner and the integrity commissioner leaving. That is something the Attorney General is also aware of. I make a brief contribution to debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Bill 2021, which, as we have heard, is basically a clean-up of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act to give statutory effect to the current arrangements by removing the Commissioner for Oversight position. That office has been vacant now since January 2020, when the previous commissioner was removed from office by the Governor in Council. Shortly after, the term of the Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC], the Hon. Michael Adams, QC,

expired and the Hon. Reg Blanch, AM, QC, was appointed as the Acting Chief Commissioner for a period of six months.

Section 18 (2) of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 provides that the Commissioner for Oversight can be appointed with the concurrence of the Chief Commissioner. Given that, the Government intended at the time that a new Commissioner for Oversight would be appointed once an ongoing Chief Commissioner had also been appointed and could be consulted on the proposed nominee. So in August last year we saw the Hon. Reg Blanch, AM, QC, appointed as the Chief Commissioner on an ongoing basis. But by that point, evidence was emerging that the LECC was actually working well with two commissioners and that there was support from the LECC itself, as we have heard, to maintain that model.

In any event, the Government was about to commence its statutory review of the LECC Act and thought it quite appropriate to consider any change to the model at this time. That review commenced in November 2020. Key stakeholders were written seeking views on whether the policy objectives of the Act remained valid and whether the terms of the Act remained appropriate for securing those objectives. Stakeholders that were written to included the Chief Commissioner of the LECC, the Inspector of the LECC, the Commissioner for Police, the New South Wales Crime Commission, the Police Association of NSW, the NSW Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales. So lots of different stakeholders were involved.

The Government sought specific views on the only substantive issue raised leading into that review and that was the proposal by the current chief commissioner to move to a two-commissioner model. Stakeholders were asked whether, if a two-commissioner model was to be implemented, a decision of the kind referred to in section 19 (2) of the Act should be made unanimously by the chief commissioner and the other commissioner, and whether the provision for the appointment of assistant commissioner pursuant to section 20 of the Act is an appropriate mechanism to provide additional flexibility to the LECC to exercise investigative and oversight functions conferred on commissioners.

There were two submissions received during the consultation process. Both were supportive of that two-commissioner model, which requires the chief commissioner to consult with the other commissioner before making a decision of a kind set out in section 19 (2) of the Act. As we have heard from one of my fellow committee members—I am the chair of that oversight committee, which the LECC is a part of—we recently conducted a public hearing into the LECC's annual report. At that hearing I personally asked the current Chief Commissioner, the Hon. Reg Blanch, AM, QC, about the two-commissioner model and its benefits or pitfalls. I must say it was made very clear both by him and by Commissioner Lea Drake that they are very much in favour of the model as it is running now and there was no reason to look at the three-commissioner model again. I think the model is very appropriate and has support from both sides. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (19:18):** In reply: I thank the member for Liverpool and the member for Dubbo for their contributions to debate on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Bill 2021. I am pleased to support a bill that ensures that the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] is fit for purpose and reflects its operational experience to date. The office of the Commissioner for Oversight has been vacant since 15 January 2020. Upon the expiration of the term of the then Chief Commissioner of the LECC, the Hon. Michael Adams, QC, on 31 January 2020, the Hon. Reg Blanch, AM, QC, was appointed as the Acting Chief Commissioner of the LECC for six months. Section 18 (2) of the LECC Act provides that the Commissioner for Oversight may be appointed only with the concurrence of the Chief Commissioner. Given that, the Government intended at the time that a new Commissioner for Oversight would be appointed once an ongoing Chief Commissioner had been appointed and could be consulted on the proposed nominee.

By the time Chief Commissioner Blanch was appointed on an ongoing basis in August 2020, evidence was emerging that the LECC was working well with two commissioners and that there was support from the LECC itself to maintain that model. The statutory review, tabled on 11 May 2021, confirmed that view and ultimately recommended that the Act be amended to remove the office of Commissioner for Oversight from the commission. The Government has introduced the bill in recognition of the successful operation of the LECC with only two commissioners and the feedback received during the statutory review process that this is the most desirable structure for the commission moving forward. The bill ensures that the LECC remains a fit-for-purpose organisation with a structure that best enables it to deliver on its statutory mandate in overseeing law enforcement in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **DUBBO GREYHOUND RACING CLUB**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:21):** Dubbo Greyhound Racing Club is one of the most proactive clubs in New South Wales. That was certainly on show again recently when it hosted the inaugural Brother Fox carnival at Dawson Park. The \$40,000 event recognised Brother Fox, a champion chaser from the 1980s trained by Steve Kavanagh. The big race was won on the night by Jungle Deuce, trained by Ray Smith from Forbes. The club timed its heats to coincide with the big rugby league clash between Souths and Penrith in Dubbo a couple of weeks ago and was rewarded with bumper crowds on that night as well as on the evening of the final. A big congratulations to club president Shayne Stiff, secretary Courtney Norbury and the entire club for such a successful carnival. Well done to Greyhound Racing NSW and CEO Tony Mestrov for getting behind the club.

### **LONDONDERRY SPIRIT OF ANZAC AWARD**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (19:22):** Over the past two years Anzac Day has been very different. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Light up the Dawn became a special way for neighbours to come together in our local streets to pay their respects to those who have served our nation. I was proud to see so many young people from across Penrith and Blacktown honouring our Anzacs. That was why I decided to start the Londonderry Spirit of Anzac Award, which encourages young people from my electorate to share what the spirit of Anzac means to them. I was thrilled that this year's entries included artworks, poems and reflections on the importance of Anzac Day and the sacrifice of those who have come before us. I congratulate inaugural award winners Sienna Planer from Werrington County Public School and Emily Abacum from Montgrove College. I thank the local schools that participated this year. I look forward to seeing reflections from future generations in the coming years.

### **COFFS COAST JUMP CLUB**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:23):** They say home is where the heart is and, in the case of Coffs Coast Jump Club, home is the Coffs Harbour Showground, a focal point for many local events. The club's 2021 Winter Classic boasted more than 400 entries and featured local riders as well as competitors from Brisbane, the Hunter and New England. The Winter Classic Showjumping Competition is well supported by the community. I congratulate Coffs Coast Jump Club members on staging that popular event. The board comprises chairperson Pamela Lund, secretary and publicity and sponsorship coordinator Sally Hutchison, treasurer Allan Harrison, technical adviser Alison Ostfeld and board members Jessica Gates, Sarah Flowers, Alison Wulff, Brendon Thurgate and Maryanne Small. Last year the club was the beneficiary of a \$5,000 State government grant for showjumping equipment.

### **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH RALLY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:24):** On Saturday 5 June I was honoured to attend the Enough is Enough rally in Katoomba, organised by a handful of incredible local women and supported by the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre. The event attracted more than 300 people from across the Blue Mountains who gathered to protest and say "Enough is Enough" to domestic and sexual violence against women. The rally featured an impressive line-up of local speakers and musicians. Rallies like those are crucial to raise awareness, find strategies for action against domestic violence in the home and denounce sexual violence in the workplace and public sphere. We heard important personal stories and demanded changes to societal attitudes and legislation. I particularly thank Anne McKenzie, Cherie Brandon, Jude Finch and Ailie Banks for organising the important event. I pay tribute to the work they do and the energy they generate. I also honour the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre for its day-to-day work supporting women. They are champion advocates for the rights of women and girls.

### **VENEKA "NEIKZ" JONES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:25):** I acknowledge the extraordinary volunteer efforts of Veneka "Neikz" Jones from Lake Cathie for making it her mission to support the flood-affected residents from Brigadoon Holiday Park. Veneka, or "Neikz" as she is known, could only be described as a true angel of the Camden Haven community for her remarkable work during and after the floods that devastated parts of North Haven, Laurieton and Dunbogan. Now eight weeks into her campaign to help the residents return to normalcy,

Neikz is still giving her time to make a difference to the lives of those who are struggling physically and mentally from the pain of being displaced and losing their belongings. Neikz helped to remove debris, source materials and appliances, tie down tarps, cook and distribute food and perform welfare checks through the night. Still on leave from her employer, Neikz is committed to getting the residents back on their feet. The manager of Brigadoon Holiday Park, Rebecca Ohlsen, commended the amazing work that volunteers like Neikz offered throughout the floods. That work is still ongoing to this very day. On behalf of the community, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Neikz Jones for her outstanding contribution and to all of those who have stepped up to support others.

#### **SUMMER HILL SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:26):** I congratulate Hanna Mohammed and Ethan Krumins from Ashfield Boys High School and to Varun Laal and Selina Jin from Marrickville High School on being recognised as this year's Summer Hill Secondary School Leaders by the New South Wales Parliament. The secondary school leadership program recognises the important role school leaders play in their school communities and provides them with the opportunity to visit New South Wales Parliament and to learn about the parliamentary process. As part of the program, students observed parliamentary debates from the gallery, spoke with members of Parliament and met with Her Excellency the Governor at Government House. I thank Hanna, Ethan, Varun and Selina for the fantastic work they have done for their school communities. They are rising stars. I also thank the exceptional educators at Ashfield Boys High School and Marrickville High School for providing such an important opportunity for those young leaders of tomorrow.

#### **GRENFELL STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:27):** I recognise the wonderful achievements of three members of the Grenfell SES unit who were recently acknowledged for their many years of service. I was privileged to present Warwick Simpson with an award for 50 years of service to the SES at the SES Binda Cluster Award Ceremony. Awards were also presented to David Sheahan for 30 years of service and to Trish Brown for 15 years of service. The combination of service from those three members to their local SES totals 95 years. Those are exemplary levels of service. All of the unit members have been involved in flood and storm responses as well as many types of general land rescue and first responder support activities. I congratulate the recipients of those awards as well as the Grenfell SES team on their continued and dedicated service to their community.

#### **SAN REMO NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:28):** I acknowledge the work of the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre and congratulate the team on its nomination as part of the 2021 Volunteering Central Coast awards ceremony, which is held each year as part of National Volunteer Week. The awards recognise individuals who devote their time, energy and enthusiasm as volunteers in the Central Coast community. The San Remo Neighbourhood Centre was nominated for the Volunteer Team of the Year category. The San Remo Neighbourhood Centre supports people dealing with long-term unemployment, young people in distress and people facing mental health challenges. The centre provides emergency food relief as well as financial and personal counselling. Along with providing assistance to those in need, the neighbourhood centre has partnered with other local community groups, including the San Remo Community Garden and the San Remo Men's Shed. I thank the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre, particularly team leader Jillian Hogan, for all the work they do to support the community. I congratulate the centre on its nomination at the awards.

#### **COAST RACE DAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:29):** What better way to showcase the launch of the inaugural Coast Race Day than with a beautiful horse ridden by a local jockey on beautiful Terrigal Beach. On Monday 3 May I was delighted to join with staff from The Entertainment Grounds to help promote the Coast Race Day and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to join them and assist with the promotion of the coast's first standalone race meeting at Gosford. With over 3,000 people in attendance, it was a fabulous day for the Central Coast racing community and our local economy. I congratulate all the winners from the day, as well as the best dressed lady, Viera Macikova, the best dressed gentleman, Rob Lee, and the best dressed contemporary, Selina McCloskey. It was a fantastic day out and I pay tribute to the work of Daniel Lacey, Michael Griffiths, Kristina Ayton and Michael Cusick for helping bring this fantastic event to the Central Coast. We all look forward to the Coast Race Day returning to The Entertainment Grounds on the Central Coast in 2022.

#### **MRS MARIE ELLEN DAVENPORT**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (19:30):** It gives me great pleasure to wish Mrs Marie Ellen Davenport, nee Porter, a very happy ninety-seventh birthday. Marie Davenport has led an extraordinary life of service to community to which we can all aspire. Marie was just 19 years old when she completed her nursing studies in 1943. She joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service with the intention to help and care for those

injured during World War II. However, if it were not for an administrative twist of fate, Marie may not have made it to her ninety-seventh birthday. On 14 May 1943 the hospital ship *Centaur* sailed from Sydney, stopping over and unloading off the east coast of Queensland.

Marie boarded the ship; however, repeated ID checks showed that she was underage. The ship's crew were ordered to pull her off the ship. It sailed with her luggage on board and Marie watching from the shore. A few minutes later and just 50 miles off the Queensland coast, the *Centaur* was attacked by a Japanese submarine torpedo and many of Marie's friends on board lost their lives. Sixty-four of the 332 crew on board survived. Soon after Marie served at the internment camp in Queensland holding Japanese prisoners of war, nursing and caring for many. Later in life, she refused all awards for her military and nursing service. Marie continued a life of service to her community, nursing for many years after the war. I am honoured to wish Mrs Davenport a very happy birthday.

#### **JULIA RESERVE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:31):** The Julia Reserve Community Centre in Oran Park was recently opened by the Mayor of Camden, Theresa Fedeli. Situated in the Julia Reserve Youth Precinct, this \$6 million facility is entirely dedicated to youth services for 12- to 24-year-olds and is a fantastic asset for the children and young people in our community. This is a safe place for young people to connect with each other, build friendships and seek support and services for whatever might be going on in their lives. Over the next couple of months 12 different youth services will be bumping in to provide a full spectrum of services, including mental health, sexual health, job assistance and government services. Many of these providers are well known to our region and we are very lucky to have them move into this newly provided space to support children and young people within our community.

#### **MEGAN ELLIOT**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:32):** I recognise a remarkable educator in Port Stephens who recently celebrated 40 years of teaching, 30 of them as a principal, including the last 20 years as the principal of Bobs Farm Public School. Megan Elliott has a passion for education. As a principal of a small, two-classroom school, she has been a wonderful leader in this small community. Bobs Farm Public School is a beautiful small school, usually with fewer than 50 students. Every time I visit, the kids are excited and engaged and the staff are energised and elevating. There is so much care and kindness, it feels more like a family than a school. It is a testament to Megan Elliott's career that the school's P&C members and her community are eager to recognise her contribution. Ms Elliott taught at Temora, Ungarie, Singleton, Irrawang and Millers Forest and completed a masters in educational studies at the University of Newcastle in 1995. Today the New South Wales Parliament recognises Megan Elliott on her 40-year career in public education, changing children's lives with the gift of education, and especially for the love and care she has poured into the families of Bobs Farm for an astonishing 20 years. I thank her.

#### **TRIBUTE TO EMERITUS PROFESSOR MAURICE DALY**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:33):** I pay tribute to the life of my late constituent Emeritus Professor Maurice "Maurie" Daly. For 20 years Maurie was professor of urban and economic geography at Sydney University. His work in planning economics has had innumerable impacts in Australia and abroad. Born in Penshurst in 1939, Maurie married Liz in 1964 and would later raise their family in Pittwater. Together, they embarked on a life of social advocacy. Awarded a Rockefeller grant, Maurie and Liz helped reconstruct rural Nigeria following the Biafran War. They worked in Europe, Asia, and South America during major structural change.

Maurie was instrumental in setting up Sydney University's Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific and was director of the Planning Research Centre. Author of *Sydney Boom Sydney Bust*, he identified the link between international financial markets and the boom-bust nature of Sydney's property market—analysis that remains profound today. Maurie loved squash and golf. A kind man with a quick intellect, he led a fantastic life. He will be missed by his beloved wife, Liz, daughters Teresa, Lisa, and Jenny, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. I acknowledge Maurie Daly for his incredible contribution.

#### **MAITLAND MEN'S SHED WHEELCHAIR LIFT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:34):** I recently attended the official commissioning of the newly installed Maitland Men's Shed wheelchair lift that was made possible through the New South Wales Community Building Partnership program. The Men's Shed received \$64,000 and was one of 15 successful local organisations that shared in the \$300,000 available to my community. I had the pleasure of assisting two of the longest serving Maitland Men's Shed members, Mr Geoff Pisani and Mr Gary Kirkman, into the lift for the official launch. I am pleased that I was able to provide this funding for such an important and vital organisation in our

community. It is a wonderful place for men to get together to work on meaningful projects, share skills and contribute to the wider local community. I also thank and acknowledge the Maitland Business Chamber, which arranged sponsorship for the cladding on the lift's exterior, which will be decorated with a mural of shed members.

#### **ST MARK'S CHURCH ACCESSIBLE CHAIRLIFT**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (19:35):** I was so pleased to accept Reverend Dr Michael Jensen's invitation to visit St Mark's Church, Darling Point, on Sunday 30 May 2021 to cut the ribbon for the parish's new accessible chairlift, funded by a \$19,000 New South Wales Government grant. The chairlift now provides disability access to the upper level of St Mark's memorial hall. Parishioner Charles Wade, OAM, safely took the first ride on the chairlift. I took the opportunity to commend St Mark's leadership for their spiritual guidance and fellowship for the community. I thank the leadership team: Reverend Michael Jensen, assistant ministers Reverend Dr Tim Escott and Reverend David Crain, the parish council, youth minister Erica Oliver, church wardens, children's minister Stephanie Leung, administrators Wendy Jarratt and Wendy Mulder, vergers Annette Jones, and pastoral care coordinator Alicia Watson, OAM. I thank them for the work they do alongside the church's volunteers in contributing to the success and community spirit at St Mark's.

#### **CENTRAL NEWCASTLE RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:36):** While most of New South Wales, me included, is no doubt hoping for an extraordinary win for the Blues in the State of Origin tonight, I recognise that last weekend was extraordinary for Central Newcastle rugby league. At half-time, the Butcher Boys' first grade side was down against the Wyong Roos 14-12, only to come from behind in a dominating second-half performance to win 36-14. The under 19s had a great win, beating the Hamilton Hawks 20-10. The ladies league tag side put in an almighty performance against the Stroud Raiders, winning 46-nil. The ladies tackle side came away with the biggest win of the lot, managing to pull off a barnburner against the Souths, romping home 52-nil. This is the Central Newcastle ladies tackle side's first season, making the win all the more impressive. As a long-time supporter of Central Newcastle, I was thrilled to see the performances last weekend. I cannot wait to see how the rest of the season goes. Onya, Butcher Boys and Butcher Birds! Go the Blues!

#### **WALLA WALLA RETURN AND EARN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:37):** I congratulate Bruce Forbes and Heather Goesch on their success running Walla Walla Return and Earn. This recycling business commenced operations in January 2021 and since then has collected approximately one million cans and refunded \$100,000 to its customers. As parents and grandparents, Bruce and Heather have taken it upon themselves to make a significant change to the way recycling happens. They have made the collection process simpler and easier for people who are time poor. The Walla Walla Return and Earn comes to your home and collects the containers wherever you need the service. The initiative has encouraged more people to get involved and put their containers towards something positive. Recently Walla Walla Return and Earn partnered with Cans for Cancer. The partnership collects approximately 12,000 cans per week and since January has raised more than \$5,000 for local charities, 75 per cent of which goes to Cans for Cancer. I acknowledge the ongoing hard work and perseverance of Bruce, Heather and their staff who have taken this opportunity to increase the reach and effectiveness of recycling in Walla Walla.

#### **ROMA DOWLING**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:38):** I was honoured to attend the Volunteering Central Coast awards ceremony on 26 May at the Erina Centre to recognise volunteers across the Central Coast who dedicate their time and energy to the community. I particularly congratulate Roma Dowling from Toukley Neighbourhood Centre, who received the "Living Legend" Volunteer of the Year 2021. Roma has been volunteering for 25 years at the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre and has been recognised for her involvement in the neighbourhood centre's community scheme. She has been devoting her time to residents in local nursing homes and enriching their lives by keeping them socially connected. Roma certainly went above and beyond to still keep in touch with the residents during the pandemic. She adapted to changes and challenges by learning how to use Zoom to still communicate and see her aged-care friends. It is wonderful to see Roma making a difference to the people around her and building healthy relationships in our community.

#### **DI GREEN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:39):** I acknowledge Di Green, a midwife who recently worked her last shift at the Goulburn Base Hospital. Di has worked for 36 years at the Goulburn Base Hospital, providing thousands of women care and bringing thousands of babies into the world. Di's work ethic over those years has been outstanding and her dedication to midwifery unparalleled. Di's colleagues recently attested that her knowledge of the practice is beyond science and includes an innate intuition. I publicly congratulate Di on her successful career and commend her for her wonderful achievements. I wish her very well in her retirement.

### GRAZIA NAPOLETANO

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:40):** The Fairfield electorate office is proud to be exhibiting the works of local artist Grazia Napoletano until the end of June. Born in the city of Bari, the capital of the Puglia region of Italy, as a two-year-old Grazia suffered epilepsy and polio as well as a stroke that left her paralysed on her left side. She took up painting in 2017 and began to produce abstract and semi-abstract works of great vitality and brilliance. Over the years Grazia has entered her works in the Fairfield City Art Society biannual exhibitions at Club Marconi and she has so far been awarded the following prizes: third prize works on paper in the 2018 Members' Prize with a work titled *The Jungle*; highly commended works on paper in the 2018 Members' Prize with a work titled *Window Boxes*; second prize works on paper in the 2018 Fairfield Art Prize with a work titled *Interior Landscape*; and commended works on paper in the 2019 Members' Prize with a work titled *Colour Step*. This exhibition consists of several works in acrylic on canvas and shows the exuberant use of colour achieved by the artist in recent years. The Fairfield electorate office warmly welcomes Grazia and her works for our monthly exhibition.

### TRIBUTE TO NOEL BEARD

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:41):** It is with great sadness that I update the House on the passing of Mr Noel Beard. Noel passed away on Friday 4 June 2021. He was 85. Noel was a popular and very well respected man in Glenorie and the wider community. His family forms a great part of Glenorie's history. A cul-de-sac by the name of Beard Place was named after his father, Jim Beard, and Venetta Road was named after his mother, Venetta Beard. The Beard family originally farmed the land, and used to grow fruit and vegetables. Noel himself was a farmer who worked the land. He was married for 62 years to his wife, Mary, whom he met in 1955 at Castle Hill Memorial Hall at a weekend dance. They have four children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Noel was a stalwart of the Liberal Party and a very strong supporter of local members, including myself. He loved his cricket too and was a notable long-time member of the Galston Glenorie Cricket Club. I pass on my condolences to Mary, his family and friends.

### HAWKS NEST BRIDGE CLUB

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:42):** Two years ago I addressed this Parliament about the Hawks Nest Bridge Club. I told the story of this impressive club's history and their drive to find, fund, design, build and ultimately open a place they could permanently call home. In 2018 I was honoured to open their new clubhouse, alongside many of the club's members. I was delighted by the invitation to return to the club last Sunday for a special soupy lunch to recognise another magnificent achievement for the club. I am pleased to report to this Parliament that the Hawks Nest Bridge Club has achieved what many of us will never achieve in our lifetimes: They own their home in their own right. They are officially debt free. When the bridge club patron and former Governor of New South Wales Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair suggested that the club should be advising the Federal Government on reducing debt, it was decided that the club did not have enough eggs or marmalade to raise the billions of dollars required. I wholeheartedly congratulate the Hawks Nest Bridge Club. I thank them for their friendship over the years and wish them a long and healthy future in their debt-free clubhouse home.

### PEAKHURST WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:43):** I acknowledge the 44 year 6 students from Peakhurst West Public School who graduated last year as the class of 2020. It was a difficult year for students, given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many disruptions to their learning schedule that came with it. Despite those difficult circumstances, the students have still managed to achieve some terrific results and I know that all of the staff and students at the school are very proud. I make special mention of two students in particular, Shadi Soueid and Maya El Zein, who were the recipients of the New South Wales Parliamentary Award for their school in 2020. This award honours the social and academic achievements of those students throughout their seven-year tenure at Peakhurst West Public School. I have no doubt all of the students have had an excellent transition into high school this year and that they will go on to achieve many great things into the future. I wish everyone at Peakhurst West Public School and these alumni the very best for a great year ahead.

### CHAI WALLI TEA SHOP

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:44):** I warmly congratulate Chai Walli tea shop in Summer Hill, which has been awarded Micro Business of the Year at the India Australia Business & Community Awards. The leader and founder of the business, Uppma Virdi, started Chai Walli out of a passion for natural and traditional tea recipes, even leaving her career as a lawyer to do so. Her story is an inspiration. She is a first generation Indian-Australian migrant, and we are so lucky that she shares her family's recipes with our community. Chai Walli is one of the 300 participants in the awards and its success is testament to the hard work of Uppma,

her family and her staff. I congratulate the hardworking team. Georgina, Kayla, Krystal and Jake should be very proud of the work they do to create such a beloved and successful local business.

#### MICHAEL WHOLOHAN

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (19:44):** I have stepped away from State of Origin to talk about Michael Wholohan in the New South Wales Parliament, which actually makes him a pretty serious person. Michael Wholohan is finishing a near 40-year association with the Penrith Cricket Club. He has been a coach since the 1996-97 summer series and has been a player since way back in 1979, which makes Michael an old "word" I can't use in the Chamber. He is also a bit of a lunatic because he has run 74 marathons. Any person who chooses to run 74 marathons is a deadset lunatic. His capability as an emcee is somewhat dubious. He might have a couple of good jokes in him but it really does wear thin. All things considered, Michael is an outstanding PE teacher and a wonderful contributor to the Penrith Cricket Club. His 40 years at that club have simply made it a better place. I know he will never really leave the club; he will be there all the time. I thank him so much for his contribution to Penrith cricket.

#### INNER WEST LOCAL HEROES TYRONE AND JOSHUA

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:46):** I acknowledge two wonderful young students in my electorate, Tyrone and Joshua from Tempe High School and Marrickville West Primary School, for teaming up with the Inner West Police Area Command to help out in their community. Last week they got up bright and early to do some much-needed cleaning up and repairs in the backyard of a community member in need. For some in the community everyday tasks can prove very difficult and having local heroes like Tyrone and Joshua around to lend a hand can make a real difference. In addition to thanking those two great young boys, I acknowledge the Inner West Police Area Command, Marrickville PCYC, Connect Marrickville, Tempe High School and Marrickville West Primary School for supporting this heartwarming initiative and for always being there to connect, protect and strengthen our community. Tyrone and Joshua are a testament to the future of the inner west and have gone above and beyond to make a real difference for someone in need. I acknowledge their efforts.

#### PAUL FURNELL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:46):** I congratulate longstanding fire captain Paul Furnell on retiring after almost 50 years of service as a firefighter within the Coolamon district. Growing up on a farm in the Coolamon shire, Paul first became involved in firefighting through his volunteer work with the Rural Fire Service. Paul rose to the rank of deputy captain in 1983 and became captain in 2000. He remained in this role until his recent retirement. Paul has been an incredibly valuable member of the Coolamon Fire and Rescue service. Throughout his service he has been awarded the Long Service, Good Conduct and National Service medals and served 22 years as the station's captain. Congratulations once again to Paul. I wish him a happy retirement.

#### DUBBO COLLEGE WE WILL ROCK YOU MUSICAL

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:47):** I recently had the honour of attending a wonderful production of *We Will Rock You* performed by students from Dubbo College. The musical tells a unique story and features the fabulous music of the band Queen. A very impressive cast portrayed Freddie, Galileo, Scaramouche, a few Bohemians and plenty more. Aside from the performers, the school band was heavily involved in recreating some of those iconic Queen songs. The amount of precision and dedication that went into creating the sets and the props was simply amazing. There are far too many people involved to name them individually but I want to give a big shout-out to the lead cast. Logan Windsor, Amelia Sanders, Llaney Webb, Noah Woldhuis, Jessica Woods, Johnathan Woods and Sarah Hall all deserve very special praise. Well done to everyone involved at every level. I know the school community, which was represented by all the principals being there on the night, is incredibly proud. Well done.

#### THE VILLAGE PROJECT

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:48):** I acknowledge The Village Project in Summer Hill for its terrific work leading the way towards making all aspects of our community more sustainable. Currently The Village Project is taking donations of used clothes and household glass to be turned into tiles and furniture in its renovations. This brilliant initiative shows that every problem can have a sustainable solution. This venture by Village Project exemplifies one of the core values it holds—that if we act locally, we can impact globally. I note the ongoing success of this project is in its capacity to involve as many members of the community as possible. Since opening, the Village Project has become central to the Summer Hill community. Founder Bindi Lea has turned the warehouse into a market space, creative hub and community enterprise where every dollar spent goes right back into our community. One day I hope there will be many projects of the same blueprint around Sydney and indeed across New South Wales. I congratulate Bindi Lea and all those who are donating to or involved in the successful Village Project to make this initiative successful.

## CLUB RIVERS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:49):** I acknowledge Club Rivers in Riverwood for all of its hard work and commitment to our community in 2020. In addition to being a fantastic venue for food and entertainment, the club provides fantastic charitable support to local community groups and organisations. Examples of this include the club's sponsorship of the Lions Club of Lugarno, the annual Lugarno Spring Festival and local radio station 2NBC. It is for these reasons that it was honoured with a Business Achievement Award as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. This award honours businesses like Club Rivers that continually give back to the local area and make our community an even better place in which to live, work and play. The club's charitable contribution to the region is simply outstanding and I know it is committed to increasing this in years to come. I thank Club Rivers for all its hard work and support for local groups and organisations. I wish CEO Paul Millar and all of the team at Club Rivers the very best for another strong year.

### *Community Recognition Notices*

## JOHN BALFOUR, OAM

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—John Balfour, OAM, is an outstanding person from Belrose in my electorate of Davidson, who recently completed 50 years as a Marshall for the RSL NSW Anzac Day March. As Senior Marshall of the Anzac Day March Executive Committee, he marches in the event and helps to organise it. John is also a Ceremonial Officer and committee member of the Forestville RSL Sub-Branch, and has given 48 years of service in the Royal Australian Artillery, a regiment of the Australian Army. In his spare time, John is a volunteer groundsman at Belrose Public School and Wesley Gardens. In 2013 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. I commend and congratulate John on completing 50 years of service as a Marshall in the RSL NSW Anzac Day March, for his service in the Australian Army and as a volunteer in my local community.

## KU-RING-GAI COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Ku-ring-gai Community Workshop is an important community centre in St Ives, in my electorate of Davidson. The workshop, also known as "The Shed", provides a welcoming environment for men and women in the community to work on projects, share skills, stay active and make friends. The workshop recently received \$10,945 from the New South Wales Government as part of a larger \$2.23 million program to improve men's sheds on Crown land. The stimulus funding will enable the installation of two concrete pads and outdoor tables to create a multi-use space for work activities, meetings, morning tea and lunch. A dust extraction system and roof exhaust fans will be installed inside the shed. Studies have shown that members of men's sheds fare better in terms of mental health, vitality and physical functioning. So I commend Ku-ring-gai Community Workshop, as well as other centres including Forest Community Men's Shed in Belrose, for their valuable service to people in my local community.

## CARE 4 KIDS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—On 22 May Care 4 Kids held its annual gala event at Gynea Tradies, which I was very pleased to attend. The gala raised close to \$12,000, with more than 100 guests supporting the event. Care 4 Kids was established in 2016 by Danielle Lucas, who is herself a survivor of family violence. Her charity makes care packs for children who are affected by domestic and family violence. These are distributed to organisations including the NSW Police Force, Northern Territory Police, women's refuges and the Family Co., formerly Sutherland Shire Family Services. A small gesture of kindness can make a meaningful impact on a child who has been exposed to trauma. I thank Danielle and all the volunteers associated with Care 4 Kids for the wonderful work they do for these vulnerable children.

## BANKSTOWN DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB INCLUSIVE

### DISABILITY CRICKET PROGRAM REOPENING

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I extend my congratulations to the Bankstown District Cricket Club on the reopening of its Inclusive/Disability Cricket Program. Last year, due to COVID regulations, the program was forced to close alongside many other sporting groups. Fortunately, last month, after over a year of closure, the Inclusive/Disability Cricket Program was able to reopen and welcome back the eager players to the cricket nets. This program is essential for providing support to players in the community who do not participate in the general programs run by the club. I thank the club for its work in extending the amazing social and physical benefits of community sport to all of those who seek it. Congratulations to the Bankstown District Cricket Club executive: President Peter O'Shea, Vice-President Bryden Sharp, Hon. Secretary Dianne Ford, Treasurer John Grealy, and Junior President Andrew Divan. I also extend my thanks to Darren McLean, Bruce Andrews and Ian Russell for their contributions to the coaching and the support that they have offered to the program.

**BANKSTOWN SPORTS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—Congratulations to the Bankstown Sports Junior Rugby League Club on hosting their Gala Day at Steve Folkes Reserve in Bass Hill. This Gala Day also marked the Sixtieth Anniversary of the club. This is a significant milestone for which I extend my congratulations. Well done to the 45 teams who participated in the Gala Day and to all the teams who participate in the many different age bracket competitions that are hosted by the club. It is excellent to see the resurgence of community sport after COVID restrictions last year prohibited many clubs from hosting their regular fixtures. Community sport, especially for young children, is essential for fostering social connections among like-minded children. I extend my congratulations to the club and its current executive: President Richard Bronger, Secretary Yasmin Harris, Treasurer Osman Harris, Vice-President Sam Barake, Assistant Secretary Gamel Elkheir, Equipment Manager Haysam Serhan, and Sponsorship Manager Ziad Jamleoui.

**ENID GREENFIELD 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—A proud family mother said "clean living" was her secret to a long and successful life. Congratulations Mrs Enid Greenfield on your 100th birthday. Enid celebrated her birthday on 11 May surrounded by her family and friends. She was born in Guilford in 1921, where she attended Guilford Catholic School. She married Mr Edwin Charles Greenfield on 25 May; the pair had children Brian, Colin, Allan, Darryl, Garry, Wayne and their adoptive daughter, Tracey. I pass on my condolences to the family in the loss of Mr Edwin and Mr Wayne Greenfield. Enid believed that raising her children and seeing them flourish was the thing that brought her the most pride in her life. Congratulations on this wonderful occasion, Enid, and most importantly, happy birthday.

**PAWS IN THE PARK**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Last month the Camden electorate celebrated Paws in the Park at the Camden Showground. Paws in the Park is organised by the Camden Council in order to raise money for local animal shelters and pounds to help find new homes for abandoned animals. The annual event had over 50 stalls to support and cater to our four-legged friends. The event included a two kilometre walk, information and market stalls, a demonstration screen, roaming performers and competitions, to name just a few. Hundreds of dogs and their owners came down and interacted within the community. Given the year of 2020, I am proud to have such a heart-warming event in the Camden electorate.

**ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I was delighted to be able recently to attend celebrations to mark Italian Republic Day. These celebrations were held on Saturday 5 June at the Carnes Hill Community and Recreation Centre. This marked the seventy-fifth anniversary since the birth of the Republic of Italy. In 1946, by referendum, the people of Italy chose to become a republic rather than to remain a monarchy under the House of Savoy. Regrettably, Australia has yet to follow this fine example. Those speaking at the event included Franco Baldi, Chair of the 2021 Festa della Repubblica and Maurizio Aloisi, President of ComItEs. The MC was Marco Testa. Also present were Tony Paragalli, Director at Club Marconi and Giovanni Testa, President of CAN-Italian Australian Services Inc. The event was a great opportunity to celebrate Italian history and culture and also to celebrate the very significant contribution of the Italian community to Liverpool.

**LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL SORRY DAY EVENT**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I acknowledge the Liverpool City Council Sorry Day Event held on 26 May 2021. This has for some time been an annual event at Liverpool held in support of the Stolen and Lost Generation. Pandemic restrictions meant it was impossible to hold the event in 2020. The ceremony was held at the Liverpool Regional Museum. A wreath laying took place at the Stolen Generation Memorial Tree at the front of the Regional Museum. Additionally, there was a flag raising ceremony together with official speeches and displays of Aboriginal dancing. An acknowledgement of country was given by Robyn Straub, CEO, of Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council and Auntie Norma Shelley participated in the flag-raising ceremony. These are important events. They point to issues that go to the core of contemporary Australia and of the history of this land for the past two centuries.

**KRISTY KENNEDY**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The smallest things can impact a person's life, and making the decision to help someone in their hour of need is a great way to make an impact. In the early hours of 1 April, a young Wallsend man, Shaniel Bowe, was knocked from his motorbike in an alleged hit and run incident. Thankfully, Kristy Kennedy had not yet left for work and witnessed the accident. Without a second thought, she rushed over to Shaniel to check on him, and to do whatever she could. Kristy called 000 immediately and sat with

Shaniel until paramedics and police arrived. She held his hand and comforted him in what would have felt like an eternity for both of them. Kristy's care did not stop there. She made an effort to track down Shaniel's mum through the many posts that were on Facebook to see how he was doing after surgery. Shaniel had a broken pelvis, smashed hip, broken femur, broken nose, and tendon damage to his knee. Thank you, Kristy. What you did for this young man will never be forgotten by Shaniel, his family, and the community of Wallsend.

#### **EMILY JONES**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Emily Jones has been a keen competitive swimmer since she was seven years old. When she was in year 6 at Edgeworth Primary School, she came third in the 4x100 metre freestyle relay in the NSW Pacific School Games in Adelaide, and was the first student from the school to win a place at the games. Emily made her first nationals when she was 12 years old, and the following year placed third at nationals, for 200 metres backstroke when she was 13. In 2019 at the school nationals, Emily broke the 50 and 100 metres backstroke records. She was selected in the Junior Pan Pacific team to compete in Hawaii in 2020, however could not travel due to COVID restrictions. Now a student at Glendale Technology High School, she placed third in the 100 metres backstroke at the 2021 national championships, and was top 10 in five events. Emily will be heading to Adelaide in June to compete in the Olympic trials. Emily has also been awarded the 2021 Lake Mac Rising Sports Star award for her achievements in swimming. Congratulations on your many swimming achievements, Emily, and good luck at the Olympic trials.

#### **ULYSSES CLUB OF AUSTRALIA MACARTHUR BRANCH**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Every year my office acts as a collection point for a number of charitable causes. A Share the Dignity donation box is permanently located at the front of my electorate office and is always full due to donations from generous members of the Campbelltown community. In November and December I also run an annual toy drive which ensures many children have a present to open on Christmas Day. Recently I teamed up with the Ulysses Club of Australia Macarthur Branch to collect items for the organisation's annual blanket drive. The drive targets those throughout the community who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and provides them with blankets to keep warmth during the colder months of the year. This year the club also collected non-perishable food items. The response, as usual, was incredible from the Campbelltown community. There was no shortage of people coming through the electorate office doors to donate to the drive. It was certainly appreciated by all the members of the Ulysses Club of Australia Macarthur Branch. Thank you again to everyone who donated to such a wonderful and worthy cause.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY VETERANS SUPPORT**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Western Sydney University has embarked on many projects and initiatives that have benefited Campbelltown and the entire region in the past. A recent program launched to support current and former Australian Defence Force and Reservist personnel wanting to pursue higher education is another example of the university going above and beyond. The Student Veterans Program connects current and former serving ADF and Reservist personnel with a range of support services and initiatives to assist students during their time at the university. It is a wonderful concept and one that will make a huge difference. As a veteran myself, I know first-hand how hard it is to make the transition from ADF to civilian life. I spent six months making the transition from civilian life to the ADF but a matter of hours making the transition from ADF to civilian life. Anything that can be done to assist veterans in pursuing studies and careers post-ADF can only be a positive. I commend Western Sydney University for such a wonderful initiative and I am sure that it will have a positive impact on many, many people.

#### **MULGOA PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I commend the staff and students at Mulgoa Public School who have come together to become the first school in Australia to participate in a walk to support "Walk for Terry Fox". The walk helped raise money to support the Children's Hospital at Westmead. To date, the students and families at Mulgoa Public School have raised close to \$300. It is great to see a local Australian school make history as the first in the country to take part in the "Walk for Terry Fox – To Inspire Our Kids" charity event. Congratulations Mulgoa Public School on making history.

#### **ALISHA WHITAKER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Local Luddenham resident Alisha Whitaker is the latest recipient of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Reach for the Sky Encouragement Award. She has been a Penrith City Softball representative player since the age of eight and represented Penrith City in the U11's and U12's girls team twice as well as the U14's girls team. She is a valued member of the Penrith Softball Club, for whom she has been turning out since she was six years old. Alisha has had the opportunity to play representative softball at the State level, where she received a special invitation from Softball NSW to trial for the NSW U14's metropolitan team.

This is because of her exceptional skills and the way she played at the 2020 NSW U14's Girls State Championships. Alisha is also commended for stepping up and becoming a part of the "Blue Crew" where she learns everything associated with umpiring and gives up her time to do so. Congratulations and good luck Alisha.

#### **CLUB NORTH HAVEN DROUGHT RELIEF**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I congratulate Club North Haven on winning the 2021 Clubs and Community Awards in the Drought Relief category acknowledging their successful Million Litre Promise project. The 2021 Clubs and Community Awards were held on 20 May at the International Convention Centre in Sydney recognising outstanding leadership and community service. In 2019 Club North Haven's Andrew Pratt volunteered a brilliant idea to distribute over one million litres of water to drought-stricken farmers who were financially impacted over many seasons by the lack of rainfall. Joining forces to support this outstanding cause was First National Real Estate North Haven, Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce and Rotary International whose combined efforts saw more than 600,000 litres of water delivered in the first two months alone. In January 2020, thanks to the determined efforts of Manager Peter Negus, Shane Globits, Andrew Pratt, Stewart O'Brien and Josh Eldridge, over one million litres of water was freighted to over 80 farming families within a radius of 100 kilometres. Now listed on the Honour Roll of ClubsNSW, congratulations to Club North Haven and thank you to all those involved for supporting our farming sector throughout one of the worst droughts on record.

#### **IN THE SPOTLIGHT VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise the award recipients of the 2021 In the Spotlight Volunteer Awards held on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at Volunteer HQ Port Macquarie. National Volunteer Week was celebrated in my electorate recently recognising those members in our community that go above and beyond to support some extraordinary projects and services which make a genuine and real difference to the lives of others. Honoured in this year's In The Spotlight Volunteer awards were; Colin O'Grady, Friends of the Historic Courthouse; Pam Foye, Rotary Club of Port Macquarie; Bill Mair, Linked Community Services; Jan Aldridge, 4Life Care and Training; and Rex Mathers, Linked Community Services. Two local organisations were also acknowledged on the day for their contributions to supporting the community—RSPCA NSW Port Macquarie and Linked Community Services. Inspiring 88-year-old Colin O'Grady was recognised for his instrumental contribution over many years volunteering as a guide at the Port Macquarie Historical Courthouse. Colin never misses a Tuesday at the courthouse and is always willing to give as much time as he can to showcase Port Macquarie's rich history and heritage. Dedicated, community champions, I thank our amazing volunteers for their invaluable service.

#### **GREAT LAKES PEARL DRAGONS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons dragon boating club which recently won the first women's 10's in Urunga. The club beat 20 other teams to take the title at the biggest regatta in the northern region. The eight kilometre endurance event started and finished in the Kalang River, with months of training resulting in this victory. I congratulate the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons on their success, especially considering it was their first race in two years due to COVID. I wish them well with their preparations for the upcoming State Championships.

#### **PAUL ALLAN OF CLUB TAREE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise Paul Allan, CEO of Club Taree. Paul was recently named winner of the 2021 Clubs NSW Heart of the Community Award for going above and beyond and providing an extraordinary contribution to the community. Paul joined Club Taree 10½ years ago and previously held the position of Brand and Communications manager. The award was given in recognition of the Club Taree Community Team which Paul started seven years ago as an outlet for all staff to engage with the community. To date that initiative has raised more than \$490,000 and seen the team volunteer in excess of 8,000 hours across 100 unique events. The flagship event is the Tour de Taree where the team mirrors the Tour de France to raise funds for Ronald McDonald house charities in northern New South Wales. In September 2020, Paul was made CEO of Club Taree and was able to continue fundraising initiatives throughout COVID-19. I congratulate Paul and the team at Club Taree for all the work they do in raising funds for charities within the community.

#### **NEWCASTLE PERMANENT CHARITABLE FOUNDATION 500**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—I am pleased to recognise the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation which recently handed over its 500th grant, which was awarded to the Police Citizens Youth Club for its "Grit" program. The Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation grants enable projects and initiatives that directly address disadvantage, marginalisation or isolation for people, from much-needed health projects. It supports initiatives that help vulnerable young people and programs that build resilient and connected

communities in Newcastle and the Hunter. The foundation has now funded over 500 projects and has handed over \$23.5 million to charities and not-for-profits. This funding helps rewrite the future for so many in our local community. The Newcastle Permanent through the Charitable Foundation is to be congratulated on working together with its charity partners across the State to solve problems, lend helping hands, secure improvements, ensure security, offer hope and give support to those in need. I congratulate the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation on its generosity and commitment to our community.

#### **NEWCASTLE OZHARVEST**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—I recently attended the launch of the Newcastle OzHarvest Nourish hospitality training program at the Lake Macquarie PCYC. OzHarvest's Nourish Program is a hospitality focused pathway to engagement and employment for at-risk youth aged 16 to 25. OzHarvest has partnered with TAFE NSW which provides Nourish with the support of volunteers, mentors and qualified industry professionals. The 18-week Nourish Program is free of charge for participants. As a part of their practical assessment students participate in 12 service periods. Nourish enables at-risk youth in my electorate of Charlestown. It creates hope, opportunity and supported pathways for young people disadvantaged by intergenerational unemployment, low literacy and numeracy, mental health challenges including anxiety and depression, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The program increases at-risk youth's earning potential avoiding health, housing and welfare costs. I congratulate Nourish graduates and commend OzHarvest for their valuable contribution to our community.

#### **BELINDA GEE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I congratulate Ms Belinda Gee on being awarded the Long Service Medal at the Rural Fire Service presentation. Ms Gee has served as a member of the Tumbledown Dick, Yarramalong and Lake Munmorah Rural Fire Service Brigades for the past 11 years. Our local Rural Fire Service Brigades play a crucial role in keeping our communities safe in times of crisis as we have seen with the recent 2019-20 bushfires and flooding events in 2021. This would not be possible without volunteers such as Ms Gee, who not only sacrifice their own time to help protect the community but also are willing to put their own safety at risk. Ms Gee's dedication, commitment and service to the community is truly commendable going above and beyond normal expectations. I would like to thank Ms Gee for her service to our community and congratulate her as a worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal.

#### **RONALD LOFFELD**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I congratulate Mr Ronald Loffeld on being awarded the Long Service Medal at the Rural Fire Service presentation. Mr Loffeld has served as a member of the Spencer, Mangrove Mountain, Wyong Operational Support and Lake Munmorah Rural Fire Service Brigades for the past 11 years. Our local Rural Fire Service Brigades play a crucial role in keeping our communities safe in times of crisis as we have seen with the recent 2019-20 bushfires and flooding events in 2021. This would not be possible without volunteers such as Mr Loffeld, who not only sacrifice their own time to help protect the community but also are willing to put their own safety at risk. Mr Loffeld's dedication, commitment and service to the community is truly commendable going above and beyond normal expectations. I would like to thank Mr Loffeld for his service to our community and congratulate him as a worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal.

#### **CURRY FOR A CAUSE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I recognise the passion and dedication of Ballina restaurateurs Rahul and Radhika Thacker in their fundraising efforts to help people devastated by COVID-19 in India. Although many members of their family and their friends in India are so far unaffected by the COVID pandemic, the couple were distressed by the extent of the humanitarian crisis in their home country. Rather than watch helplessly they decided to take what action they could, with a fundraising dinner and raffle event at their restaurant, Mumbai Masala—a three-course menu inspired by the cuisine of New Delhi. All money raised went directly to Khalsa Aid and the Hemkunt Foundation, two non-government organisations that are working on the ground in India to support millions of people who have nowhere to isolate from COVID-19, and no safety net whatsoever in terms of food, water or clothing. The funds will help supply oxygen and medical equipment to those in need as well as support services for people affected. I also acknowledge the generosity of the Ballina business community, who dug deep to provide the prizes for the raffle. Congratulations to Rahul and Radhika Thacker for their event.

#### **JUDY MACDONALD**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I recognise the massive contribution made by Judy MacDonald to the Byron shire community. Judy passed away aged 67 in 2018 but memories of her have been refreshed by husband Nino's efforts to have a memorial bench built to honour her. An educator, activist and community leader, she took part in many protests, including the successful Bentley blockade against coal-seam gas fracking. She marched for women's rights to safety and sat naked in a field with 750 other women protesting the war in Iraq. Judy spoke up

for the Byron hinterland and rural communities, sat on committees, forums and action groups, volunteered at the Writers Festival, went to garden club and Politics in the Pub, cooked for book clubs and Golden Girls lunches—all in her spare time! A founding member of Brunswick Valley Landcare, she became their environmental officer, organising workshops and field days, information stalls, community plantings and bush regen days. She was instrumental in setting up the Mullumbimby Farmers Market in 2010, and regularly delivered courses on biodiversity and growing produce in the subtropics. On behalf of our community, we thank Judy MacDonald for her incredible contributions to improving life for people and the planet.

### **BOER WAR COMMEMORATION**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—On 30 May the Nowra RSL Sub-Branch held a ceremony to pay their respects to the approximately 16,000 Australians who fought in the Boer War. Lasting from October 1899 until the end of May 1902, this war cost the lives of over 600 Australians; 282 died in action or from wounds sustained in battle, while 286 died from disease and another 38 died of accident or other unknown causes. I acknowledge the contribution of Mr Peter Williams, who attended as the bugler for the ceremony with his bugle that was originally used in the Boer War. Mr Williams regularly attends Anzac Day services throughout the Shoalhaven and his contributions are greatly appreciated. On behalf of the South Coast community, I thank the Nowra RSL Sub-Branch for once again organising this special ceremony, allowing the community to come together to remember all those who fought in the Boer War.

### **ROYAL EASTER SHOW DUCK**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Congratulations Danny Benn and Gerald Farrugia for breeding a champion bird, an Indian runner duck as I understand it. Congratulations on your drake winning Grand Champion bird of the year 2021 at the Royal Easter Show and for being the first duck to ever win it in its 199 year history, receiving the added honour of being included in the Sydney Royal Easter Show's grand parade. Winning first prize in anything at the Royal Easter Show is a great achievement, but being the first ever is something that will stand out in the record books, much like your drake does. I was lucky enough to see a couple of photos of him. He really does look like a very fine animal and, as I understand it, beating the chooks needs to be recognised and congratulated. As one of the judges commented, "He was one of those ducks who never dropped his guard. I looked at him half a dozen times, and he stood there like a soldier." I know there is training involved in the preparation for "showing". I am not sure how that goes, but hats off to you two for getting him ready and for being the best and the first duck.

### **RENEW WAGGA WAGGA**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Wagga Wagga is at the beginning of a "Renaissance". Renew Wagga, an initiative of Eastern Riverina Arts, is breathing new life into empty shopfronts and providing exciting opportunities for local artists. Two new creative businesses led by local artists opened their doors last month. Located in Wagga Wagga's Tompson Street, the first two businesses to take part in the new project are visual artist Maggie Deall's The Little Yellow House Gallery & Studio and F.Stop Workshop, a joint venture between photographers James Farley and Patrick Ronald. A serving police officer, Ms Deall was an entrant in this year's Archibald Prize. Now her studio is open to the public and providing a retail space where you can purchase her art and the works of other artists from around the Riverina. Ms Deall is looking forward to running workshops. Mr Farley and Mr Ronald's F.Stop Workshop will be a collaborative hub for local photographers to hone their skills. They will run photography workshops, offer a darkroom and will exhibit their own work alongside that of other Riverina photographers. I wish these two new ventures well and look forward to seeing what Renew Wagga brings to our city next.

### **BATLOW COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—After the 2020 bushfires devastated Batlow, many people from across Australia wanted to lend a hand to the community as it began to rebuild. With donations of cash, food, toiletries, clothing, furniture and even a truckload of toys pouring into the small community, members of the Batlow CWA branch were among those who stepped up to help. The branch was asked to help distribute thousands of dollars donated to a GoFundMe campaign established to help Batlow as well as other large donations including \$15,000 from the Canberra Raiders. Led by president Tina Billing, secretary Maria Long and treasurer Helen Grady, and assisted by a panel of other community representatives, the Batlow CWA branch ultimately oversaw the distribution of more than \$60,000 in cash and much more in donated goods. Additionally, the branch opened up its Batlow rooms to ensure there was a space for counselling services to be offered to residents. In acknowledgement of the branch's work during the bushfires, as well as during the COVID pandemic, it was awarded the CWA Past State Presidents' Award at the CWA State conference in May. I commend the branch for its vital work in helping Batlow to rebuild.

### **WESTERN SYDNEY TENANTS ADVICE AND ADVOCACY SERVICE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 21 May I was delighted to join WESTS for their community engagement day. They provide free tenancy advice, referrals, advocacy and in some cases representation for residential tenants at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Their services are focused but not limited to tenants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; who are low-income earners; living in social housing; who suffer isolation; and/or who have disabilities. There were over 60 attendees at the community engagement day who were able to finally reconnect with WESTS after a long period of physical isolation dating back to start of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. My thanks go to coordinator Franja Repolusk and her team for the invitation to attend but also for their ongoing work to support tenants from my electorate and across western Sydney.

### **STEPS OF HOPE GALA**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was privileged to attend the Steps of Hope Gala on 29 May 2021 at The Lemnos by Clarence House in Belmore. Established in early 2020, Steps of Hope is a 100 per cent not-for-profit charity whose mission is to help the people of Lebanon rebuild their futures. Steps of Hope organised the gala which contributed towards minimising poverty in Lebanon and helped to rebuild Beirut after last year's explosion destroyed thousands of homes. Aiming to minimise poverty and hardship through acts of charity, Steps of Hope provides relief for those who are experiencing financial, emotional and physical difficulty. Approximately \$200,000 was raised on the gala night, which is an absolutely outstanding result. The funds raised will be going to a Children's Cancer Hospital in Lebanon as well as continuing the charity's original initiative of fixing apartments damaged by the blast last year. President Charlie Ibrahim informed me that this time it will be going to the more costly repairs many homes have needed. This fantastic event was organised by Charlie Ibrahim and his team. Thank you for the invitation and I congratulate them all for their efforts and hard work.

### **STARTTS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—STARTTS—Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors—is a specialist non-profit organisation funded predominately by NSW Health. STARTTS provides psychological treatment, cultural support, community interventions and programs to individuals and refugee communities who have fled torture and trauma and settled in Australia. STARTTS has locations throughout New South Wales including in Blacktown, Fairfield, Auburn, Wagga Wagga and Armidale. The STARTTS head office is in the suburb of Carramar in western Sydney. Recently I was fortunate to meet with and have important discussions with Jorge Aroche, CEO, Lachlan Murdoch, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, and Jasmina Baraktarevic, Community Services Coordinator. Prospect has many refugees who have fled war, violence and deprivation. It is extremely difficult for our refugee communities to leave behind their familiar environment and settle in a new country with a foreign language, culture and systems. This is why the work of STARTTS is absolutely vital and impactful. By providing specialised assistance, individuals and refugees are supported to overcome traumatic experiences and move on to living fulfilling lives as Australians. I thank the remarkable team at STARTTS for all that they do to support our refugee communities. Your invaluable work truly makes a difference.

### **CATHOLIC BREAKFAST CLUB**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Wednesday 26 May 2021 I had the pleasure to attend the Catholic Breakfast Group at the Parliament of New South Wales. The Catholic Breakfast Group is a not-for-profit organisation that unifies the Catholic community on a quarterly basis, here at Parliament House. The group is designed to bring together members of the Catholic community to discuss ideals of camaraderie and defending and reinforcing our Catholic values and beliefs. It was wonderful to welcome Dallas McInerney, CEO, Catholic Schools NSW as the guest speaker. Mr McInerney discussed the issues, challenges and concerns facing Catholic Education in New South Wales. I thank Mr McInerney on his insightful address on the future of Catholic education. We have many Catholic schools and churches in the electorate of Prospect. The Catholic community in Prospect is wonderfully diverse and welcomes all different ethnic communities. It was great to reconnect with Catholic leaders in my local community and participate in theological discussions. I also thank Paul and Rita Zammit for organising and running this successful event. It was great to meet with other members of the Catholic community and especially those in western Sydney.

### **COWRA ROTARY CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I extend my congratulations to the members of the Cowra Rotary Club who are raising money through container recycling to be donated to local charities and community programs. The Cowra Rotary Club is aiming to raise \$10,000 by the end of this financial year. The Cowra Rotary Club

during this financial year has recycled 73,650 containers through the Return and Earn facility and has raised over \$7,365 for the 12 local organisations it supports. The club has support from local businesses in town who donate their bottles, cans and cartons to it to recycle. The Cowra Rotary Club has also established a home pick-up service to collect recyclables from the elderly who are unable to get to a Return and Earn outlet. This is a wonderful program that the Cowra Rotary Club has established and I wish it all the best on reaching its target amount to support local charities and community programs.

#### **EMMA, KATE AND PHOEBE CLIFTON**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I recognise the wonderful achievements of three young ladies—Emma, Kate and Phoebe Clifton—who represented Grenfell and Zone 2 in two State Pony Club Championships recently. The State Championships were held in Harden and were held over two days. Phoebe competed in the Under 17 C Grade Competition of the NSW Pony Club State One Day Event Championships, which included dressage, show jumping a height of 80cm and cross country. Phoebe also competed in the Under 17 Advanced Class combined training event jumping around 1.05m. Emma and Kate competed in the NSW Pony Club State Combined Training Championship. This included dressage and show jumping. Emma competed in the Under 13 Advanced Class jumping 75cm and Kate in the Under 15 novice class jumping at least 80cm. My congratulations to Emma, Kate and Phoebe on achieving representations in this highly competitive field and I wish them all the best in further competitions.

#### **JEDDA AND MAXINE KELLY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—I recognise Jedda and Maxine Kelly of Balranald. Jedda and Maxine are to be congratulated on the dedication they have shown to Aboriginal Culture by tending the Aboriginal Cemetery in Balranald. They both volunteer their time and energy, working tirelessly to care for the trees, flowerbeds and surrounding seating—all at their own expense, and with their own gardening equipment. I thank Jedda and Maxine for their initiative, and the valuable assistance, support, and respect they share with the Balranald community.

#### **MATHOURA BRA FENCE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—I recognise and congratulate Sharnie Celli and Ann Robertson of Mathoura for their creative fundraising initiative, the Mathoura Bra Fence, which aids families and individuals within the community battling cancer. In 2018 the Bra Fence was established and now more than a thousand bras from across the country line the fence. The charity associated with the fence has raised more than \$8,000 since its inception, providing fuel cards to help more than 20 local people travel the many hours to healthcare appointments. Sharnie and Ann are to be commended for their continuing efforts to raise funds and awareness for those in the community who need it most. This year, the women have included a section for "jocks and socks" and organised an event to aid even more people in the community. I congratulate both Sharnie and Ann on their dedication to the community through their fundraising efforts.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE NSW OPEN DAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I was delighted to attend the 2021 NSW Fire and Rescue Open day, which showcases the highly commendable actions of those who service our community in protecting and educating the public when it comes to fire safety. I was lucky enough to be shown around Rutherford Fire Station by Zone Commander Inspector Paul Collins and Grant McDonald and Nathan Holz who are both on-call firefighters. Rutherford Fire Station opened its doors to ensure that the public has the opportunity to attend its local fire station and have any questions answered when it comes to protecting themselves, their homes and others from any form of fire danger. It was heartening to see how many young people were inspired by the day, having the opportunity to get into the trucks and speak to our local heroes. It is vital the local community is aware of the fire dangers that contribute to the 1000-plus home fires our firefighters attend each year during winter. Fire and Rescue NSW is the busiest urban fire and rescue service in Australia, I commend our local men and women who dedicate their time to our local fire and rescue community.

#### **MAITLAND INDIE FESTIVAL AND ART FEST**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—On Sunday 30 May I had the pleasure of launching the AWW!—Artists Who Write—exhibition at IF Maitland, also known as Maitland's Indie Festival and IF Maitland Art Fest. The event was held at the BoltSpace Gallery in Maitland's Levee. The exhibition showcased an array of artists who showcase their art through art and words. From poets, authors, songwriters to bloggers there was a diversity of artists featured during the festival. Congratulations to artists Barry Maitland, Helen Hopcroft, Richard Tipping, Professor Liz Cameron, Brian Purcell and Professor Kit Kelen as well as Festival Director Graham Davidson, who all had works in the AWW! exhibition. With the creative industries suffering throughout 2020 it is exciting to see these kinds of events start to happen again. Thank you to the major sponsors of the IF Maitland Art Fest:

Maitland City Council, Hunter Writers Centre, the Mutual bank and Ingram Spark. It is great to have such fantastic supporters of the arts in Maitland!

### **WORLD BICYCLE DAY 2021**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—On 3 June it is World Bicycle Day, a great reminder of how supporting cycling and alternative modes of transport can transform cities and communities. For many of us, 2020 was the year we finally pulled the dusty old pushbike out of the shed and went for a cycle. In fact, bike ridership across New South Wales rose by 40 per cent since the beginning of 2020. In my community, I am thankful to have wonderful bicycle user groups such as AshBUG and Bike Marrickville, and of course acknowledge the extraordinary work of Bicycle NSW and Bike Sydney in advocating for cyclists. Cycling is not just great fun—it is good for our health, good for the planet, and good for the hip pocket too, being one of the cheapest ways to get around town. But unfortunately, in New South Wales, we do not have the adequate infrastructure to support the 1.1 million people who ride a bike each week. Despite the Government's noises about investment in active transport, it has only spent \$130 million on active transport in the 2020-21 State budget. We need to do much more to support the wonderful cyclists across New South Wales. I wish them all a happy World Bike Day.

### **THE BIG ISSUE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I congratulate the *Big Issue* on its twenty-fifth anniversary. Across New South Wales, the *Big Issue* provides people experiencing homelessness and other forms of social and economic disadvantage a pathway to a working life. Since they first hit the street in June 1996, over 7000 vendors have been economically empowered through the 13 million copies of the magazine sold. No matter where you are in our State, it is near impossible to miss a fluoro vest and a friendly face selling copies of the *Big Issue*. Of course, the *Big Issue* is more than a magazine; it is a community. Since being founded, the magazine has started a number of programs to assist people, including the Women's Workforce, the Big Issue Classroom and the Community Street Soccer Program. Last year was difficult for all Australians, but particularly for the people who the *Big Issue* aims to help. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, it meant vendors were unable to be out selling magazines. Even though the *Big Issue* began 25 years ago, it is needed now more than ever. Congratulations to the vendors, board and all those involved with the *Big Issue* over the past 25 years.

### **JUNE WALKER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise June Walker of Ben Lomond for her generous gesture towards the Tour de Cure Signature Tour which passed her property in the New England area of the Northern Tablelands. Knowing the value of the Tour de Cure school visits and the message to demystify cancer and encourage kids to make healthy lifestyle choices, June waited outside her gate to hand a donation towards the search to cure cancer to the peloton. She then invited riders and the crew into her home to share country hospitality. I am sure June had not foreseen that her spontaneous act would be featured on the "Sunrise" program nor Tour De Cure rider Mark Beretta's tribute to her posted on Instagram. I congratulate June on her spirit, stepping forward to support the cause she believes in with a significant gesture from a little country road. I commend June for her intuitive gesture which has shown others the significance of an act of generosity and kindness.

### **PONY CLUB NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the achievements of Pony Club Zone 13 riders at the NSW State Championships, hosted by Walcha Pony Club and attended by pony clubs from across the State. The competition was intense but conditions were good enabling Zone 13 riders to show their talents with great sportsmanship and skill. I congratulate Emmaville Pony Club's Brooke Klinger, Jasmine Klinger, and Madison Ellis; Armidale's Jessica Emery and Michael Paull; Glen Innes' Emily Mills and Kaitlyn Bennet. Inverell's Mackenzie Lyons, and Chief Instructor Belinda Williamson. I commend all the participants who contributed to Zone 13's excellent day at the Pony Club NSW State Championships for 2021.

### **FAR NORTH COAST HOCKEY - CONGRATULATIONS DIVISION TWO GIRLS TEAM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Far North Coast Hockey on hosting the Under 18 Girls NSW State Hockey Championships at Hepburn Park in Goonellabah. Teams from all over the State converged on Hepburn Park between 21 and 23 May. Our local Under 18 Girls team were stand-outs in the field. I congratulate Captain Alana Albertini and Coach Adrian McGrath on a successful State finals where these young women did our community proud. The team had a 2-1 win in the semi-final against the Central Coast with Alana Albertini and Nella Bradford scoring the winning goals. Maya McGrath and Hollie Matthews also giving noteworthy performances. Unfortunately Far North Coast Hockey was pipped at the post by Grafton going down 1-0 in the final. Coach Adrian McGrath has the right attitude telling the Northern Rivers Review that it is all about

player development and doing your best. This team of sportswomen clearly gave it their all and as Captain Alana Albertini says did have a laugh when they came off the field. I commend the Under 18 Girls Far North Coast Hockey team for their stellar effort at the NSW Championships.

#### **GEMFEST THIRTY YEARS IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—GEMFEST Lismore is one of the biggest events on the Lismore calendar. After being cancelled last year due to COVID-19 it was back with a bang. Gemfest is the major fundraiser for the Lismore Gem and Lapidary Club and 2021 marks 30 years of Gemfest. Held over 15 and 16 May at the Lismore Showground 7000 attendees and 150 stallholders from across the country. Gemfest is an important economic boost for our small businesses bringing many visitors to Lismore who spend their money locally. So much work went into Gemfest this year particularly in developing a COVID-Safe plan which involved extra time planning and increased cost to keep our community safe. I thank the committee executive and members for their countless hours volunteering including President Rodney Knight, Vice President Jenny Bryenhock, Secretary Leslie Cann, Treasurer Bruce Copper, Marcus Bebb, Peter Bryenhock, Peter Cann, Arlene Davis, Belinda Holtby, Leonie Bebb, Steve Payne, Gary Thompson, Ivan Turner and Liz Weatherburn. Gemfest would not be possible without the tireless efforts of the committee and membership of the Lismore Gem and Lapidary Club. I congratulate them on a successful Gemfest.

#### **MERRY MANANDHAR**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I acknowledge Merry Manandhar, who is the cultural coordinator of the Nepalese Australian Association. The past year has been tough for all members of our community and I thank Merry for her ongoing commitment to helping those in need. Merry first joined the Nepalese Australian Association in 2013, to assist with cultural activities. She now coordinates her own weekly Nepalese dance classes and educational seminars which are loved by members. Currently there are 30 students in her class and I have heard first-hand from Merry that it is filled with some amazing talent. During the recent pandemic, she made a rapid transition to teaching these classes virtually and this is a great result for our community as it brought everyone together during this difficult time. It is for these reasons that she was nominated and presented with an Individual Achievement Award as part of the Tenth Anniversary of the St George Community Awards last year. These awards honour some of the many men and women who go above and beyond every day to make our community even better. Well done Merry.

#### **BIANCA STANGHIERI**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I acknowledge Bianca Stanghieri who is a rising star in the taekwondo community and an outstanding young woman. Bianca was also the College Captain at St Ursula's College Kingsgrove and I have no doubt that she will go on to be an inspiring leader of our community. Bianca is Second Dan Black Belt and she has been an Assistant Instructor of the Elite Taekwondo Club in Kingsgrove since 2015. From such a young age, Bianca has aspired to achieve her personal best. She has always been there to help other students and she regularly volunteers on grading days. As College Captain, she led a team of 20 senior and 40 junior leaders and her mentorship was particularly important during the recent pandemic where she played a pivotal role in discussing online learning and social distancing. Last year I had the opportunity to present her with a Youth Achievement Award as part of the St George Community Awards. These awards honour some of the many individuals who go above and beyond every day to make our community stronger. Well done Bianca.

#### **HARWOOD MARINE**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Ross Roberts and Gio Cervella, and all the team, at Harwood Marine who recently won the Commercial Marine Service Provider of the Year Award at the 2021 Australian Marine Industry Awards Gala Dinner. This is a wonderful achievement for a proud local Clarence Valley business who undertake full service shipbuilding, ship repair, marine design and engineering. They have long history in the Clarence Valley with extensive experience in the construction of specialised cargo/passenger ships, utility aluminium fast work boats, multi-purpose work boats, barges, tugs, patrol boats and ferries. This is wonderful recognition of the excellent work that is performed by this regional business and I wish everyone at Harwood Marine continued success in the future.

#### **CANICE'S KITCHEN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I congratulate Canice's Kitchen at St Canice's Catholic Church in Elizabeth Bay on their rapid COVID response and commitment to supporting vulnerable people in Sydney's inner-city. Within a few weeks of the pandemic, Canice's Kitchen had transformed their daily onsite program with food, friendship and support into a COVID-safe food collection service made possible by volunteers from remote kitchens. By the reopening in February this year, this amazing team had distributed 190,000 food items from the church gate. Canice's Kitchen have now returned to welcoming over

120 guests on site each day. Community members enjoy delicious meals produced onsite and have access to vaccines, mental health support, life coaching, employment training, legal clinics, showers and clothing. I was honoured to join the Canice's Kitchen team for the grand opening of the new dedicated library for Sydney's street community and see over 2,000 titles on offer for visitors to enjoy. The library is a valuable addition to a service that fosters connection, conversation and community. I am proud to have Canice's Kitchen in my electorate and commend their continued holistic service to our community.

#### **VACCINATION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I congratulate those involved in the joint program to provide access to COVID vaccination for very vulnerable people in the inner city. A joint program involving NSW Health, Kirketon Road Centre, St Vincent's Hospital, the City of Sydney, St Vincent de Paul Society and Ozanam Learning Centre will provide both COVID-19 testing and vaccination for very vulnerable people in Woolloomooloo. The program reaches out to people sleeping rough and less mobile, frail and at-risk residents who are unable to get to other vaccination outlets. We know that these vulnerable groups are more likely to have underlying medical concerns and will be more at risk of serious illness if they get COVID – and are less able to isolate and socially distance from others. It is vital to protect them catching easily transmissible disease and prevent community transmission. The program will help these vulnerable people to protect themselves, their families, their neighbours and the wider community by getting vaccinated for COVID. I congratulate those involved with this creative and passionate program that will help make sure everyone is included in our response to the pandemic.

#### **NSW GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNERS**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I congratulate Ms Jo Fuller, and Geoff Owen, winners of the NSW Government Community Service Award in my electorate. Mr Geoff Owen has been president of the Mount Druitt Senior Citizens association since 2018. In his short time as president, Mr Owen has been incredibly proactive in connecting with the community, raising fundraisers for community projects, and has helped to promote inclusion and assistance for his organisation's members. Ms Jo Fuller has been a member of the Board of the Mount Druitt Wash House for 15 years. She has also been an active member of the management committee for the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency since 2007. Ms Fuller is incredibly passionate in helping the vulnerable in my community, in particular, those in the Wash Board's domestic violence program. Both of these people are completely deserving of this award, and I am proud to have them as members of my community.

#### **KATOKE TRUST FOR OVERSEAS AID**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—Based in Sydney, the Katoke Trust for Overseas Aid has been supporting impoverished communities in the Katoke area of Tanzania since 1998. Virtually 100 per cent of funds raised by the Trust are used to deliver important health, education and agriculture projects in the region. Currently, the Katoke Trust, of which I am proud to be a patron, is running its Ks for Katoke challenge, which encourages participants to raise funds by running, walking, riding or swimming throughout the month of June. As of this week, Ks for Katoke has raised almost \$13,000—and there is still a long way to go! The money raised will help provide accommodation, food, health care and education for young people at the Katoke-Lweru Secondary School. I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the Trust's President, Associate Professor Alan Watson AM, as well as all the supporters. I wish them well in reaching their Ks for Katoke goal of \$100,000 by 30 June.

#### **GREATER WEST SCOUTS**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the seventy-fourth Greater Western Sydney Region Annual Report Presentation for the Greater West Scouts, of which I am proud to be a patron. The Scouts do wonderful work in and around my electorate of Castle Hill, and the report showed that the region was in a sound financial position, with plenty of members. Indeed, the biggest problem the Scouts seem to have is there are too many young people wanting to get involved, with waitlists meaning the area requires more leaders. I would especially like to thank Region President Ross Grove, as well as other board members, including, Debbie & Ross Howlett, Eleanore Smid, David Stopps, Geoff Henderson, Tony Dent, Stephen Wallace and Melanie & Wendy Dimmock for ensuring the continued success of the region. The Scouts operate many groups within my electorate, including in Rouse Hill, Kellyville, Dural and multiple in Castle Hill, as well as in surrounding areas such as Baulkham Hills. I would encourage all interested to join their local group, as the skills and friendships gained in the Scouts can last a lifetime.

#### **BILL RENTON AND GRAHAME UTLEY**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate Bill Renton and Grahame Utley; two of my constituents who have recently been presented the 2021 Local Senior Achievement Award for

Castle Hill. Both of these men have always had the Community at the heart of what they do, with both engaging in volunteering and fundraising efforts throughout their lives. Bill Renton was a founding member of Kellyville United in 2015, and worked tirelessly in the lead up to its launch to ensure that the club was a success right off the bat, with Caddies Creek Reserve being key in those endeavours. In the years since he has ensured the receipt of grant after grant for the club, in order to grow it into one of the strongest clubs in the Hills Football Conference. Grahame Utley has been a local lion for over 40 years, joining the Baulkham Hills Lions Club in 1978 and remaining a member ever since. With his help the Lions Club has been able to raise vast amounts of money for causes across the country and overseas, helping hands on cleaning up after bushfires and drought, and raising money by gift wrapping or sausage sizzles. Both Bill and Grahame epitomise the community spirit that thrives in the Hills, and my congratulations goes out to both of them.

#### **YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2021 HEATHCOTE REPRESENTATIVE**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I congratulate Vivien from Engadine High School as she will be representing Heathcote as the Education Minister in the 2021 Youth Parliament in July. I was excited to host the lovely Vivien and her family yesterday at Parliament House to give her a behind the scenes tour. It was great to see her passion and enthusiasm for all things Parliament. I wish to thank the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning for making time to meet with Vivien as it was a great opportunity to discuss Education Policy. Again, congratulations Vivien. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

#### **WORLD HAEMOCHROMATOSIS WEEK**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Last week was World Haemochromatosis Week [WHW]. WHW aims to raise awareness of hereditary haemochromatosis which is the most common genetic disorder affecting Australians. Haemochromatosis can lead to too much dietary iron being absorbed and stored in the body resulting in organ damage if not detected and left untreated. In Australia one in 200 of European heritage have the genetic predisposition for haemochromatosis and one in 7 people are carriers of the gene that causes it. Unfortunately haemochromatosis is under diagnosed and too few Australians know that their health may be at risk because of the condition. Also, the symptoms of haemochromatosis can be often confused with a range of other illnesses including, fatigue, depression and joint pain, therefore public awareness is low. I urge the community to learn more about haemochromatosis and better understand how it may affect you or your loved ones. Finally, I wish to acknowledge a constituent in my electorate, Dr Dianne Prince, for her endless advocacy in raising awareness about this condition, through her roles as President of Haemochromatosis Australia and Haemochromatosis International.

#### **MY KIND CO**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—I bring to the attention of the House the work of My Kind Co who recently transformed the Balmain Town Hall with their exhibition event 'Queen Bees of Balmain' as part of the Inner West Fest Baludarri. From patriarchy to matriarchy, this wonderfully creative and symbolic activation, removed the stale, pale males from the walls of the Balmain Town Hall, and replaced them with a host of vibrant female portraits by leading female artists. We need more monuments to women and public art celebrating our female heroes. This exhibition was a fantastic start and My Kind Co are working to continue creating further opportunities to help make this ambition a reality. I especially want to acknowledge Creative Director Lisa Tatman and her My Kind Co creative collective team, including the featured artists, volunteers, and organisers for their commitment to creating this stunning transformation.

#### **DENISE SINGLETON**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—I wish to congratulate an amazing lady, Denise Singleton. Last week I was delighted to present Denise with her award as 2021 Local Woman of the Year. Denise now has her name etched into the Honour Roll for her amazing work and commitment to her organisation Wigs4Wendy. Denise has given a lot back to her community through Wigs4Wendy, I was honoured to be able to present her with this award. After Denise' sister Wendy was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago Denise discovered the challenges faced by those going through treatment, and one of those being hair loss. The reason Wigs4Wendy was created. This service gives women a free service, providing them with wigs, chemo-caps and turbans. Congratulations Denise, you deserve this honour.

#### **VAL WORTHINGTON**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Val Worthington on her amazing 60 years of service to the Parkes community through the Que Club, previously named the Quota Club. Val Worthington was recently acknowledged by the Parkes Que Club for her 60 years of service. All there for the occasion would agree that there is no one who has done more for the club that does so much for the Parkes community. Val became President of the Parkes chapter, and eventually went on to become the District Governor. In addition to her

ongoing commitment to Quota and Que, Val was involved with Parkes Floral Art Society, which holds an annual display of flower arrangements. Val also did a lot of volunteer service work outside the club, including delivering Meals On Wheels to the Parkes community for a remarkable 25 years. Val remains a very active member of Que, and has continued to breathe life into the club by introducing new members, ensuring its vibrant continuation long into the future. I congratulate Val on this magnificent achievement of community service and for actively enriching social bonds across the Parkes community. Well done.

### **ORANGE MALE VOICE CHOIR**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise the Orange Male Voice Choir, formed in 1926. Current Conductor, Phil Rees, is only the seventh in the Choir's history, bearing testimony to the strong bonds of friendship within the Choir. The Choir rehearses weekly at the Orange Regional Conservatorium, and welcomes men of any age in to join them in song. The Choir comprises four parts; Bass, Baritone and First and Second Tenors, and its repertoire covers a broad range of music, from popular tunes and Broadway musicals through to traditional Australian ballads and Welsh hymns. Notable events in the Choir's 95-year history, include:

Competitors in the 1932 Australian Male Voice Championships

Five-time winners of the City of Sydney Eisteddfod

Performances with international artists Harry Secombe, John McNally, June Bronhill and Julie Anthony

Performances in the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Town Hall, Melbourne Concert Hall, Great Hall of Parliament House, National Library in Canberra, Cardiff's St. David's Hall and in the Royal Albert Hall, London

First Australian male choir to compete at the International Eisteddfod in Wales in 1985

Hosted and performed with Eric Bogle and Paul Jarman in-concert in Orange in 2019.

Congratulations on this milestone and your outstanding achievements.

### **SISTERHOOD BRUNCH FUNDRAISER**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—I draw the attention of this Parliament to the Sisterhood Brunch Fundraiser for Mums4Refugees that was held on 15 May 2021 at the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre. The event was a collaboration between Mums 4 Refugees and Welcome Merchant and was organised as a celebration that brings awareness to the challenges that mothers on temporary visas face every day in Australia. Mums 4 Refugees are a grassroots network of mothers and carers across Australia committed to advocacy for the human rights of people from refugee backgrounds and those seeking asylum. Welcome Merchant is an organisation created to promote the businesses of refugee entrepreneurs through events and their online directory. The event featured delicious catering by Racha's Syrian Kitchen and Margarita's Cakes. I was honoured to speak at this event and was joined by many wonderful women from our community including Renuga Inpakumar - an impressive young Tamil woman and advocate for asylum seeker rights. I especially want to recognise National Convenor of Mums4Refugees, Dulce Muñoz, and welcome Merchant Founder, Marjorie Tenchavez, for their incredible work in organising this event and in their work supporting refugees and asylum seekers in our community and nationwide.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the Sutherland Shire Netball Association who are the successful recipients of \$5,490 from the NSW Government's 2021 Local Sport Grant Program. Established in 1960, the Sutherland Shire Netball Association is home to 25 Clubs and is the biggest netball association in New South Wales. This grant will facilitate the purchase of a new electronic scoreboard, along with safety lining for the Bellingara Netball Stadium to further enhance the player and spectator experience. The funding will also equip the Association's junior talent from the development squad with new uniforms to ensure that sport remains accessible to everyone. Of course none of this would be possible without the hardworking team behind the Sutherland Shire Netball Association. I acknowledge the outstanding executive committee including Karen Salter, Lisa Woodham, Prue Haberecht, Sue Woods, Shirley Way, Jenny Rees, Aynsley Dryden, Kerry Phillips, Nerida Noble, Lisa Filby, Vicki Kerr and Dianne Maclachlan. I commend the Sutherland Shire Netball Association for bringing the importance of these projects to my attention and look forward to seeing the players benefit from the Local Sport Grant funding.

### **TAREN POINT TOUCH ASSOCIATION**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the Taren Point Touch Association who are the successful recipients of \$1,850 from the NSW Government's 2021 Local Sport Grant Program. Established in

1975, Taren Point Touch Association is a wonderful sporting community run entirely by volunteers. The Association is affiliated with NSW Touch and Touch Football Australia. Through this grant funding, the Taren Point Touch Association will be able to cover the cost of accreditation for Club coaches who dedicate their time to supporting players. We all know that the cost involved in completing these courses can be a heavy financial burden on volunteers and volunteer organisations, so I'm pleased that this funding will invest in the people that support community sport. Of course, none of this would be possible without the executive team behind Taren Point Touch Association. I acknowledge committee members Craig May, Corinne May, John May and Ross Culbert. I commend the Taren Point Touch Association for investing in the skills of their volunteers.

#### **ARNCLIFFE YOUTH CENTRE**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)**—Bayside Council's Youth Centre at Arncliffe was officially opened to the public last month and I was lucky to get to see the fantastic new facility firsthand. This Centre has been many years in the making. The Youth Centre is the first of its kind for Bayside and will focus on supporting, developing and empowering young people across Bayside. The Centre has two amazing multi-purpose indoor courts that are perfect for various indoor sports. It is a fantastic initiative that aims to bring the youth of our wonderful community together by hosting sports and other youth engagement programs and services. Thank you to Bayside Council and the community for making this wonderful centre a reality.

#### **ST GEORGE SCHOOL IMMERSIVE ROOM**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)**—I was delighted to attend the opening of the St George School's new Immersive Room after assisting with funding through a Community Building Partnership Grant. The room is a dynamic, interactive, and immersive experience for students with severe and multiple disabilities from K-12. It's equipped with special sensory equipment that encourages development of all senses to achieve a full sensory experience. The environment is used as a stimulus to transport students into the stories they read, take them into other worlds, and give life to exciting experiences. This is a fantastic educational tool that can be utilised by teachers for all major key learning areas. Congratulations to the St George School on opening this wonderful new facility. Thank you to Principal Diana Murphy and the St George Fund.

#### **JANET EVA SUTTON**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—This past year has taught all of us a great deal about resilience, a concept that I am sure is very familiar to Bowral resident Janet Sutton who turned 105 on May 23. Mrs Sutton was born in Perth in 1916, and lived through two world wars, droughts, floods, and many societal changes and personal challenges. Mrs Sutton's family and friends travelled from interstate to celebrate her milestone birthday at the Scottish Arms Hotel in Bowral, where tributes to Mrs Sutton's Scottish heritage included sword dancing and bagpipes to entertain her guests and bring back nostalgia from her youth. Congratulations Mrs Sutton on your birthday milestone and may this year be a happy and peaceful one for you and your family.

#### **SCHOOL STEER SPECTACULAR**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I would like to congratulate Chevalier College on being crowned champion at the 2021 South Coast Beef School Steer Spectacular. This year the event was hosted by South Coast Beef and was the biggest School Steer Spectacular ever, with 15 schools and 400 students attending on the day and more than 1000 students engaged in the raising and preparation of the steers. The led steer classes in the show ring – known as the hoof championship - was held at the Nowra Showground, followed a few days later by the judging of the carcass as it hangs in the cool-room – the hook championship. When the results of the hook competition were tabulated, Chevalier College shone above the rest of the field and was announced the South Coast Beef School Steer Spectacular overall champion. Congratulations to Chevalier College and to all the students who participated in the steer raising on their great success.

#### **BLACKTOWN ARMY CADET UNIT**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I recognise the Blacktown Army Cadet Unit for their long history of service in army cadetship training, dating back to 1979. The Blacktown Army Cadet Unit is the largest community based cadet unit in its Battalion and one of the largest in its Brigade. I commend them for their support to local community groups and service to community ceremonies throughout the year. The Blacktown Cadet Unit demonstrates service to the ANZAC Day City March and local dawn services, as well as nearby festival celebrations. I recognise former members of the Australian Army, Captain Ken Duncan and Lieutenant Mick Ridge, for their leadership of the Cadet Unit. Their knowledge and skills are what allows the Cadet Unit of Blacktown to run as close to Army standard as possible. I am pleased to acknowledge the Blacktown Army Cadet Unit for their continued service to the youth of the Seven Hills Electorate and the wider local community throughout the year.

### **MODEL FARMS HIGH SCHOOL 2021 STUDENT LEADERS AND P&C EXECUTIVE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I acknowledge the outstanding community of Model Farms High School for educating students from throughout Winston Hills and Baulkham Hills in the Seven Hills Electorate. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the 2021 student leaders. Well done to the college captains Sophie Flanigan and Dillon De Silva, and vice captains Phoebe Hendriks and Roderick Schuster. I also recognise the SRC president's Casey Upton and Jarad Butt, as well as executive members Ella Beesley and Adam Burst. I further congratulate sports captains Olivia Bell and Kieran Grady. I would also like to acknowledge the P&C executive for their service: president Julie May, vice president's Matthew Walton and Carolyn Brown, secretary Mel Ozluk and treasurer Oz Ozluk. Model Farms High School is a terrific school with a proud community. I thank Principal Mark Grady for his leadership and dedication to serving the Model Farms community. Again, I thank and congratulate the student leaders and P&C executive for their service throughout 2021.

### **MAX AND JAN COWDROY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Max and Jan Cowdroy who recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. The couple, from Galston, first moved to the area in 1977 for the plum trees, horses and fresh air. They met at 17 when they attended Teachers College in Wagga with both having gone on to spend many years in the classroom. Jan taught in primary schools and special education at schools such as Karonga. While Max spent 51 years as a teacher including 33 years at Barker in Hornsby. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Max and Jan for contribution to education and for teaching hundreds of children over their career. These days Max, who previously was part of a bush band, volunteers his time performing at the Galston Community Centre, Mark Donaldson House and Rowland Village. While Jan is heavily involved in the local Probus club. They raised three children and now have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Congratulations Max and Jan on 60 years of marriage and thank you for your contribution to our local community.

### **EMILY HEWITT-PARK TO REPRESENT WOMEN'S NSW HOCKEY SQUADS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate Mosman resident Emily Hewitt-Park for being selected into the Under 21 Field Squad and Blues Team for NSW Hockey. At such a young age, Emily is an inspiring role model for her sport and for her community. Emily was selected to play in both teams for the upcoming Australian Championships in July at Moorebank. She will play alongside other talented young female hockey players from across the state. Growing up in my electorate, Emily has represented NSW at a number of national competitions and captained the Under 18 Blues Indoor team. Her sporting achievements are paralleled by her academic success, having completed her year 12 studies at Manly Selective School last year, and ranking first in a number of subjects. I wish Emily all the best in bringing home gold in the upcoming tournament. No doubt she will do the community and the Northern Sydney Beaches Hockey Association proud.

### **SIMPLY CUPS RECYCLING SCHEME ENCOURAGES LOCALS TO STEP UP**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to acknowledge the Simply Cups recycling initiative that has taken off in my local area. A three-month trial has enabled local residents to recycle single-use take-away coffee cups. The items can be repurposed and reprocessed into other goods, such as reusable cups and road surfacing. I want to thank Mosman Council for partnering with Simply Cups and the NSW Environment Protection Authority. My local community is able to do their part in reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfill and become more environmentally conscious. I am proud that people in my electorate have stepped up to partake in this scheme and help Australia establish its first cup recycling facility. While I prefer to use a keep cup to drink my coffee every morning, I understand that many of my local cafes and businesses rely on single-use coffee cups, especially at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you again to Mosman Council and well done to local residents for stepping up and doing their part in keeping NSW clean.

### **MAKE WAY MUSIC EVENT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Last month I spoke in this place about the Make Way Music Event, which was hosted by the Kincumber Neighbour Centre as part of the Central Coast Council's Youth Week. This fantastic event was one of many events being facilitated by the Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre Youth Project, which the New South Wales Government and I have been strongly supporting. Today I want to particularly acknowledge the tireless efforts of Sharon Aldrick, the Senior Youth Worker based at Kincumber, who created the event, sourced the local bands, organised that sound and lighting, organised the stage, and organised the food, as well as cooking some of it herself! I am also advised that Sharon was ably supported by Billy Matthews, who put in an incredible effort to support her. I want to take this opportunity to thank Sharon and Billy for their work, which was essential to ensuring this event was a success.

### GOSFORD LEAGUES PARK AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I want to congratulate the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation in taking home the 2021 National Trust Award for Aboriginal Heritage as well as the top award, the Judges Choice Award, recognising the incredible transformation of Leagues Club Park in Gosford. The revitalisation of this public space, which is one of the most visible parks on the Central Coast, has been incredible. It has been transformed into a regionally and culturally significant play space in Gosford that has been a true collaboration between the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, and the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. I particularly want to congratulate the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council and their chairperson, Danielle Captain Webb, as well as Uncle Gavi Duncan for his personal contributions to the project. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of Valentina Misevska and Luke Robertson from HCCDC for delivering his new space for everyone on the Central Coast to enjoy.

### HONOURING ARAB-AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I acknowledge my parliamentary colleague the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane for recently hosting the "Honouring Arab Australian Women Mainstream Media & Literature Awards" in the NSW Parliament Theatre. The community is blessed to have so many high achieving Arabic-Australian women making positive contributions to the arts. It was a great night acknowledging outstanding women who are all leading in their respective fields. On a personal note it was a pleasure to catch up with former Fairfield Advance journalist Ms Jennine Khalik following the presentation of her "Acknowledgement to Journalism Award". I extend my congratulations to all the award recipients on the evening.

### NETWORK SOLAR CAR STEM CHALLENGE

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield recently hosted the Network Solar Car STEM Challenge where students from local schools were able to bring along their handcrafted solar vehicles to enter the challenge. The day was well-planned by Mrs Siran Galeb (STEM Coordinator) at Patrician Brothers' College and students from Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School; Sacred Heart Primary School Villawood; Sacred Heart Primary School Cabramatta; St Gertrudes Primary School Smithfield; Mary Mackillop College Wakeley and Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield presented their vehicles, showing their construction prowess as their vehicles travelled around the tracks. This event was a great opportunity to showcase an innovative way of engagement in learning and was a fun day for all involved. It was also a way of teaching students the intricacies of sustainable design and the importance of renewable energy to our environment. The overall winners of the Solar Car STEM Challenge were the students from Mary Mackillop College Wakeley and I congratulate them on their excellent vehicle. I would like to thank Mr Peter Wade, Patrician Brothers' College Principal, for inviting me along to share in the fun. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the organising team – Mrs Siran Galeb and the College Ambassadors – for a magnificent event. And a big thank you also goes out to Mr Michael Richards, Sunsprint Coordinator at UNSW for his presence on the day.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### LANE COVE ELECTORATE ROTARY CLUBS

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (19:50):** It is with great pleasure today that I recount and acknowledge the tremendous contributions and service of the Rotary clubs within the electorate of Lane Cove. This year we are commemorating 100 years of Rotary within Australia. The presidents of each of the four Rotary clubs operating within the electorate of Lane Cove have come forward to share their recent and ongoing activities. The Rotary Club of Hunters Hill has been an integral part of the community, contributing to the social and financial aspects of the area. The club this year was able to raise \$20,000 for upgrades to the Giants Steps School, contributing to storage and working facilities. These funds were combined with the Rotary Club of Eastwood-Gladesville's ongoing funds to further help educate and support students with autism.

The club's Play It Forward project funded and initiated the installation of specialist swings for children with disabilities in local parks across the Hunters Hill municipality. President Michael Parsons, alongside numerous other members of the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill, have been annually distributing bowel cancer scan kits to the community while also hosting multiple comedy nights to raise money for intestinal cancer research as a part of the Gut Foundation service. The Rotary Club of Hunters Hill has not shied away from initiatives operating overseas, making a real difference in Third World countries. Its Interplast initiative sends teams of certified and well-trained health professionals to 17 Asian Pacific nations to provide urgent life-saving surgeries as well as medical training to the communities they visit.

The Rotary Club of Eastwood-Gladesville has also been taking part in initiatives operating overseas. Involved in fundraising efforts for the Oecusse region of East Timor, the club is helping provide much-needed

necessities to the many living in poverty. The president of Rotary Club of Eastwood-Gladesville, John Bern, has continued to organise members of the club and community to volunteer for the St John Ambulance as well as providing personnel to the SES to assist in desperate circumstances such as the recent flooding and the bushfires of 2019-20. Recently the Rotary Club of Ryde celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. One of the club's most notable achievements in its area is the Rotary Youth Exchange program. It has been providing a life-changing experience for both the outbound Australian students and the locally hosted students from around the globe. Each student has experienced a widened understanding of global culture and shared this collectively with their families, teachers and classmates.

Ever since November 2018 Rotary Club of Ryde has organised and hosted the Light Up East Ryde function. The Christmas market invites crowds of hundreds to join the friends and families of the neighbourhood to enjoy market stalls, food, live entertainment and most of all the community atmosphere. And once it gets dark, the Christmas lights are something to really behold and marvel at. The Rotary Club of Ryde has been an ongoing supporter of the Meals on Wheels program. Rotarians began volunteer work as demand for drivers increased drastically. The Rotarians have volunteered extra members and hours to deliver on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays as well as their ongoing Sunday commitments.

Lastly, the Rotary Club of Lane Cove has been very resilient in maintaining its fundraising initiatives during the pandemic. The annual street fair, which has run since 1993, had to be cancelled last year due to the lockdown. However, a mega raffle was held last year, which raised \$20,000. The President of the Rotary Club of Lane Cove, Silvio Gmur, hopes that the fair makes a strong return this year. Through all of the Rotary clubs' ongoing fundraising events, the fair has assisted and funded numerous upgrades to better accommodate women in need. This has been in addition to the club's cooperation with the Tree of Joy, which has operated as a refuge for women and children. The recycling company Hyecorp and the Rotary Club of Lane Cove have partnered to raise awareness of the problems of unrecyclable waste. To do this they have installed recycled plastic park benches in numerous parks around the Lane Cove area to encourage the community to recycle as best they can and avoid environmentally damaging plastics.

It is an incredible privilege to be part of a community where members so willingly give of their time to serve not only their own initiatives but also those organisations and programs that save lives. The Rotarians serve those who are hungry and need protecting in our community as well as reach out to families and nations living in poverty, helping them in the most generous and professional of ways. I am so very proud of the work of the Rotary clubs within the electorate of Lane Cove. On behalf of the House, I commend them for always giving back and supporting those in need. Our community thanks them.

### **PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:55):** I speak about my first decade in this place, as 26 May 2011 marks the day I presented my inaugural speech in Parliament with family, friends and colleagues watching on. Since then I have made over 800 speeches in this Chamber, represented the Parliament and the New South Wales Government locally, nationally and internationally, and worked alongside my parliamentary colleagues to deliver over \$1 billion of investment across the Port Macquarie electorate. Ten years on, the privilege of serving my community has not been lost on me for a single day—whether I am walking through the doors of one of the oldest establishments in the nation or I have picked up a coffee at a local café and headed into the office in Grant Street.

I pledged my commitment on that same day to work relentlessly to deliver better services and infrastructure like the long-awaited Lake Cathie Public School or the dedication of Westport Park as public open space. The past 10 years have been a journey of incredible learning and extraordinary experiences marked by highs and lows, sometimes immense frustration and occasionally disappointment. But the setbacks have certainly been surpassed by the achievements that I know have made a genuine difference to people's lives. The Government's investment locally has been impressive but the most gratifying aspect of being a local MP is not the media announcements of millions of dollars, not the photos at openings of new facilities or events, but the prospect of changing the lives of individuals. Of late there have been so many examples where we have met people when they are at their most vulnerable.

People are anxious and distressed with the recent devastating floods in Port Macquarie and the Camden Haven, the fires that ripped through the mid North Coast resulting in a fatality at Johns River or the worst drought in history which poor farming families have suffered through. I am so privileged to work alongside staff, including Terry Sara, Sarah Jones, Brendan Seed and part-time employees William Barlow and Lesley Olsen who are as passionate and dedicated as I am and who will go to the nth degree to find solutions for those in need. It is always so humbling to engage with and support our incredible volunteer community organisations with funding so they can deliver improved facilities for all of us to enjoy. They dictate the degree of positive engagement and happiness for each of us through the opportunities they provide for interactions and social relations.

The changed landscape of Tacking Point and the Beach 2 Beach footpath are perfect examples. In the months ahead we will see progress on the new police headquarters for Port Macquarie, an ambulance station for Lake Cathie, a modern HealthOne community centre at Laurieton and the anticipated PCYC. I am hopeful the long-awaited Ocean Drive duplication will finally commence once Port Macquarie-Hastings Council allocates additional funding to this local council road. There is no resting on our laurels as we work to accommodate our fast-growing community. In partnership with all levels of government and our expanse of innovative organisations and businesses, I am confident the road ahead will be positive and productive.

### ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (19:58):** I speak on the long-awaited proposal for Rouse Hill hospital, which this Government has promised time and again. In fact, the Government promised it before two separate elections and of course there is still no hospital at Rouse Hill. The proposal for a hospital that the Government has just committed to—I think for a third time, at a different site—will not even have an emergency department. We are talking about a hospital in the fastest-growing part of Sydney that does not have an emergency department. Residents are asking me and other members of Parliament from western Sydney, "Why is it that our part of Sydney is supposed to cop hundreds of thousands of new residents but we don't even get basic services?"

It is typical of the Government when it comes to infrastructure in north-west Sydney. It is all promises at election time and zero delivery. The hospital was announced before the 2015 election; there has not been a spade in the ground. It was announced before the 2019 election. This time, those opposite said a site was chosen; there was a lot of hullabaloo about that. Two years on, there has not been a spade in that ground and the Government has come to the magical realisation that the site chosen before 2019 will not work. Now the Government says it has a new site, on which it still has not started construction.

It is just one mess after another when it comes to the Rouse Hill Hospital. The Government does not do its homework when it comes to this issue, and hundreds of thousands of working families in north-west Sydney get short-changed. It is not just the hundreds of thousands of families that live there now; what about the hundreds of thousands of families that are coming in the future? I have lost count of the number of times my colleagues and I, particularly the member for Blacktown, have raised the unacceptable way that the Government treats the hardworking families of north-west Sydney. They are families who just put their heads down and want to get ahead, and they cannot even get a hospital with an emergency department. The Government has stopped listening to actual people. If you are a high-paid consultant, sure, you get listened to. Lobbyist mates—you bet. Liberal Party elites—all the time. If you are an average family in north-west Sydney that deserves the right to get a hospital with an emergency department, you are completely forgotten.

I have said time and time again that it is the same story for schools in the same community. The school at Marsden Park, Northbourne Public School, was made from demountables. It only opened a few weeks ago. There are thousands of families that live in Marsden Park and tens of thousands more to come, but there is still no high school. A new primary school in Tallawong has not started. It is the same story for transport and roads. We all know the story of the Schofields station commuter car park, promised by 2020 as a multi-deck commuter car park for a set of communities that are rapidly growing. It still has not started. What a broken promise to this community! What a betrayal of this community! For families that live in north-west Sydney, Richmond Road has not been upgraded although tens of thousands of homes have been built on it. It is the same road that it was when there were kangaroos and cows living on the sites where tens of thousands of families now live.

It is simple: North-west Sydney should not be treated worse by the Liberal Government just because it is not part of the Liberal Party elite and because it is hardworking families trying to get ahead. They deserve hospitals and schools and a road that is not a goat track. If members do not live in north-west Sydney, they probably do not get it. Emergency departments are obviously vital for hospitals; the fact that I even have to say that in Parliament is a disgrace. Rouse Hill Hospital should not be different. The people of north-west Sydney in the electorate of Londonderry and the electorate of Riverstone deserve a hospital with an emergency department. Gladys Berejiklian has the opportunity to do the right thing: Stop delaying the hospital, and build it with an emergency department.

### WEDDIN SHIRE PROJECTS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:03):** In the north of the vast Cootamundra electorate is the Weddin Shire, a local government area that has just over one person for every square kilometre of the shire. The community may be small but it is a powerhouse. It is a region with a rich and celebrated history that is looking to capitalise on the opportunities of the future. I am proud of the assistance the New South Wales Government continues to provide to the shire, enabling it to undertake vital projects and bring to life work that the community has dreamed of for decades. Across the towns and villages of the Weddin Shire the Government is supporting upgrades and improvements to community spaces and places, the vital meeting points for the community. This

includes \$134,778 for the Caragabal Memorial Hall, which is helping to continue the hall's refurbishment, including upgrading the kitchen, toilet, guttering and pipes.

At Bogolong Dam a youth and community facility is being created to ensure that recreation space can be enjoyed by the whole community. The \$300,000 investment from the New South Wales Government is creating a fishing pontoon, boat ramp, toilets, showers, barbecue area, walking tracks and other facilities. In Grenfell there is a huge amount of work underway, ensuring the town and the wider Weddin Shire have the facilities they need for the future. The Government is investing in the environment, supporting the Weddin Community Native Nursery to continue its work in supplying native species for local Landcare with a grant from the Community Building Partnership program. The Government is investing in the health of the Weddin Shire. It has built a new, state-of-the-art ambulance station in Grenfell, which is fit for purpose and gives our hardworking paramedics the facilities they need to continue providing their vital service. It was a joy to meet with local paramedics at the opening of the new Grenfell NSW Ambulance station in March of this year.

The Government is investing in the spaces and places that bring the community together, helping the showground replace its electrical infrastructure and upgrade its pavilion, ensuring not only that the show can go on but also that it can do so more safely, with the powerlines moved underground. Similar support for renovations at the Grenfell Picnic Race Club and the Grenfell Uniting Church have ensured that volunteers have the comfortable environment they deserve, with renovated kitchens. The Weddin Shire is looking to the future, seeing the opportunities that lie ahead and creating the infrastructure to cater for them. The Government is supporting the shire in its transformation of Grenfell Main Street, a multimillion-dollar upgrade that will create space for future events and infrastructure.

That work includes creating infrastructure for future access to power for an electric car charging station; better digital connectivity in the Grenfell CBD; upgrades to the streetscape; protection of the heritage verandahs; new seating; plantings; a sculpture celebration of the town's own Henry Lawson; and, of course, improvements to accessibility so that everyone can enjoy the public space. The Government has supported the transformation of Henry Lawson Oval, giving the Grenfell Girlannas, Goannas and Junior Rugby League teams a home ground they can be proud of and creating a recreation space for the entire community with a new fitness circuit, grandstand and amenities. It is helping the Grenfell Country Club cut its power bills with a new solar power system, air conditioning and roof repairs.

No community can grow and thrive without adequate sewage treatment facilities. The Government is ensuring there are no blockages in the pipeline of Grenfell's growth with a \$12.3 million upgrade of the Grenfell Sewage Treatment Plant. It is a once-in-a-generation investment in the future of Grenfell that ensures the cost burden of that vital infrastructure does not fall on the shire's ratepayers. Ensuring our young people get the greatest start in life is one of the Government's highest priorities, and the Weddin mobile preschool is dedicated to developing the future of our kids across the shire. I do not have enough time in this speech to outline all the work that is being done to help bring to life to the Weddin Shire, but I can say that I am very proud of the cooperation between the shire, the community and the State Government, and all that we have achieved together.

### CANTERBURY HOSPITAL

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:08):** Firstly, I acknowledge and thank the 900 staff at Canterbury Hospital. I also acknowledge NSW Health, the health Minister and my community—particularly our community and faith leaders—who have worked together during this very difficult time of COVID. We are not out of the woods yet; we are seeing what is happening in Victoria. We also want to ensure that we increase vaccination rates. Once again I am speaking on behalf of my community and begging the Government for additional funding to fix Canterbury Hospital. Again our cries have not been heard by the Government. As members know, there was a scathing letter written by 60 senior doctors from Canterbury Hospital, but their concerns have also been sidelined. I acknowledge that the Minister does understand, but we would like to see funding in the budget that will be handed down in two weeks' time.

The fantastic staff are those very people without whom the hospital would not be able to serve our multicultural community—whether it is our doctors, our specialists, our nurses, our cleaners, our security, everyone has done a fantastic job. The population in our community continues to grow significantly. By 2031 it is expected that our population will increase by 39 per cent. I have written to Minister Stokes calling for a moratorium on the 6,000 units planned for Campsie alone. We have already got thousands of units on Canterbury Road. I have spoken in this place about the corruption that occurred and why all those properties are on Canterbury Road. We have an infrastructure deficit. I will continue to advocate and fight on behalf of my community for the basic social infrastructure.

Renal dialysis is an essential medical treatment used by individuals whose kidneys are unable to function normally. Canterbury Hospital does not have renal dialysis. There are many, many people in my community who

do not have their own vehicle and have to travel to Concord or to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. They have to catch public transport two or three times a week. If RPA or Concord do not have any places, some have to travel all the way to Liverpool. Dialysis can mean the difference between life and death. I have spoken to many elderly people who find it not only taxing on their mental health but they say to me, "Sophie, I just can't do this any more. I want to die." This is why it is imperative that in the budget we receive our fair share. This Government should not allow all this development to happen without the adequate social infrastructure.

As I have mentioned in this place before, my electorate is a multicultural community with many language barriers. It is also an ageing population: 20 per cent per cent are aged 60 or older. We have close to 10 nursing homes. Many people are being cared for at home by their families, by the next generation, but we urgently need support in our community. Five years ago the Government ripped the palliative care unit and beds from Canterbury Hospital. I acknowledge that we have a single clinical nurse consultant and a visiting service from a single doctor a couple of times a week. They are fantastic. They are excellent. I acknowledge their work. But our population is growing exponentially—with the development of 6,000 more units, and 50,000 units across Sydenham to Bankstown—and the Government has pulled out palliative care. I acknowledge the PM Glynn Institute has written a report entitled *A Snapshot of Palliative Care Services in Australia*, which was commissioned by the Australian Catholic University. I will have more to say about palliative care at another time. The Government has its priorities absolutely wrong. I urge the Treasurer to invest in Canterbury Hospital.

### TRIBUTE TO LUCIO SAVERIO FELICE

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (20:13):** I pay tribute to a stalwart of the Grafton and South Grafton business communities, Lucio Saverio Felice, who sadly passed away last month. He was better known in the Clarence Valley as "Farmer Lou". He always wore a trademark smile that always made you feel very welcome. Lou lost his battle with cancer in the early hours of Monday 31 May, but he was very fortunate to have his loving family around him—just as he did every day in his fruit and veggie shop. The Felice family were, and still are, a very close family. They have been adopted by the Clarence Valley community. Lou's story in Australia began in 1963 when he arrived in Sydney from Italy as a teenager. He had no money and spoke no English. He had been placed in the care of his married sister, who was living in Sydney at the time. His brother-in-law helped him find a job in a hat factory where English was not a requirement. He was a young boy in a foreign country and he had to learn the ropes the hard way—basic things like where and how to use public transport.

Money was always tight and after paying a modest board to his sister, there was very little left over. Lou realised he needed upskill to negotiate a better wage for a better life and so whilst still working at the hat factory he worked nights and weekends, unpaid, at a fruit and vegetable shop in Bondi junction. The owner of the shop was a Greek and he provided Lou with the initiative to pursue a career in the fruit and vegetable business. Lou loved the business and he had an incredible work ethic. Of course, it was in a fruit and veg shop that he met Lucia. In fact, it was a fruit shop owned by Lucia's uncle. They married in 1968. A year later and after the birth of their first child, Maria, Lou and Lucie opened their own fruit and vegetable shop in Bondi Junction and then later in Ashfield. Their son, Paul, arrived in 1973 and their priority was to provide for their growing family. When Ernestina was born in 1976, it prompted Lou and Lucie to take up an offer to manage a shop that was part of a chain of fruit and vegetable shops throughout New South Wales and into Queensland.

The job took the family to Brisbane and they set up residence there, but because of the demands and the pressures of the workload, they decide to look for their own business. That opportunity arose with a Farmer Charlie's franchise becoming available in Grafton and the family moved there in 1997. The shop was an enormous success with the locals, but unfortunately the franchise provide little opportunity for input from Lou. Things that were important to Lou such as choice of produce and sourcing from local producers and wanting to become an integral part of the community prompted Lou to start up his own shop. That was the start of Farmer Lou, who had a shop in Grafton and another in Skinner Street, South Grafton. It soon became obvious that the South Grafton business was overtaking Farmer Lou's in Grafton. The shop in Grafton closed because the South Grafton shop was flourishing. His loyal Grafton customers just gravitated to the South Grafton shop. Since moving to South Grafton and such was the popularity of the shop and the affection for Lou and his family that Farmer Lou has won the people's choice award in the Clarence Valley Business Awards for three consecutive years.

Lou was always a family man and his priority was always to provide for his family. He treated his employees like family and some have been with him for over 20 years. Lou was always a very modest man who he never mentioned the many charities he supported, charities such as the Cancer Council, the South Grafton High School breakfast program, the Jacaranda Big Breakfast and, of course, the countless fruit and vegetable trays for all manner of volunteer groups. Lou was always very generous and never said no. He was a gentleman always, with a smile on his face and we loved him. May he rest in peace.

## ROUNDTABLE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:18):** Living with domestic abuse is harrowing for anyone. For some members of our community, with language and cultural differences to negotiate, it can seem impossible to find a way out. In my role as shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and shadow Minister for Women, I recently hosted in Parliament House a roundtable forum to focus on the particular challenges faced by victims of domestic violence from multicultural communities. The roundtable gathered 30 women representing more than 20 frontline services, as well as staff from several domestic violence peak bodies, including DVNSW and Women's Safety NSW. I was assisted by Dr Sabrin Farooqui, President of the Cultural Diversity Network, who co-hosted the event with me. Dr Farooqui and I received an overwhelming response to our invitation. Workers in frontline services were ready and keen to discuss how the Government can better support migrant women and children facing domestic violence. Everyone agreed this was an urgent discussion to have and an area that needs careful attention because of its unique challenges. We also agreed that current systems and structures have to change to include all women, regardless of culture and race.

Aware that we were tapping into a goldmine of wisdom, experience and knowledge, we invited participants before the event to let us know their key challenges and priority issues. We wanted to ensure that their concerns would drive the agenda. Four major themes arose, which we unpacked during the roundtable. First, was the challenge of getting information about domestic and family violence support services out to migrant and refugee women. This is not just about disseminating information but cultivating a deeper understanding about what domestic abuse is in all its complexity. In some cultures, "domestic violence" is a negative phrase and invokes shame and stigma. We explored what steps can be taken to improve communication with women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Secondly, we discussed the myriad difficulties surrounding the reporting of abusive relationships. The first challenge identified was how to encourage women and their children to come forward in the first place. Many flaws in the system were identified, one example being inappropriate police responses. It is vital that police and first responders are trained to be aware of cultural sensitivities in specific communities and to respond in a trauma-informed manner. Thirdly, we discussed the need for increased support for women on temporary visas. Too often, access to services is dependent on one's visa status. As a result, many victims of domestic violence are falling through the gaps. The refugee settlement sector is not funded to manage domestic violence issues and workers are not trained. We asked what steps can be taken to better support those on temporary visas to secure safe housing and become financially independent.

Finally, and crucially, the urgent need for a culturally appropriate case management service was identified as a priority. It is important to acknowledge that cultures are different and there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. Caseworkers need domestic violence specific training to be able to work holistically, with a wraparound service that joins the dots from early intervention to resolution. Participants of the roundtable worked in teams to delve deeper into these four themes. They drilled down to identify the gaps and ways to overcome them. The roundtable was buzzing with the passion and energy of women committed to finding solutions. We saw robust discussion as participants shared experiences from the grassroots and stories of victim-survivors. We are now in the process of formulating a report to present to the Government that summarises the recommendations and action points arising from the roundtable. We hope to gain a meeting with the Minister to present the report.

As members of Parliament, our job is to listen to those working at the coalface who know what their communities need. It was an honour to meet those hardworking, passionate women and acknowledge their important work supporting domestic violence victims from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I have been inspired by many of these women and have had the opportunity to witness their work. For example, I acknowledge Kittu Randhawa from the Indian Crisis and Support Agency, who did amazing work on the dowry abuse project in Blacktown. I also acknowledge Maha, Nemat and the incredible team from Muslim Women Australia for the work they put into the COVID-19 research project about domestic violence and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The roundtable also provided a wonderful opportunity for those working to support victim-survivors of domestic violence to sit down together to learn more about each other's work and how we can support each other in this important work of advocacy. I will take the recommendations and actions formulated at the roundtable to the Government, and I will continue to demand better support for women on temporary visas, better case management services that are culturally appropriate and better ways of breaking down the barriers to providing information to migrant and refugee women. I offer special thanks to the determined Dr Sabrin Farooqui and the peak organisation representatives who came to participate, especially Delia Donovan and Hayley Foster. I thank all those fantastic, inspiring women who attended and who work so hard in this space of preventing and responding to domestic violence. Each and every one of them plays a crucial role in bringing about long-overdue positive change.

## GARDENS OF STONE NATIONAL PARK AND MARANGAROO AND CARNE WEST SWAMPS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:23):** I recently visited the magnificent Gardens of Stone and Marangaroo and Carne West swamps with colleagues from the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Nature. The visit was an unforgettable opportunity to see a rare and precious part of New South Wales that, sadly, far too few people have seen themselves or even know about. The trip was organised by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW and was hosted by the Lithgow Environment Group, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Gardens of Stone Alliance. The Hon. Rose Jackson, the Hon. Catherine Cusack and Mr Justin Field and I saw firsthand the breathtaking Lost City pagodas, which tower over the sandstone valleys and canyons below. The area was badly affected by the bushfires of 2020-21 and again more recently by the storm events in March. However, it is slowly recovering—the landscape peppered with blackened eucalypts shooting green growth. The contrast of these majestic sandstone cliffs and the gently renewing bush is poignant, underscoring the enduring beauty of this unique landscape but also its fragility.

Our visit also included the beautiful Marangaroo and Carne West swamps. The difference between these two shrub swamps could not be more stark: Marangaroo remains lush and healthy, abuzz with life, while the Carne West swamp falters, its groundwater sapped by longwall mining from the nearby Springvale coalmine. Chris Jonkers, who is a local expert on the plateau, describes these precious shrub swamps as nature's kitchen, where insects, birds and mammals flock for food, water and sustenance. The swamp is around 18,000 years old. Prior to the extension of nearby mining underneath it, it was so dense with ferns that you could not walk through it and it was totally waterlogged. It is now bone dry, relying on rainwater to support its dwindling plant life. Longwall mining from the nearby mine has cracked the surface rock and is leaching water away. The lack of groundwater in the swamp crippled its capacity to recover from the bushfires of last year. Surveys have failed to find a single endangered Blue Mountains water skink in the swamp—just one of the species lost from this precious ecosystem.

Luckily, residents and community groups have been working on a proposal to save this area, campaigning to list the Ben Bullen, Wolgan and Newnes State forests as a State conservation area. It is a testament to the long campaign that has been run that it has won cautious support even of Centennial Coal, which operates the Springvale and Angus Place mines. I note that the environment Minister has also expressed support for the idea, although we are yet to see a firm commitment to make it a reality. Protecting this area as a State conservation area is important, but local residents and the organisations that make up the Gardens of Stone Alliance propose going even further: They have prepared an ambitious plan to invest \$32 million over 10 years for tourist facilities, lookouts, road upgrades and trails in what could make the area a world-class tourist destination to rival Katoomba. For me, this is the next Three Sisters.

The area is just two hours' drive from Sydney and 40 minutes from Katoomba and offers an incredible opportunity for a tourist economy. In addition to spectacular views, we could have bushwalking, picnicking, birdwatching, photography and camping, as well as rock climbing, abseiling and canyoning. The list goes on. Economic modelling suggests that protecting and investing in the area could attract up to 420,000 visitors a year to Lithgow, stimulate \$40 million a year in economic activity for the local community and create 260 full-time jobs. As mining communities like Lithgow move away from fossil fuels over the following decades, we need the vision and investment now to support local communities and to create local jobs through initiatives like these.

The strongest advocate in the Parliament for these proposals is the member for Blue Mountains, who for years has fought alongside community activists, local residents and environmental groups for stronger protections for the plateau and the magnificent pagodas of the Gardens of Stone. The advocates to save this precious and threatened piece of wilderness stretch from MPs such as the member for Blue Mountains to locals including Leo Williams, Nahla Campbell and Penny Easton who set up a lemonade stall to raise money for the effort to preserve the Lost City. Leo is a passionate young environmentalist, and he sent me a beautiful drawing of the pagodas. I thank Leo, Nahla and Penny for their passionate advocacy and their commitment to their local area. I call on the State Government and the environment Minister to do more than just talk about the proposal. It is time to listen to local residents and get this done. It is more than just doing the right thing for the environment; it is doing the right thing for the people of New South Wales.

## SILVER CHAIN PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (20:28):** I note from the outset that I offer these words on behalf of one of my local constituents whose mother recently passed away from cancer of the pancreas. Rae wanted to die at home, not in a hospital, neither public nor private. She just wanted to die at home. She had family members who were going to ensure that her final wishes were going to be met. Rae came home from hospital on 25 March 2021 and died on 5 May 2021, in her own home. This was done with the assistance of Cessnock District Health Palliative Care Service, which was amazing, and for 3½ weeks of the nearly six weeks by Silver Chain palliative care, which provided the personal care specifically needed by an end-of-life patient.

Every palliative care staff member who attended Rae's home was professional, caring, empathetic and compassionate. Nothing was too much trouble, no question went unanswered and no contact was ignored, be it day or night. For Rae or any of her family members their presence and inquiries were welcome. Silver Chain palliative care service will cease to exist in the Hunter in just a few weeks: on 1 July 2021. This wonderful organisation, which provides world-class services, will no longer be plying its trade in the Hunter. Obviously the decision-makers who chose to fail to fund this service in the future have never had someone they love need this service; if they had, this travesty never would have happened.

There is a huge difference between palliative personal care needs, and home care and support services personal care. They are two different beasts. Rae experienced both in the last 41 days of her life after being discharged from hospital to go home to die in her own home as per her wishes. Both services have wonderful caring staff but the patient needs are so very different when the patient is at end of life and requires specialised palliative care. Silver Chain staff worked with palliative care staff. They contacted them to discuss Rae's treatment and to let them know their observations and of any changes they had observed. Silver Chain staff too were professional, caring, empathetic and compassionate. That was not only so that Rae could be comfortable but also so that her husband of 63 years, her children and her grandchildren, who were providing her with care, could be welcomed, warmed and comforted during this time.

Silver Chain's care provided Rae with dignity, gentleness, humour, honesty and safety in her dying days, for which her family will be forever grateful. "The loss of the Silver Chain service to our Hunter community is immeasurable," my constituent writes, "for anyone who is unfortunate enough to contract a terminal illness and wants to die in their home." The experienced palliative staff of Silver Chain will be lost or underutilised if they are not used solely in this specialised field of palliative care. We would not ask a general practitioner to perform a heart operation or an optometrist to perform a hip replacement, so why do decision-makers consider it acceptable to let specialist palliative care services cease to ply their specialised trade?

There are not enough accolades for the care and support provided by both Cessnock District Health Palliative Care Service and Silver Chain palliative care for Rae and her family. The loss of Silver Chain will be felt by many families in our community for years to come. Decision-makers should look at all aspects of their decisions, not just the bottom line. I can only hope that they do not have to make the choice that it is preferable to die in a hospital because there are insufficient services available for them to remain at home if that is their dying wish. I offer these words on behalf of my constituents.

#### STATE OF ORIGIN AND PENRITH PANTHERS

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (20:33):** It is State of Origin night—the first origin of the year. It is an opportunity for me to recognise just how important Penrith has been in the creation of the State of Origin team this year. I am an immensely proud member for Penrith and we are without doubt a rugby league town. The work that has been done by the young men from the Penrith team who are now representing the State of New South Wales—and Queensland—to have seven players from the Penrith Panthers team involved in the State of Origin is an extraordinary achievement.

Most importantly, it is recognition of the amazing work, tenacity, work ethic and resilience of each of those individuals, starting with Nathan Cleary, who is the halfback and leader of the Penrith team. He is a young guy who I first met as a St Dominic's student coming through the junior ranks and who is now emerging as a genuine superstar of the Rugby League competition. The work that Nathan has done in the community, the leadership he has demonstrated and his personal growth to become the person he is now is something that we all behold. I see the way that he is motivated to change people across our community.

Isaah Yeo is a young kid from Dubbo who made his way to Penrith through our academy program. He oozes leadership and is such a fantastic guy. He is the person people want to be around and the guy who sets the standard. He demanded that he get picked for State of Origin. It was fantastic that he got to break into the side last year. To be in the starting line-up this year is a recognition of his fantastic work. Jarome Luai oozes confidence and always has a smile on his face. He always looks like he is having a great time on the field. He is the person players want to be next to and be around. He brings so much energy to the Penrith team. I hear from "Freddy" Fittler and all the guys who are involved in the New South Wales team about how much energy Jarome Luai has brought to the team. I have absolutely no doubt that we are seeing the start of a fantastic State of Origin career.

Liam Martin is the "Temora terrier". The member for Cootamundra is in the Chamber so I have to say to her that we are claiming the Temora terrier as a son of Penrith tonight, particularly as he is putting on his first blue jersey. This guy works harder than anyone else. He has decided that it does not matter what level of talent anyone else has; if he works harder than every other person he will be able to perform his best and get to the absolute peak of his potential. That is an unbelievable message for anything in life. Liam Martin sets that standard with his work ethic.

Brian To'o has one of the absolute great rugby league stories. I still remember being in the change rooms with this young man after he played his first game and saying to him that he belonged in first grade rugby league. It is not only his energy and enthusiasm but also what he has been able to do in a short period. If he is not the most improved rugby player in the National Rugby League competition, I will give away being a rugby league fan. He has broken records for run metres and post-contact metres. All the statistics people love this guy. He has basically said, "I am the best winger in the competition this year. You have to pick me." He is built for State of Origin—this is a guy who is wider than he is tall and he will not let a single soul down. The thing that most stands out for me about Brian To'o is how committed he is to his family through the support he has shown them with his salary, and his commitment to his faith and his community. The things that this guy does away from the footy field, which we will never really hear about, speak to his character. I have no doubt that he has a hugely bright future ahead of him.

Apisai Koroisau, the eighteenth man in the New South Wales team, is the hooker for the Penrith side. He has plenty of speed and darts out of dummy half all the time. He really sets up the play. I hope he gets plenty of opportunities on the field over the course of this State of Origin side. He is absolutely critical to the future of the Penrith team. Kurt Capewell is unfortunately playing for the wrong team tonight by donning the Queensland jersey. A couple of weeks ago I got to sit at the Penrith game with his parents, who are such lovely people. They are so passionate and committed to him and his football career. I am really pleased that he has been able to find a fantastic home at Penrith. That opportunity has given him the chance to play State of Origin football. Many people may not have thought that was possible but last year he showed that he was a State of Origin player. His personal commitment to his career should be something that he absolutely takes credit for. It is definitely the Penrith Blues this year.

### LUGARNO GREENSPACE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:38):** On behalf of residents of Lugarno and the broader St George community, I extend my support in making the Glenlee property an intergenerational public green space for all to enjoy. The Glenlee property, also known as Lugarno Farm, has been preserved by the Matthei family since 1910 but the strong evidence of Indigenous occupation demonstrates that the history of this space is far greater. The rich social and cultural ancestry should be enshrined as a place of beauty and reflection, not a subdivision of 31 properties. We must acknowledge that this space is currently listed on the National Trust of Australia (NSW) register as part of the Lugarno Early Settlers Local Heritage Precinct. The entire premise of this protection is to safeguard the custodianship of heritage sites and places of historical significance. By selling this land for financial gain we are selling out the values of the Lugarno community, which have been passed down through generations of local residents. No two parcels of land are the same and we cannot treat it as such.

Almost half of this area is covered in undisturbed tall blackbutt eucalypt bushland, which has been classified as possessing high ecological value. This site acts as a filter to protect the Georges River from stormwater run-off and it is home to locally rare echidnas, swamp wallabies and other wildlife. We cannot afford to interfere in the biodiversity and natural ecosystem of this area. If this site becomes repurposed for housing, the natural beauty of Lugarno and the Georges River will be damaged forever. This is not a matter that can be taken lightly. My community has called for action and I am determined to do everything that I can to ensure that this green space can be a precinct where our natural ecosystem and cultural history can thrive.

Lugarno is a close-knit community, with just over 5,000 residents consisting of 1,600 families. This is not an appropriate suburb for large-scale development, and the burden that this would place on local infrastructure has not been properly accounted for. The latest findings from the 2021-22 intergenerational report from NSW Treasury anticipates that our State's population will grow by 3.3 million people before the year 2061. In order to plan for the future, we must protect our green spaces and do what we can to provide our children with the same, if not greater, recreational and environmental opportunities than we had. More locally, the feedback that I receive from the community on a daily basis dictates that we do not want more development. Whether it be additional high rise along the Riverwood rail corridor or increased development along the Oatley foreshore, I have always staunchly opposed inappropriate overdevelopment; this case at Lugarno is no different.

I have written to the mayor of the Georges River Council, Kevin Greene, and the member for Banks, David Coleman, as well as to a number of State Ministers in this House, including the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean; the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Rob Stokes; the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey; and the Special Minister of State and Aboriginal affairs Minister, Don Harwin, in the other place, to exhaust all possible avenues of support. I understand the costs and procedures involved make this process difficult, but it is not impossible. The benefits of this potential community and environmental precinct far outweigh these restricting factors.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to increase public green space in Lugarno for the benefit of the entire St George community and it is one that we cannot miss out on. I sincerely hope that all levels of government

can work together to ensure that this space can become a community precinct that enshrines our local cultural history for generations to come. That is what our community is demanding and that is exactly what I will continue to fight for. This week we have launched a petition, which many people have already signed in support of this fight.

### SWANSEA ELECTORATE PARAMEDICS

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (20:43):** Tonight I address the concerns of local paramedic workers within the Swansea electorate. Sadly, this Government is failing not just our paramedics but also our communities. Paramedics consistently find themselves short-staffed, skipping meals, working overtime or being assigned to stations out of their area to cover shortages. In the Swansea electorate, Doyalson ambulance station staff are constantly reassigned to cover vacancies at other stations. This is depleting staff levels at the Doyalson ambulance station on a near-daily basis, even though the station has recently hired several extra staff. Despite extra staff having been hired, no additional facilities have been added to the station. There is also insufficient parking on the site to accommodate the additional staff.

In announcing the additional 750 paramedic and call centre staff as part of the 2018-19 budget, the Government also promised \$72 million in capital works. Why has none of this been spent at Doyalson ambulance station? The staffing issues plaguing the sector were clearly highlighted on Monday night when the Hunter region found itself 10 members short and unable to fill the vacancies. The Government is simply not doing enough to address this urgent issue and it is the community that is ultimately paying the price. The latest Bureau of Health Information's *Healthcare Quarterly* for October to December 2020 showed an increase in ambulance wait times for the Lake Macquarie east zone. The median wait time for an ambulance to arrive for people in life-threatening situations has increased, as has the percentage of people waiting more than 15 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in P1 cases. This mirrors the statewide figures in the P1 category, which show a 3.4 per cent drop in ambulances arriving within 15 minutes and a 1 per cent drop in ambulances arriving within 30 minutes.

This is not just an issue within the electorate of Swansea; it is statewide. The New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission has found that the system is being stretched by sparse rostering, leading to a blowout in wait times. The New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission recently recommended that NSW Ambulance should be required to increase the amount of paramedics rostered on at any time, but this will not come into effect until 2 July 2021. The commission heard that crews were working overtime and stations were being understaffed. This has resulted in paramedics missing breaks and scheduled COVID-19 vaccine appointments as a result of the increased workload. Not only have paramedics been forced to work overtime to maintain staffing levels but they received a further setback when they too fell victim to the Berejiklian Government's public sector wage cuts. These workers were promised a 2.5 per cent pay rise after being awarded just a 0.3 per cent pay rise last year, only to have the Treasurer to rip the rug out from under them by limiting public sector wage rises to 1.5 per cent. Why did the Government sign up to a 2.5 per cent pay rise only to then betray these workers? They deserve an answer from the Treasurer today.

I can assure the House that paramedics have had enough of the disrespect from this Government. That is why they are taking a day of industrial action on 10 June, which follows industrial action taken by nurses at Belmont Hospital last week in response to the Berejiklian Government's pay cuts. I stand in solidarity with paramedic workers across the State in calling for adequate staffing of each station and for the Berejiklian Government to deliver on the promised 2.5 per cent pay rise. These are the people who Government members refer to as "heroes", yet they are being absolutely denied the rightful pay that they work hard for and deserve. I also acknowledge the hard work of the unions that represent the paramedics, nurses and midwives in this State, particularly those in the electorate of Swansea.

### TAXI INDUSTRY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:47):** Today I bring to the attention of the House how the taxi industry is continuing to be let down by the Berejiklian Government, specifically in my electorate of Lakemba. So many of my constituents have been left unable to provide a financially secure future for their families because of the actions, and now inaction, of this Government. This is an issue that I and many of my colleagues have raised repeatedly. Yet the Government continues to drag the chain and leave many taxi drivers and owners struggling to survive. These are people who invested in taxi licences as the key part of their retirement plan because they put their faith in the Government's sensible regulation of the industry. People took out huge loans to buy a taxi licence for up to \$400,000, often making a decision between buying a house or investing in a sole trader business such as this. Now, after the Government's reforms, they are left with a loan for hundreds of thousands of dollars and a licence that is worth only a fraction of that.

In May 2021 licences were trading for an average of \$53,100. That is an absolutely heartbreaking situation for these hardworking families to be left in. When one considers the increase in value of property in the Lakemba

electorate, it is further distressing. People take risks in business but, generally speaking, an investment in government-managed business is considered to be pretty safe. The Government's response was to set up the independent review of the point to point transport industry led by Sue Baker-Finch, announced in October 2019. The report following the review made 24 recommendations. While the Government has committed to reforms to address these recommendations, it has been a painfully slow process—a process that is affecting people's lives. But these families who rely on the taxi industry are still waiting. Ms Baker-Smith completed the report in six months and yet the Government took seven months to release it. The Minister responded to the report in late February 2021; we are now still waiting for the reforms to be taken forward.

The taxi industry plays a huge role in my community, with many drivers and taxi licence owners living in my electorate. We have so many drivers and owners who are just trying to make a living for their family, and the Government has pulled the rug out from under them. Taxi drivers have been neglected and left behind by this Government. So many taxi drivers have come to me desperately asking for answers as to why this Government would do this and why they have seen their life savings effectively destroyed. Recently, one taxi driver and licence owner came to my office and shared his experience of this Government's damaging reforms. He lives in Punchbowl with his wife and is a father of three with another on the way. He is the main provider for his family and the changes by this Government are taking a heavy toll on his family, as they are with so many families in a similar position across the State. His father was a taxidriver for 35 years and in 2005, when his father decided to retire, he took the opportunity and decided to take over from his father and start working in the taxi industry.

At this time, his licence plate was valued at around \$350,000. Today, he could not sell the licence. He asked me, "Who in their right mind would pay \$70,000 for a licence plate?" The Government has destroyed his desire to drive. He has had to change jobs and work wherever he can because the stress and pressure of this Government's changes have become too much. I will be clear: This constituent owns the plates but works a job in a completely different industry because he needs to put food on his children's plates. It is very clear taxidrivers and taxi plate owners need compensation.

Since the Government's announcement that it will be implementing reforms arising from the report, families have been waiting anxiously for any news or announcement from the Minister. Unfortunately, we have heard nothing. Once again, the Government has left the taxi industry behind. Our taxidrivers have worked so hard to make a living and deserve better. I call on the Minister to make this a priority. He should just be transparent and tell the industry when he is going to get around to these reforms. I call on the Government to properly compensate affected licence owners so that they are not left effectively funding the Government's reforms from their own pocket, through their lost income and an almost worthless asset. Families of the taxi industry, like those in my electorate of Lakemba, should be made whole and not have massive mortgages on licences bought before the Government's reforms.

The world has changed—I get it. The gig economy has changed economics and I get that too. But at the heart of an economy are people and these people have not just been let down, they have been discarded by a heartless Government. If this Government, as they say, cares for people, then it is time to replace the words with deeds. Let's be fair, let's sort out this mess that the Government has created and let's do it once and for all. Let us make sure there is a place for everyone but make it fair. This is the absolute heart of everything that keeps coming back to me. These families have been treated unfairly. They have bought an investment instead of buying a house. It was meant to be their superannuation and now they are left with something virtually worthless and they are yet to hear from the Minister. I call on the Minister to address these reforms as soon as possible.

### THORNTON PRECINCT

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:52):** I am pleased to update the House on a meeting that I held on 23 May in my electorate of Maitland about the Thornton traffic precinct. I have raised this issue on a number of occasions with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and I have also been raising it through the media as a result of many people in my community raising their concerns with what is going on there. To put it in a nutshell, you really just need to know two numbers. The first is \$167 million. That is \$167 million that the people in the 2322 postcode have sent down to the New South Wales Treasury coffers in stamp duty in one year—2017-18. The second is \$51 million. That is what the council asked the Government to give back through the funding processes to repair and upgrade the infrastructure that enables those people to live in that locality. Now, \$167 million in one year for any suburb in stamp duty is just incredible. That year it was second only to the Sydney CBD. In most years most suburbs would probably spend a maximum of \$20 million to \$40 million on stamp duty. It is an extraordinarily high level of growth. It is one indicator of the growth in that electorate.

Those are the numbers, but what is the reality for the people who are living in this situation? I asked people at this meeting to share with me the impact on their lives of this congestion that they are experiencing. One person in the meeting said that they moved to the electorate of Maitland 17 years ago for a quiet time. It used to take them 35 minutes to travel to see their doctor in Newcastle. Now it takes them one hour and 30 minutes as a result

of congestion. Many of the intersections are not fit for purpose. Another woman talked about trying to get to her children in child care because when she is delayed in traffic and late to pick up her children there are significant late fees to pay, so as a casual worker, for every half-hour that she stays back at work she is actually being penalised more than she is being paid.

Casual workers travel to Wallsend—the electorate just next door—taking an hour and 15 minutes. It takes 40 minutes to get out of the suburb. Up until a couple of years ago this journey took three to five minutes. It is just ridiculous. The whole trip is a 20-kilometre trip. Imagine taking an hour and 15 minutes to travel 20 kilometres in a regional area in New South Wales. If people cannot get to work, they cannot get paid. People have told me that it is taking them two hours and 10 minutes to get from Newcastle to Thornton. There is only one bridge in Thornton. It is a tiny little bridge. Back in 2009, before the former member for Maitland was elected to this place, she said it must be duplicated before any more housing could be approved. What has happened since then? In 2012, when she was the member for Maitland, that cap was removed so that more and more developments are going in there. The Thornton precinct is one of the fastest-growing areas in the State; traffic is being pushed through the eye of a needle

The Labor Government started the duplication back in 2010, but in 10 years this Government has failed to complete it. People are blaming the council. It is this State Government that should be wearing the responsibility for that—10 years and not one cent. I have put together a graphic, which shows the major upgrades to Maitland State roads in the 10 years to 2011 by NSW Labor: Metford Underpass, \$12.9 million; Weakleys Drive Overpass, \$51.8 million; Thornton Rail Bridge, \$12 million; 3rd River Crossing, \$65 million; Hunter Expressway, \$200 million—\$341 million in less than 10 years. It also shows the Liberals' last 10 years: Maitland Railway half a roundabout, \$51 million; Tocal Road \$1.2 million; Weakleys Drive Lights, \$14 million; New England Highway duplication, \$14 million; Testers Hollow, \$2 million—\$82 million. It is a disgrace. Fix our roads.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DON CARTER**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:57):** I pay tribute to a local legend of the Menai region, Don Carter, who sadly passed away on Monday night. Mr Temporary Speaker, I am glad you are in the chair now to hear this tribute. I know you also knew Don really well as the member for Heathcote. For as long as I can remember, the Carter family name has been synonymous with the 2234 region of the Sutherland shire. In fact, Carter Road in Menai is named after Don's family, who settled in the area in the early 1900s. His parents and grandparents ran a large poultry farm between Menai Road and Shackle Road when the region had little to no community infrastructure, and a school with only one teacher. His father and mother founded the first Menai Scouts and Menai Cub Scouts, and Don became a King Scout in 1950. The whole Carter family have given so much to our area for over a century with Don and his twin brother, Len, being no exception to the idea of service.

Don was a passionate and dedicated advocate for our local area, founding the local Apex and Rotary clubs and serving our community during many of our most difficult times through the Menai Rural Fire Brigade. Don and Len's involvement with the Rural Fire Service started off early in their lives, assisting their father, a founder of the Menai Rural Fire Brigade, from the age of 10 before officially signing up in 1948 at the age of 16. Don was captain of the Menai brigade for 45 years, making him one of the longest-serving captains in the organisation. He also served as deputy group captain from 1987 to 1992. When you add his brother's service to the picture, I am sure you can imagine the honour board at their fire station.

Over Don's 73 years of service in the Rural Fire Service he was awarded multiple awards to highlight his dedication to assisting and protecting our local community. They include the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004, the RFS Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery in 1999, the National Medal Fourth Clasp in 2005 and the Long Service Medal for 60 years of service in 2011. His passion for our local area and his experience in fighting fires saw him successfully advocate for new subdivisions to have bushfire protection measures, or asset protection zones, included in their design. Those measures included perimeter roads and trails. In 1983 Don set his sights on helping his community in another way: by successfully running as an Independent for Sutherland Shire Council. Don served for 12 years on the council, from 1983 until 1995, including a term as president, from 1990 to 1991.

Don achieved many things on the council. He advocated for his local area and for Sutherland shire as a whole, as well as for more support to be provided for the RFS, including for category 1 tankers for the fire brigades. In addition to providing the council's support for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, he also created one of the Sutherland shire's most important international ties through the sister city arrangement with Chuo City in Tokyo, which was established in 1991 and included a student exchange program that has operated ever since. I was proud to support that sister city arrangement during my time on the council. Don's hard work and passion was again recognised in 2004 when he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the Rural Fire Service and to local government, a recognition that was rightly deserved.

I knew Don for 17 years. I first met him when I was elected to the council and continued to work with him in my role as the local member, including when the team moved into their new fire station at Barden Ridge. Our work continued more recently in my role as the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services. I have had a lot to do with Don and I will miss him. He was an absolute character and a real gentleman. He has given so much service and time to our community. I am glad to hear that, as a mark of respect, flags at all the shire Rural Fire Service stations were flown at half-mast on Tuesday. I pass on my sincere thanks to Don's family and friends for providing him with the support to play such a large role in our community. Don gave up so much time to make such a difference. I also offer my condolences, thoughts and prayers during what must be a difficult time for his family. We have lost a giant of the Menai region, but Don's memory and love for helping people will live on. Vale, Don Carter.

### DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (21:02):** Recently I spoke about honesty, openness and transparency, which is paramount in any pecuniary interest declaration lodged by local government councillors or mayors. To see how transparent the Fairfield City Council's returns were, I made an application under the provisions of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009—GIPA Act—requesting the disclosure of interest returns for the mayor. I received the relevant returns for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 as well as 2019 and 2020. I asked only for the mayor's returns as I was informed that, whichever councillor's forms I requested, they would all be given to me in the same format. Upon receiving the returns, I was shocked to find that all relevant information a person would require to make a judgement as to whether properties or trusts owned by councillors or the mayor were used for rezoning or development approval purposes were redacted—everything.

I understand that people want to keep their properties and sources of income private, but when you are in a position to rezone areas or approve developments in an electorate I believe the community you represent and the media have a right to hold you accountable for your actions. They must have full access to all relevant information so that honesty and transparency can be seen to have been done. If you do not agree with that principle, then do not stand for public office. When I made inquiries into why Fairfield City Council redacted the whole return, I was informed that each council interprets the legislation as it sees fit. I made inquiries about other councils and found that some provide the whole return without redaction, while others make you come in to view the returns with a staff member looking on to make sure that no copies are taken. However, some councils provide their information without redaction on the web, which may be viewed at any time.

The returns of all members of Parliament are available on the web. There is no need for a GIPA request and no information is redacted—not even our addresses or our signatures. That is honesty and transparency. When I asked why Fairfield City Council redacted certain information, I was told that the councillors were worried about their personal safety and the safety of their families. If that is the case, why do councillors on other councils and members of Parliament not have the same concerns? Redactions could be used to hide pecuniary interests from the public. I call on the Minister for Local Government to look closely at the anomaly of Fairfield City Council redacting everything on the pecuniary interest forms. The council may as well give the general public a blank piece of paper—that is all the returns are worth. I call on the Minister to mandate the easy access to pecuniary interest returns for councillors, mayors and designated persons on the council's homepage.

To achieve that, the requirement must be reinstated under chapter 14 of the Local Government Act. At the moment, the obligation exists in the model code of conduct, which can be manipulated by councillors to suit their own agendas. In addition, I ask that a provision be inserted into chapter 14 requiring that a copy of a return be made publically available on the council's website within a specified time of it being lodged. I also ask that amendments be made to the appropriate regulations to ensure that disclosure requirements are in line with those of members of Parliament. The issue is far too serious for the Minister to ignore. How can the community be satisfied that there is no skulduggery going on if all property and business interests are redacted? What do the councillors have to hide? It is high time the Local Government Act was amended in the interests of honesty, openness and transparency.

### VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (21:07):** This year from 17 to 23 May we celebrated National Volunteer Week. It is an opportunity for us to call out the volunteers who are at the heart of our community. Waverley Council hosted its annual Local Hero Awards as part of those celebrations. I will profile the award winners from the electorate of Vaucluse and thank them for their generosity in helping others. First up, Sondra Beram of Vaucluse received a Certificate of Commendation in the Strengthening Community category for her role in organising the Bondi Gives Back initiative, which raised \$40,000 for victims of the 2020 bushfires. As the owner of Bru Cafe in North Bondi, she uses the cafe to raise funds for various charities and local social service organisations. Well done and thank you to Sondra.

The Local Hero Award in the Community Volunteer category went to Belinda Head from North Bondi, who for the past three years has volunteered as treasurer at the WIRES East Branch. Belinda is an active animal rescuer. She has rescued over 100 animals and looked after them in her North Bondi home before releasing them back into the wild. She is also a volunteer with our local Woollahra Public School. The Second Nature Champion award is given to individuals who have made a significant voluntary contribution to environmental sustainability. This year the award went to Kit Shepherd from Bondi for her role as convenor of Transition Bondi, which she has held since 2012. Kit is not only a volunteer; she has also recruited many volunteers over the years through her passion and dedication.

The 2021 Local Hero Award for the Working Together category went to the WIRES eastern branch, which is one of 20 NSW WIRES branches. It has actively helped rehabilitate and preserve our local nature wildlife for over 35 years. The branch is made up of over 180 volunteers, who make themselves available 24/7 to help sick or injured local wildlife. The Working Together Certificate of Commendation went to the Wilderness Society Eastside Community Group. The group has contributed significantly to the network of individual Wilderness Society community groups across the country during its five years of service. We are lucky to have our local wildlife so well cared for. These awardees are the driving force behind so many of our local community organisations that I have grown to know and love, so it was fitting that we celebrated their dedication during our volunteer week.

There are so many other amazing volunteers and community organisations in my electorate. I will highlight some of them tonight. Firstly, there are our surf clubs: North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club led by president Andrew Christopher, and Bondi Surf Bathing Life Saving Club led by president Brent Jackson. Then there are our SES volunteers at the NSW SES Waverley-Woollahra Unit led by Commander Kim Edwards. There is the Holdsworth Community Centre in Woollahra, which looks after children and adults living with intellectual disabilities; Bondi Icebergs Club led by president Lynne Fitzsimons; Bondi Amateur Swimming Club led by president Peter Quartly; Our Big Kitchen, which many members know, led by Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin and his wonderful wife, Rebbetzin Laya Slavin, in Bondi. COA Sydney has been previously mentioned many times in the House. It is led by CEO Rachel Tanny, who provides care, meals and social support for our local Jewish seniors.

There is my local cricket club, Eastern Suburbs Cricket Club, led by the famous Jim Maxwell, AM, who is the president, and vice-president Peter Lovitt; JewishCare led by president Jason Sandler and CEO Gary Groves; Jewish House led by president Roger Clifford, OAM, and CEO Rabbi Mendel Kastel, OAM, who we all know; Sydney Friendship Circle led by executive director Rabbi Sender Kavka and his wife, Chana, who is the director of community engagement; Rose Bay Rotary Club with president Grace Spyrou and her team; and Bondi Lions Club with president Gus Milner and its board. There is the 3rd Rose Bay (Judean) Scout Group led by Leon Waxman, who is such a wonderful man. There are the local sailing clubs: the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Double Bay Sailing Club, Vaucluse Amateur 12Ft Sailing Club, Woollahra Sailing Club and Vaucluse Yacht Club at Watsons Bay. There is Mum for Mum led by Nadene Alhadeff. I could mention so many other groups, but I do not have time tonight. During National Volunteer Week, I thank every one of them for building my community.

## NURSES

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:12):** Tonight I give voice to workers who are not being heard by the Government. Nurses are not only the front line of our health system but they are also its backbone. Throughout the COVID pandemic, our nurses have stood up and kept our communities safe and strong. Politicians from across the spectrum have paid tribute to them time and time again. But, sadly, for some in Parliament that is all they are willing to pay. Government Ministers and MPs, and even the Premier, have taken every opportunity to stand in front of television cameras and praise our nurses and call them heroes. But when they have gone back to their offices, they have signed off on pay cuts for our nurses instead. Nurses who live in Port Stephens and across the Hunter and the State have all effectively taken a pay cut under this Government. Their real wages are going backwards. They are working harder for longer, with fewer resources and less money in their back pockets.

On Monday this week dozens of nurses travelled to Parliament to meet with parliamentarians. They met at the back of the Parliament. They spoke with media about their experiences and advocated for their colleagues, their patients and our communities. They were calm and dignified but determined to tell their stories. They booked a big room in Parliament and invited all MPs to come and meet with them. But not a single Liberal or National Party MP turned up. There are 65 Liberal and National Party MPs in the Parliament. Not a single one turned up to listen to those nurses, to hear about their experiences or to even say thank you to them. Incredible nurses live and work in Port Stephens—men and women working in hospitals and the community; specialist nurses, those with decades of experience; and brand new assistants in nursing. They all tell me the same thing: They need more help from the Government.

It is not all about money, although their real wages certainly deserve to grow. They need more resources. They need more time to train and support others. They need extra boots on the ground so they can deliver the quality care that their patients deserve and that they want to deliver. They need nurse-to-patient ratios. Babies need to be covered and counted as patients. At Tomaree Hospital in my electorate, nurses are doing everything. They are covering the emergency department, triaging patients, treating patients, looking after the patients on the ward, monitoring those inpatients, trying to convince the rostered doctor to turn up, offering advice to patients who are ill and scared and their families, and arranging transfers to our tertiary hospital in Newcastle. They are doing the lot.

But they cannot be expected to work like this. The Government should not treat our nurses like this. Our community should not experience the consequences of the underfunded, under-resourced, overstretched health system, but they are. On Monday a midwife spoke of being at breaking point. The Government expects her to look after five mums and five babies all on her own in one shift. They are complex cases—mums and babies with complications who need constant monitoring. At any one time she is responsible for 10 patients, who are all vulnerable. At night she is looking after eight mums and eight babies. So there are 16 patients on one shift all under her responsibility and care. The stakes are high every single shift. If something goes wrong, people's lives are changed forever. But the Government is setting up our nurses to fail.

The nurses told us of stories of violence directed towards them at work without adequate protection. A mental health nurse even suffered cervical spine injuries after being assaulted by a patient. Does she feel appreciated when the Government turns around and gives her colleagues and her an effective pay cut, and when it expects her and her colleagues to do more and more with less and less? The nurse attended the meeting here in Parliament in her own time in order to stand up and demand better from this Government. And she was not alone. There was a room full of nurses whose vocation is to care for others. I was shocked to see every hand in the room rise when asked who else had suffered violence in their workplace.

We heard that most nurses work through their meal breaks. They are lucky to have time to go to the toilet. They want everyone to know that the system is breaking and that they are breaking. It is being held together by their goodwill and it is not good enough. I thank all the nurses who live and work in Port Stephens, everyone who visited Parliament House this week and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for supporting its members to raise their voices and tell their stories. As a community, we should demand that the Government value the work nurses do. We all value their work. The Government has to start doing the same.

### CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE INVESTMENT

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:17):** When it comes to how much money the New South Wales Government takes from the Hunter and what it gives back, the balance sheet has long been running a deficit for the Hunter. When it comes to the Charlestown electorate, it is the same story: The Government takes but it never gives back. Since 2011 more than \$134 million has been collected in stamp duty from the 2290 postcode, which only covers part of the Charlestown electorate. What have we got back? Our social housing at Windale is not fit for purpose and the waitlist for social housing is 10 years. Hillsborough Road is so congested people cannot even get out of their own suburb in order to get to work or school and 11 of our public schools are over enrolled.

Yet here we have a plan by Landcom to sell off and bulldoze some 12 hectares of bushland along Myall Road in Cardiff and Garden Suburb at 19A Myall Road for a development of 66 residential lots and three super lots that was approved by the regional planning panel. This is a multimillion-dollar development but will it meet the needs of current and future residents? Will the profits be reinvested in local infrastructure, including roads, schools and public transport, or will it just put added pressure on existing infrastructure? This bushland is well loved by locals for bushwalks and is right in the heart of northern Lake Macquarie. The proposed development will impact a further 28 hectares beyond the 12 that will be cleared. It is not surprising that a number of locals have expressed concerns to me about the proposed development, with a range of potential issues being raised. A gentleman wrote to me saying:

I recently moved back to the area because of the amount of established bushland. I believe what little natural environments we have left ought to be protected. Mindless destruction of sensitive flora and fauna should not happen. This is not just for my sake but also for future generations to enjoy and benefit from. Natural habitats are not as resilient to society's needs for unsustainable growth as many seem to think. This rich and established bushland should be protected as the dense habitat supports the bustling flora and fauna within it.

Another person wrote to me saying:

We can't let this precious habitat, home to many threatened species, be destroyed. It's also enjoyed by many local people for recreation, myself included and makes up part of our vital green belt through Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

Another person wrote to me and said:

The large area that this subdivision sits amongst is documented as being suitable habitat for 16 Threatened Bird species, 7 Threatened Mammal species, 5 migratory bird species. 1 x known threatened flora ... and suitable habitat for 2 other flora. ... Nine of these are Regionally significant species/communities of flora and fauna. The Powerful Owl is just one but the most likely to be affected the most. The continued fragmentation of good quality forest and woodlands by subdivisions, roads and industrial areas around the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas is placing all of them at risk.

Another person wrote to me saying:

This project ... will cause a huge amount of ongoing concern, not only now, but into the future.

The bushland tag to be destroyed is one of the few central Newcastle bushland reserves remaining. ... The flora and fauna are unique and the bushland creates an extremely unique link for wildlife between Glenrock, Blackbutt and Lakeside. ... It will congest Myall Road further, the traffic junctions on either end of Myall Road, the access to Myall Road and peak hour traffic are already unmanageable.

Those people are not able to come into this Parliament and say those things. They have asked me to do that, and I am committed to doing so. I ask that the Government ensure that the development, when Landcom undertakes it, takes those people's totally valid and real concerns into consideration as the development progresses. As I said, I am committed to being a voice for those people in Parliament and their issues have to be acted upon.

**The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 21:24 until Thursday 10 June at 9:30.**