



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 14 October 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 14 October 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

ELECTRONIC NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The SPEAKER: I thank all members who have lodged notices of motion electronically over the past three days. The system is working efficiently and fairly, from my assessment. I appreciate the cooperation.

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 12 October 2021

No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2021-091B]

Page 2, clause 2(1), lines 5 and 6. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), this Act commences on assent.

No. 2 GOVT No. 2 [c2021-091B]

Page 2, clause 2(2), line 7. Omit "subsections (3) and (4)". Insert instead "subsection (3)".

No. 3 GOVT No. 3 [c2021-091B]

Page 2, clause 2(4), line 16. Omit all words on the line.

No. 4 GRN No. 1 [c2021-083D]

Page 14, Schedule 5.2, lines 12 and 13. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

Omit "to another Act and an Act" from section 30A(1).

Insert instead "to another Act or statutory rule and an Act or statutory rule".

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (09:31): I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (09:31): I note that the Opposition will not oppose the amendments passed in the other place. I put on the record my concern, after speaking to NSW Farmers yesterday, that the consultation that was promised three months ago in the Chamber has not happened. I understand the Deputy Premier has been busy and the COVID pandemic is ongoing, but I hope we can get some real consultation on those bills. If the amendments to the Act take effect from assent rather than from proclamation, the opportunity for consultation by the Minister and now Deputy Premier—congratulations—will be severely limited. I urge the Deputy Premier to hurry up and do the consultation. Business support for farmers has been constrained by the 50 per cent rule. We know now it is an imperfect measure but we are still applying it to the way they can pay for their vehicles. It is an important issue for farmers in the State and I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads to please hurry up with the consultation. We really need it.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022

Debate resumed from 13 October 2021.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (09:33): As my contribution to the budget estimates debate was interrupted yesterday, there are still some issues to go through. As I mentioned yesterday, the \$695 million

brand-new hospital is a great plus. It is currently under construction, with a completion date of 2022 and an opening date of 2023, and will lift our bed capacity from 220 beds up to 490 beds. That is a great plus. Another great plus is the commitment by our previous Deputy Premier to create free car parking at the new Tweed Valley Hospital. He has committed to that on a number of occasions and we have had discussions with the Hon. Brad Hazzard, coming together on this important issue.

I cannot go much further on this matter without thanking Adam Hall from the Health Services Union [HSU]. He has been a great and loyal advocate as well. We often praise our doctors and nurses in our hospitals, but we should also praise the other staff: the catering, security and cleaning staff. Hospitals could not operate without them and I pay tribute to those people. We are looking forward to the new car parking construction. Car parking at hospitals is a major issue, whether here in the city or in the regions. I am looking forward to it because it will greatly enhance the ability of people to seek treatment.

I praise the Government for continuing the Dine & Discover vouchers. They have been a great plus for the regions and are popularly taken up. I note there have been further announcements about the vouchers, which will stimulate a lot of small businesses. I stand here today awaiting news from the COVID economic recovery committee about allowing Sydneysiders to travel to my area. Up my way we have formed what could be called the coalition of the willing. We have the great Labor member Janelle Saffin, Tamara Smith, myself, Catherine Cusack, Ben Franklin and Chris Gulaptis. Believe it or not, we even have the member for Currumbin, Laura Gerber, and the member for Burleigh, Michael Hart. They are both LNP members. It shows that in pandemics and disasters we can come together to work for a better solution.

There is also a great announcement in the budget papers about the construction of a scissor lift. You may ask what a scissor lift is. It is designed to lift large boats out of the water at the marina so they can be de-fouled, repaired and so on. The construction of a 75-tonne scissor lift there is a good thing. The old facility is a slipway and there is deep concern about its environmental impacts, particularly from arsenic and lead paint. The scissor lift is for our great fishing fleet, the commercial operators—houseboats, commercial fishing and fishing charters—and the recreational boaties. As I said yesterday, technically the New South Wales border doglegs 30 degrees to the north from Point Danger. Eighteen nautical miles off Surfers Paradise is New South Wales jurisdiction. Boating is a really great issue.

I praise the local Tweed Shire Council, including mayor Chris Cherry and the CEO, Troy Green, PSM. The council has received funding to investigate the possibility of supplementing our water supplies by tapping into the Queensland system. The Queensland system has upgraded its dams and installed a desalination plant at Tugun. That will allow water from Queensland to supplement our systems and vice versa, if the need ever arose. As opposed to the fabulous Annastacia Palaszczuk, I believe we are all Australians, irrespective of what side of the border we live on.

That would be a great plus, but it is a difficult one because there is a sand bypass within the Tweed—funded through the budget—that transports sand from the New South Wales side. Three partners are involved: the New South Wales Government, the Queensland Government and the Gold Coast council. One might think it a simple matter to move sand and water across a State border, but there is a special Act of Parliament for that, called the Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Act. It took a special Act of Parliament many years ago to facilitate the transporting of sand. The sand removal re-established a lot of the famous surfing breaks at Duranbah. The damn Queenslanders believe it is their beach but it is actually in New South Wales. It is a continual battle and a matter of ongoing debate. The issue still has not been resolved. But it is our beach, not theirs.

Overall the budget has been very good for the State of New South Wales. I note that members on both sides of the House, particularly those opposite, have criticised the budget and have complained that their electorates have been hard done by. However, for instance, the budget includes significant upgrades in health for the whole of the State. I respect the members opposite who raise issues. An important part of our role as a member of Parliament is to promote and campaign for facilities and services within our electorates. We do not win everything but so long as we win the majority of times we can say, as the famous football coach Jack Gibson used to say, played hard, done fine. I thank the Government, the Ministers and all my colleagues on both sides of the political divide. We do come together in this place and push forward the issues we believe in. I note that the member for Sydney will be introducing important legislation later today. As always, the battle lines are being drawn and the issues will be vigorously debated. Every member of the House is here for the right purpose: to make life better for the good people of New South Wales. I commend the budget to the House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Tweed. I know that you play hard and done good.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (09:41): The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for our State. To the fortune of the good people of New South Wales, the management of our State's finances in the years following Labor's economic mismanagement has been in the stable hands of the Coalition

Government. Our fiscal responsibility allowed us to respond to the challenges we faced by supporting individuals and businesses and by stimulating the economy through investment in key projects. Access to better schools, green space and parks will make a world of difference to people's wellbeing. This State Government is committed to advancing the road forward.

As we recover and move towards prosperity, we are fortunate to have the financial capacity to fund our great vision for education. I am pleased that a large number of Hawkesbury schools will benefit from the New South Wales Government's \$240 million Regional and Metro Renewal Programs. Windsor Public School, for example, will benefit from a sports court upgrade; Bligh Park Public School and Windsor Park Public School will benefit from toilet upgrades; and Glossodia Public School and Freemans Reach Public School will benefit from a canteen upgrade. I am delighted that Hobartville Public School will have an upgrade to its administration and staff room. Brewongle Environmental Education Centre will have an upgrade to its kitchen; Hillside Public School, which has a total of 39 students, will have an upgrade to its playground; and Glenorie Public School will have an upgrade to its amenities.

Further to the Regional and Metro Renewal Programs, 23 schools in the Hawkesbury electorate will have old, inefficient lights replaced with smart LED lights, benefiting the eyes and minds of students and the schools' power bills. The LED Lighting Upgrade Program will bring savings on electricity bills and also improve the sustainability of schools and take steps towards the New South Wales Government's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. These important investments in our children's education will also boost local employment as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The LED lights program utilises the Local Trade Schemes and will support more than 1,200 jobs by using local tradies to undertake the installation work, where possible. Investment in education is an investment in the future. The New South Wales Government is investing \$7.9 billion over the next four years to continue its program to deliver 215 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. Our students and their hardworking teachers deserve nothing less than quality infrastructure, and I am proud to be part of the New South Wales Government that is delivering so many projects in education.

In relation to tertiary education, various TAFE NSW campuses will be fitted with state-of-the-art digitally enabled learning spaces, designed to link local students with a statewide network of industry-qualified TAFE NSW teachers. This will enable students to participate in classes no matter where their teacher is located. This investment forms part of the \$20 million initiative to build 200 high-tech, modern learning spaces that support virtual learning across TAFE NSW campuses by May 2022. My community is delighted that TAFE NSW Richmond will receive funding to fit a specialist facility with technology and equipment to enable Richmond-based teachers to share their highly sought-after industry experience with students no matter where they live.

Another of my key priorities and that of our Government is to secure a brighter future for the good people of western Sydney. After selling its residual 49 per cent stake in WestConnex for \$11.1 billion, the New South Wales Government announced that it would put profits from the road project into a new fund aimed at revitalising western and south-western Sydney. True to its word, on 21 September 2021 the State Government announced the \$5 billion WestInvest Fund for building new and improved facilities and local infrastructure to help communities hit hard with COVID-19 and help the people of western Sydney rebuild their lives and businesses. Such funding and the vision of our great Government is of vital importance and will assist in the recovery from the pandemic. The funding injection will be a game changer for the people of western Sydney and south-western Sydney and a catalyst for growth.

The new WestInvest Fund focuses on projects that make a real difference to quality of life, help create jobs in the process and change the face of western Sydney for the better. It will help rejuvenate western Sydney communities and increase employment. The Government will put \$2 billion from the fund towards high-priority projects to be developed in consultation with local communities, while \$3 billion will be for future projects in six areas: firstly, parks, urban spaces and green space; enhancing community infrastructure such as local sporting grounds; modernising local schools; creating and enhancing arts and cultural facilities; revitalising high streets; and clearing local traffic. I am looking forward to further upgrades and rejuvenation of Hawkesbury and neighbouring regions in western Sydney. I have a few projects that I have in mind and I will be advocating to the New South Wales Treasurer for those works to be adopted. The investment announced will improve parks and open space and will inject further life into town centres, from which opportunities will grow.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison was among the dignitaries who visited Richmond recently as we unveiled the new preferred route for the new Richmond bridge and bypass. The total joint commitment in Federal and State funding is half a billion dollars, that is, \$500 million. The Federal Government is allocating \$400 million and the State Government is kicking in \$100 million in that 80:20 partnership for vital infrastructure. The new Richmond bridge and bypass will alleviate a long-term traffic bottleneck between Richmond and North Richmond, double

traffic capacity across the Hawkesbury River, reduce travel times and cater for future growth in this growing part of western Sydney. The current Richmond bridge takes more than 31,000 vehicles a day and funnels traffic through both town centres. That is why we are doubling bridge capacity and bypassing Richmond and North Richmond. It is estimated that the new Richmond bridge and bypass will save motorists up to 12 minutes of travel time through this area.

The New South Wales Government also will assist those who are negatively impacted by disasters beyond their control. The recipients of the assistance are not simply getting a handout but rather a helping hand to enable them to recover and continue the strong contribution that they make to our economy and society. This is why I am pleased that storm- and flood-affected producers from Hawkesbury's critical agriculture and horticulture may apply for recovery support through the \$80 million Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program, co-funded by the Australian and New South Wales governments.

The storms and floods that devastated Hawkesbury earlier this year caused significant damage to locals, in particular local turf farms and vegetable growers, thus affecting the businesses that rely on these industries. The agriculture and horticulture industries are key to Hawkesbury's economy, which has already taken a huge hit from the impacts of prolonged drought, bushfires and COVID-19. The funding in this program will provide the direct assistance many local producers need to recover as well as build resilience and preparedness for future natural disasters. The Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program is one part of the \$790 million NSW Storm and Flood Recovery Package, co-funded by the Australian and New South Wales governments.

I am pleased that a project aimed at increasing awareness of issues facing the Hawkesbury-Nepean River [HNR] has received \$10,000 in funding as part of Sydney Water's 2021 Community Grants Program. The project, known as "Water knowledge for the Hawkesbury-Nepean River Sydney", is run by Western Sydney University campus, comprised of the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development—Greater Western Sydney. The grant will fund a series of community days, activities and tools to engage and empower a variety of river users, Landcare groups and volunteer groups. This includes a citizen science training day, online resources, a cultural walk and talk, development of an HNR "species of the river" survey and report card, and a regional HNR forum. I am sure even those members opposite would agree that this is a beneficial and important investment.

Another key focus of mine that is shared by my Coalition colleagues is the safety of our constituents on the road. Motorists travelling through the intersection of March and Bosworth streets at Richmond will now experience a smoother, more reliable journey, with improvements to the busy junction now complete. I note it took around 19 months for that project to be completed, with much noise and interruption to local residents, but I think everyone is rejoicing in the end result, so it was worth that journey.

The Coalition Government has always been committed to the strength of our NSW Police Force and to ensuring it has the resources and staffing required as its officers put their lives and safety on the line to protect our own lives and safety. It is always a proud moment of mine to welcome new officers to my community as part of a NSW Police Force that has been strengthened by investment from the New South Wales Government, including the delivery of 1,500 additional officers over four years. Earlier this year I welcomed probationary constables Joshua and Alexandra, who had completed eight months of foundational training at the NSW Police Force Academy in Goulburn. Members and residents can rest assured of their safety, with a commitment to a \$60 million upgrade to Goulburn police academy as we continue to educate and train those who will go on to serve as brave police officers.

Our budget provides a record infrastructure investment of \$108 billion over the next four years. I will repeat that for the benefit of members: \$108 billion over four years. I had to repeat it because it is a large figure! The investment is spent efficiently on projects across the State that will increase the safety and quality of life of the people of our great State, as well as boost the economy and provide a lot of local jobs. The infrastructure investments include \$12 billion allocated over the next four years to the Sydney Metro West, while \$588.1 million will be allocated to New South Wales bus services, including new buses, identifying new bus routes and continuing the transition to a low-emission transport fleet. Importantly, \$683.5 million will be invested over the next four years in road safety investment.

In addition to infrastructure spending, \$6 billion has been allocated to stimulus support, while another \$6 billion has been allocated to support households with the cost of living. True to the values of a Coalition Government, \$9.4 billion has been provided in tax relief since 2011. This Government has a record investment of \$7.9 billion for over 210 new and upgraded schools in New South Wales in this budget. Some \$1.1 billion has been budgeted to Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and there has been \$6 billion in stimulus support.

It is no surprise that Labor members will criticise our economic management and investment in infrastructure. In fact, I am more concerned that they support us, knowing their history of economic

mismanagement and false promises. We are extremely fortunate that the Labor Party was not in government at the time preceding the pandemic. Otherwise, we would not have had the strong fiscal management that enabled us to keep businesses afloat and invest in the recovery and prosperity of the greatest State in the greatest country. We are also extremely fortunate that they were not in government during the pandemic. Members will recall that past Labor governments could not complete the most basic tasks in normal times; imagine what would have been in the case of the pandemic!

I look forward to seeing businesses continue to open their doors having survived a pandemic that wreaked havoc across the world and brought it to a standstill. They will do so knowing that we are investing in infrastructure that will create vibrancy and jobs in their respective areas. The businesses will be supported by safe and efficient roads and prosperity that will bring customers to their doors. Record investment in education will educate and train future employers and employees. The lives of individuals, families, and business owners are being made even easier with \$2.1 billion allocated to digital investment in New South Wales. As I said, there will be a record \$108.5 billion in infrastructure investment over the next four years—and the list goes on. I am also proud to be a part of a government that assists our disadvantaged to give them the best chances in life. Delivery of our stimulus measures has included more than 6,000 tutors employed in 2,184 government schools involved in the intensive learning support program for the most disadvantaged students. The stimulus measures have also led to support for more than 8,000 victims and survivors through the domestic family violence support package.

A main reason behind our success is that we listen to the community. I recently had the privilege of hosting a Hawkesbury business town hall meeting via Zoom entitled "Getting Back to Business" with the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Digital and Minister for Customer Service, and the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC, Minister for Finance and Small Business. We listened to the real life concerns of the small-business owners who are the driving force behind our economic success. Our Government absorbs their situations and our strong economic management allows us to invest in ways that address their concerns. We ensure funding is efficiently allocated to the specific needs of our communities, with all the subsequent benefits that flow into the economy.

New South Wales is known to be a great place to live, work, play and visit. This is the result of a New South Wales Government that allows businesses to prosper, and provides a helping hand and the infrastructure enabling people to innovate and work hard. The support we provide families is for the purpose of their quality of life, safety and wellbeing. We have allocated \$43.9 million over two years to provide a \$100 Active Kids learn to swim preschooler voucher for children aged three to six years who are not yet enrolled in school to develop important water safety and swimming skills. Our investments have protected and will continue to protect the health and safety of our citizens; transform communities; support individuals, families and businesses; address cost-of-living pressures; and drive productivity. I look forward to further investment in the recovery and future prosperity of Hawkesbury and New South Wales. I thank the House.

Debate interrupted.

Bills

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alex Greenwich, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of 28 members across both Houses, I proudly introduce the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021. The bill will create a safe framework for people who are in the final stages of a terminal illness and who are experiencing cruel suffering that cannot be relieved by treatment or palliative care to be provided with the choice to die peacefully, with dignity and surrounded by loved ones. New South Wales is fortunate to have one of the best palliative care systems in the world. It has brought great comfort to thousands of people with a terminal illness. Palliative care funding in this State has grown, and that growth must continue with this bill. It is my hope that the bill will increase demand for palliative care as more people discuss their end-of-life options with doctors. However, the best palliative care cannot alleviate all end-of-life suffering for all people.

Palliative Care Australia estimates that 4 per cent of patients are beyond its help, and there is evidence that palliative care cannot effectively control 10 per cent to 20 per cent of end-of-life symptoms. The 2016 Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration report found that 4 per cent of terminal patients had severe pain and 6.5 per cent had other severe physical symptoms. A majority of doctors surveyed by the Australian Medical Association in 2016 reported treating patients who palliative care could not help. The stories within those statistics are

heartbreaking. I know all members have heard from the loved ones of someone who died a slow and agonising death—stories of people who died choking on their bodily fluids and slowly suffocated to death, whose tumours grew so large they broke bones, who were unable to swallow, whose bodies were covered in painful open sores, whose organs shut down causing symptoms like violently regurgitating faeces, and whose bodies slowly wasted away.

Without the option of voluntary assisted dying, people who receive bad news about their terminal prognosis live in fear, and sadly the rate of death by suicide among people who are terminally ill is high. Data from the National Coronial Information System shows that in this State at least 20 per cent of suicides in people over 40 are associated with a terminal illness. That accounts for over 10 per cent of all suicides. Those hardworking police, paramedics and health workers on the front line do not find those statistics surprising. They regularly attend call-outs where there have been suicides and suicide attempts by people who are terminally ill. That is why the Australian Paramedics Association, the Police Association, the Health Services Union [HSU] and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association strongly support the bill.

A modern, advanced healthcare system should not leave anyone to feel that their only options are either a slow, cruel, agonising death or a violent and lonely suicide. Some people choose to starve and dehydrate themselves and cease vital treatment like dialysis to speed up their death. However, this can take weeks and cause severe symptoms, discomfort and distress. People who have a terminal illness deserve better. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 will provide a safe framework for patients whose death is imminent and whose pain and suffering has become unbearable to get help to end that suffering at a time of their choosing. It follows the same eligibility, process and safeguards as bills passed in all other States.

I turn to the provisions of the bill. The bill meticulously sets out in detail the principles that underpin the legislation, including the eligibility criteria to access voluntary assisted dying; the steps that a person must take before they can get access; the protections for healthcare workers, including to ensure that they can conscientiously object; the rights and responsibilities of institutions and facilities that refuse to provide voluntary assisted dying services; the eligibility criteria of other persons involved in the process such as doctors, nurses and witnesses; the make-up of a Voluntary Assisted Dying Board; the option to request a review through the Supreme Court; offences; and requirements to review the legislation.

To be eligible to receive voluntary assisted dying, a patient must be at least 18 years of age and an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or have been living in Australia for at least three continuous years and ordinarily reside in New South Wales. A patient must be diagnosed with at least one disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and that, on the balance of probabilities, will cause death within six months or, in the case of a neurodegenerative disease, within 12 months. The disease, illness or medical condition must cause suffering to the patient in a way that cannot be tolerably relieved. Importantly, the patient must have decision-making capacity to make a voluntary assisted dying decision. In seeking assistance, the patient must be acting voluntarily and without any pressure or duress. Pressure or duress includes coercion, intimidation, threats and undue influence.

The bill also requires a patient's request for voluntary assisted dying to be enduring. It sets out in detail each step that a patient must take before they can access voluntary assisted dying, from the first request to disposing of any unused substance. Each step must be recorded in specific forms that are sent to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board. The process is entirely voluntary. There is no obligation on a patient to continue and the patient is told multiple times throughout the process that they can withdraw at any time. The first step is for the patient to make a first request to a doctor. The doctor must either accept or refuse the request. A doctor can refuse because they have a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying, or are unwilling or unable to perform the duties of a coordinating practitioner.

To be eligible to act as a coordinating practitioner, a doctor must be highly experienced. They must either be a specialist, an overseas-trained specialist or a practitioner with general registration who has practised for at least 10 years. The doctor must also have completed training approved by the Secretary of NSW Health, which will cover eligibility criteria and how to identify risk factors for pressure or duress. If the doctor accepts the first request, they become the coordinating practitioner. The coordinating practitioner must then conduct a first assessment of a patient against each eligibility criteria. That covers residency, diagnosis, prognosis, decision-making capacity, whether the request is voluntary and without pressure or duress, and whether the request is enduring.

The bill makes it absolutely clear that if a coordinating practitioner is uncertain about whether a patient has a disease, illness or medical condition that complies with the requirements, they must refer the patient to a medical practitioner who is qualified to make that decision such as an oncologist or a neurologist. Similarly, if a coordinating practitioner is uncertain about whether a patient has decision-making capacity for a voluntary assisted dying decision, or whether the person could be subject to pressure or duress, they must refer the person

to a psychiatrist or another registered health practitioner who is qualified to make that decision, such as a geriatrician.

In the case of pressure or duress, if appropriate a patient can be referred to a person who is not a registered health practitioner provided they have the skills to make an assessment—an example could be a social worker. If the coordinating practitioner determines after the first assessment that the patient meets the eligibility criteria, they must provide the patient with extensive information about their diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and palliative care options, and the process going forward if the patient chooses to continue. The coordinating practitioner must tell the patient that they may decide at any time not to continue further. If the coordinating practitioner is not satisfied that the patient meets any criteria then they must assess the patient as ineligible and the process ends. The coordinating practitioner must then refer the patient to another doctor for an independent assessment.

The doctor who receives the referral can accept or refuse it. A doctor can refuse a referral because they have a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying, or because they are unwilling or unable to perform the duties of a consulting practitioner. They must refuse the referral if they are not eligible to act as a consulting practitioner. The eligibility criteria for a consulting practitioner is the same as the coordinating practitioner. If the doctor accepts the referral they become the consulting practitioner and must independently assess the patient against each eligibility criterion. The mandatory obligations on the consulting practitioner to refer a patient, if they are uncertain about a particular eligibility criteria, reflect those of the consulting practitioner in the first assessment.

If the consulting practitioner is not satisfied that the patient meets any criterion then they must assess the patient as ineligible. If the consulting practitioner assesses the patient as eligible, they must provide the patient with the same information required of the consulting practitioner after the first assessment to ensure that the patient is kept informed about the medical situation and the outcomes of their decisions throughout the process. Importantly, the patient is told again that they are under no obligation to proceed with the process.

Patients assessed as eligible in this rigorous process who choose to proceed with their application must then make a written declaration. The written declaration involves making a request for access to voluntary assisted dying in writing, which declares that the request is voluntary and without pressure or duress, and that the patient understands the nature and effect of voluntary assisted dying. The patient is required to sign their written declaration in front of two witnesses. Each witness must certify in the declaration that in their presence the patient appeared to freely and voluntarily sign the declaration.

After the patient has given the written declaration to their coordinating practitioner they must make a final request to the coordinating practitioner. The final request cannot be made earlier than five days after the first request was made. However, if both the coordinating practitioner and consulting practitioner agree that the patient is likely to die or lose decision-making capacity within that period, the final request can be made earlier. The coordinating practitioner must then conduct a final review of all assessment forms and certify that the assessment process has been complete and that the patient has decision-making capacity, is acting voluntarily and not because of pressure or duress and that their request for voluntary assisted dying is enduring.

The coordinating practitioner must then request an authorisation to prescribe a substance from the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board. The board can refuse the authorisation if it suspects that the eligibility requirements have not been met. Before issuing a prescription, the coordinating practitioner must provide the patient information on the substance, including how the substance is to be administered, stored and prepared; the expected effects and risks of taking the substance; and the period after taking the substance when the patient is expected to die. The patient must be told at this time that they are under no obligation to proceed. The coordinating practitioner can then prescribe a substance to assist the patient to die. The prescription is sent directly to an authorised supplier.

The patient will need to make an administrative decision on whether they would like to self-administer the voluntary assisted dying substance or have a health practitioner administer the substance for them. A patient who chooses to self-administer must appoint a contact person to be responsible for returning any unused substance to an authorised disposer and informing the coordinating practitioner if the patient dies. Where a patient has chosen to self-administer the substance, the substance can be supplied to the patient, their agent or the contact person and it must be stored in a locked box at all times. Where a patient has chosen to have the substance administered by a health practitioner the substance is supplied directly to the administering practitioner.

The administering practitioner is likely to be the coordinating practitioner; however, they can also be a specialist, an overseas trained specialist, a general practitioner who has practised for at least five years, a nurse practitioner or a registered nurse who has practised for at least five years. They must have also completed the Health Secretary's training. The administering practitioner must administer the substance in front of an

independent witness. The witness will need to certify to the board that the patient's request for access appeared to be free, voluntary and enduring.

The bill enshrines the power for facilities, which are referred to as entities in the bill, not to provide voluntary assisted dying services, while setting out responsibilities towards patients and residents, depending on whether the entity is a residential facility or a hospital. Residential facilities will have greater responsibilities towards residents because they are people's homes and nobody should be denied a legal medical option in their home because of the views held by management, especially given choice in residential care is often limited. Residential facilities that do not provide voluntary assisted dying services will be required to let doctors and other participants attend the premises to provide voluntary assisted dying services. Those in residential facilities seeking voluntary assisted dying will be told to inform their residential facility. I thank Uniting and Catholic Healthcare Australia for this recommendation. Hospitals that are referred to as "health care establishments" in the bill will only be required to help transfer patients to and from the hospital to access voluntary assisted dying services elsewhere. There is no obligation on a hospital to allow external doctors on site.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Board will play an important oversight role. The board will collect and publish data; provide advice, information and reports to the Minister and the Health Secretary; and refer matters, for example to the police, the Coroner or the Health Care Complaints Commission. The board will be responsible for determining applications to prescribe a voluntary assisted dying substance and for sending information to the patient's contact person to ensure that they know how to comply with obligations. The board will be made up of five members jointly appointed by the Minister for Health and the Attorney General. The chairperson and the deputy chairperson will be required to have minimum specified practical legal experience.

The bill creates a comprehensive set of offences to protect against any misuse of voluntary assisted dying. These will act in addition to the safeguards that are built into the very robust statutory process. A new offence for administering a prescribed substance to another person outside of the provisions of the bill will incur a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, as does the new offence for inducing someone to take a prescribed substance. Inducing someone to apply for voluntary assisted dying attracts a maximum of seven years' imprisonment. Advertising of schedule 4 or schedule 8 poison as a voluntary assisted dying substance attracts a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment. A contact person who fails to return any unused substance that remains after a person dies will be subject to a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment. There are also offences to protect people's privacy.

The bill provides for the introduction of a care navigator service. Both Victoria and Western Australia have established care navigator services, which provide a point of contact for patients, the community, health practitioners, health services and residential facilities. Care navigators can provide general information, connect people with medical practitioners who provide services, and provide holistic advice on appropriate end-of-life services. The feedback on the care navigator service in Victoria is very positive. The legislation will be subject to regular review every five years after an initial review that must commence two years after the provisions come into force. Reviews will look at the operations and effectiveness of the laws as well as access issues in regional areas or issues that are associated with language and culture.

Poll after poll, story after story, and years of compassionate campaigning across New South Wales have shown that the vast majority of this State's citizens support voluntary assisted dying legislation. I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for agreeing to a conscience vote on this bill. I ask all members to respect and listen to each other's views. I ask all members to not play procedural games that will only prolong people's cruel pain and suffering. I ask members to engage with me on genuine amendments and not filibuster with ones that will only create unfair barriers to access. Most importantly, I call on all members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council to listen to the genuine call of those who are dying cruelly and give them the choice, comfort, dignity and respect that they deserve. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Mr ROY BUTLER: In accordance with Standing Order 170 (1), I postpone general business orders of the day (for bills) No. 1 [Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021].

The SPEAKER: I fix the resumption of the member's second reading speech as an order of the day for a future day.

*Bills***ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS VILIFICATION) BILL 2021****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 10 June 2021.**

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:22): Via video link: The Government opposes the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021. In his second reading speech, the member for Liverpool suggested that the amendment proposed in the bill is consistent with the approach taken in the Anti-Discrimination Act with regard to a number of other attributes. He further claims that the amendment is a minor amendment that builds upon the existing structure within the Anti-Discrimination Act. While the member for Liverpool is correct that the proposed amendment is consistent with the approach to other provisions, it is not accurate to suggest that the proposed amendment is a minor one or that the bill is consistent with the structure of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Anti-Discrimination Act provides protections against discrimination on a number of grounds, including race, sex, homosexuality, gender status, marital or domestic status, disability, carer's responsibilities and age. Discrimination is prohibited in a number of areas of public life, including work, education, provision of accommodation and goods and services. The Act defines vilification as a public act which incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons. The vilification protections of the Anti-Discrimination Act [ADA] operate as an extension to protections against discrimination. Not all attributes protected by anti-discrimination provisions are afforded additional protections against vilification in the Anti-Discrimination Act—for example, age or disability.

The bill contains amendments to the ADA that would make it unlawful for a person, by a public act, to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or a group of persons on the grounds of religious beliefs or affiliation and defines a "public act" for the purpose of religious vilification as the following:

- (a) any form of communication to the public, including speaking, writing, printing, displaying notices, broadcasting, telecasting, screening and playing of tapes or other recorded material, and
- (b) any conduct, not being a form of communication referred to in paragraph (a), observable by the public, including actions and gestures and the wearing or display of clothing, signs, flags, emblems and insignia, and
- (c) the distribution or dissemination of any matter to the public with knowledge that the matter promotes or expresses hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of—
 - (i) a person on the ground that the person has a specific religious belief or affiliation...

It is more appropriate to consider whether religion should be included for vilification purposes as part of the Government's commitment to introducing religion as a ground for protection against discrimination at this stage following the passage of the Commonwealth Government's Religious Discrimination Bill. The Government is currently engaged in that exercise.

On 18 June 2020 another member's private bill, the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, which sought to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, was referred to a joint select committee for inquiry and report. The religious freedoms and equality bill proposes a number of amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to make religion a ground of discrimination under the Anti-Discrimination Act. The report of the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 was tabled in Parliament on 31 March 2021.

The committee report makes a number of recommendations, which include amending the Anti-Discrimination Act to prohibit discrimination on religious grounds and to provide further provisions for the expression of religious beliefs. Recommendation No. 4 of the committee report is that the Government conduct a broad-based review to update the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and assess the effectiveness of the religious vilification provisions in the Crimes Act 1900 to decide whether civil or religious vilification protections are required in the Act. The New South Wales Government's response to the committee report was tabled in Parliament on 7 September 2021. The Government response commits to support the committee's central recommendation to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act to prohibit discrimination on the ground of religion. However, given recent announcements that the Commonwealth Government intends to introduce its Religious Discrimination Bill into the Commonwealth Parliament by December 2021, at this stage the New South Wales Government intends to make its commitment following the passage of the Commonwealth's bill through the Commonwealth Parliament.

It is more appropriate that civil vilification protections against religious vilification be considered holistically in the context of other religious protections that will be implemented. The committee recognised the complexity of this issue. The committee report states:

... some vilification provisions are already contained in anti-discrimination legislation as well as the Crimes Act 1900. The Committee notes the calls from stakeholders to extend vilification provisions to religious beliefs and activities, especially given the inconsistency of the treatment of religions which are linked to an individual's ethnicity.

The Committee recommends that the effectiveness of the religious vilification provisions in the NSW Crimes Act 1900 and whether religious vilification protections are required in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 should be assessed as part of a broad-based review of the Act.

The diverse range of views shared with the committee in relation to religious vilification also illustrate the complexity of the issue. In its written submission to the committee, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre [PIAC] stated that under the bill considered by the committee "religious belief would not be given the protection of civil vilification provisions, which apply to grounds of race, homosexuality, transgender status and HIV-AIDS status". That is significant given that vilification in the Act offers broader protection than does the Crimes Act 1990. The PIAC's submission goes on to state:

This inconsistency in protection is exacerbated because race is defined in the Act as 'includes colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin', which has been interpreted to include Jewish and Sikh persons, but not Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist persons – meaning some religious groups would have access to both criminal and civil protections, while others would only have access to the more limited criminal protections ...

We therefore recommend the Committee consider the inclusion of a prohibition on vilification on the basis of religious belief in the Bill, to make it consistent with existing prohibitions on racial, with homosexual, transgender status and HIV/AIDS vilification.

Calls for protections against religious vilification were also shared by a range of faith-based organisations, including the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network and the Muslim Legal Network (NSW) and some legal stakeholders, such as the NSW Young Lawyers and the New South Wales Society of Labor Lawyers. On the other hand, some stakeholders have suggested caution in the introduction of civil religious vilification laws. While religious vilification was not a component of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, some religious stakeholders have raised concerns about the civil religious vilification laws impeding on their capacity to engage in spirited, robust criticism of other religions and religious doctrines. Stakeholders recognise that the issue of religious discrimination should be dealt with in a balanced and holistic manner. For example, the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and ACT stated in its submission:

The Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT commends the NSW Parliament's concern to provide proper legislative protection to prevent discrimination on religious grounds and uphold freedom of religion. We understand that while there is a mosaic of laws nationally that afford such protection, there is no current law in NSW that specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of religious belief. At the same time, and in a world environment of heightened discord and division across national, racial and religious lines, we are cautious about any legislation that could be perceived to favour one group of rights over another, or one form of religious belief over another, and thus undermine, even inadvertently, the tolerant and inclusive society we are striving to create.

These examples demonstrate the importance of considering civil protections for religious vilification in a holistic manner and the context of other religious protections that will be implemented following the Commonwealth bill. It also demonstrates the need for community and stakeholder consultation prior to such a bill being introduced to Parliament.

While the member for Liverpool referred to various submissions to the committee inquiry as justification for the bill before the House today, religious vilification was not an aspect of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020. While the committee did consider these submissions, it did not make a recommendation on vilification other than that it should be further reviewed and considered. The New South Wales Government will consult with the public and key stakeholders in the development of the Government's bill in implementing its response to the committee report. This is the appropriate, proportionate and responsible approach when introducing significant legislative reform. No such consultation has occurred in the preparation of the bill before the House today. I also note there are existing protections against religious vilification under New South Wales law.

Section 93Z of the Crimes Act provides that a person who by public act intentionally or recklessly threatens or incites violence towards another person or a group of persons on specified grounds is guilty of an offence. The specified grounds are race, religious belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and HIV-AIDS status. Section 93Z commenced in August 2018 and replaced four serious vilification offences previously in the Anti-Discrimination Act [ADA] with a single indictable offence in the Crimes Act. The introduction of section 93Z followed extensive consultation on and review of New South Wales serious vilification laws.

Section 93Z does the following: First, it replaces the existing serious vilification offences with a single indictable offence in the Crimes Act to demonstrate the seriousness of threatening and inciting violence. Secondly,

it broadens the grounds of protection to include religious belief or affiliation and intersex status in addition to the existing grounds of serious racial, homosexual, transgender and HIV-AIDS vilification, while updating the existing terminology of "homosexual" and "transgender" with "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to reflect modern terminology. Thirdly, it removes the existing disparity between maximum penalties for serious vilification of different protected groups. Fourthly, it reflects community standards through an increased maximum penalty.

These reforms also clarify that it is not necessary to adduce evidence of the state of mind of any other person apart from the accused, or that any other person has acted as a result of the accused's alleged act. The offence is investigated by the NSW Police Force and requires the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions to commence a prosecution. The requirement for the director's consent provides a safeguard to ensure that the offence is only prosecuted where appropriate in accordance with the prosecution guidelines. These reforms have struck a careful balance between preventing public acts, threats of violence and facilitating freedom of expression in New South Wales. They followed extensive consultation on and with these New South Wales serious vilification laws.

In 1992 the Hon. James Samios, MLC, reviewed the serious racial vilification offence in the Anti-Discrimination Act. A report on this review was presented to the then Government on 27 August 1992. Among other things the report recommended that the ground of racial vilification should be extended to cover ethno-religious people and groups and that the maximum penalty should be increased. In 1999 the NSW Law Reform Commission finalised an extensive review of the Anti-Discrimination Act. Relevantly, the Law Reform Commission recommended that an offence of serious racial vilification be moved to the Crimes Act. In 2009 the then Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Nicholas Cowdery, AO, QC, prepared a paper on the offence of serious racial vilification in the Anti-Discrimination Act, which raised the concerns that there had been no prosecutions instituted under the offence of serious racial vilification in the Anti-Discrimination Act. In 2012 the then Premier, Barry O'Farrell, MP, asked the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice to inquire into the serious racial vilification offence in the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Standing Committee on Law and Justice released a report on that inquiry on 3 December 2013. The committee came to the view that the effectiveness of the serious vilification offence in the Anti-Discrimination Act had been hindered by a number of prospective impediments that had prevented the practical application of the offence by courts and prosecutors. In November 2016 the then Attorney General, the member for Vaucluse, Gabriel Upton, MP, asked Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, AO, to undertake broad community consultation on a number of issues relating to serious vilification in New South Wales. Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian met with 50 groups and four individuals during 2017. His report on consultation of serious vilification laws in New South Wales showed that many stakeholders considered that moving the offences into the Crimes Act could be beneficial as it would clarify police responsibilities for investigating serious vilification offences. Some stakeholder support included religion as a protected ground. Many agreed that the procedural requirements and maximum penalties should be consistent across all serious vilification offences. The Government gave careful consideration to these reviews and community consultations before introducing the reforms in 2018.

Furthermore, the Anti-Discrimination Act also provides protections against racial vilification on the grounds of ethno-religious origin. Under the Anti-Discrimination Act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person or persons on the basis of ethno-religious origin. Ethno-religious origin is included in the Anti-Discrimination Act as part of the definition of race. The Act generally prohibits racial discrimination and vilification. Finally, I note that there are a number of government initiatives and campaigns in New South Wales to target and address vilification and extremism. For instance, the NSW Police Force has a dedicated Engagement and Hate Crime Unit which oversees and works with local area commands to investigate hate-motivated incidents. Furthermore, in May 2020 the Attorney General launched a Stop Public Threats campaign to ensure that the community understands the protections against vilification that are available under New South Wales laws. The campaign provided help for victim-survivors and the community to understand their legal rights and ensure that threats of violence are reported to the police for investigation. As the Attorney General said at the time:

We need to work together to combat abusive and violent behaviour that discriminates against cultural or religious groups as well as other sections of our community.

The Government has committed \$49.6 million over four years for the delivery of a range of programs and initiatives to counter violent extremes and hate speech and support victims, including \$13.8 million for the expansion of the Community Partnership Action program, which is a community grants program aimed at promoting social cohesion and community harmony, and the online Remove Hate from the Debate campaign. For the reasons I have laid out today, the Government opposes the bill.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:39): Via video link: I speak to the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021. I acknowledge the member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General for the

work he has done on the bill. One of my last acts as the Leader of the Opposition was to work with the shadow Attorney General on this bill. I acknowledge Jihad Dib, the member for Lakemba, and Tania Mihailuk, the member for Bankstown. To understand why this bill is needed it is important to note the history of anti-discrimination in New South Wales. In 1977 the Anti-Discrimination Act was passed in New South Wales, making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or marital status in the areas of employment, accommodation, provision of goods and services and education.

In the decades since, amendments have been made to include other protected attributes such as age, disability and sexuality. These amendments reflect the continuing consensus in this House on the importance of equality of opportunity and the right of all to feel safe and respected in public life. In 1994 an amendment was made to section 4 of the Anti-Discrimination Act to extend the definition of race to include ethno-religious origin and descent. It was explicit that the amendment would extend the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act to include members of the Sikh, Jewish and Islamic faiths. However, the diversity of Islam, with its various traditions developing independently across different continents for centuries, makes it very difficult to accept the inclusion of all Muslims as one ethno-religious group in our courts. I believe that as lawmakers we have a responsibility to ensure there is fairness and consistency in our legislation. In passing this bill we fulfil that responsibility.

The bill will protect any visibly religious person: for example, converts who do not share the same ethnic or racial heritage but who may still be targets of vilification. The proposed legislation is also inclusive of atheists and agnostics and will protect them from vilification of their beliefs. I thank all those stakeholders who have advocated for reform. While I acknowledge the many different religious groups that have supported reform of some sort, as the member for Strathfield I will focus my contribution on the Muslim community, and specifically Muslim women. I do this not out of disrespect for any religion or person of faith, because those who know me well know that I am a strong advocate of multiculturalism and multifaith communities. I choose to make my contribution specifically about Muslim women because I believe they in particular have no protections. In response to this bill the Australian National Imams Council said:

This bill addresses a glaring and fundamental absence in the protective laws relating to vilification in New South Wales. In New South Wales, there is no legislative protection against vilification directed at a person based on their religious identity and belief. This is despite that protections are provided against vilification based on other protected attributes.

Observing the hijab is a key tenet of Islam, much like a Sikh who wears a turban or a Jewish man who chooses to don the kippah. Muslim women who wear the hijab are practising their faith and deepening their relationship with God. However, unlike Jewish or Sikh men, an attack on a Muslim woman on the basis of her hijab is not treated by the existing law as discrimination. We often speak in this place of the details of bills and laws, and while this bill is technical in nature the ramifications of it passing this Parliament are real and life-changing.

In 2019 Rana Elisma, who wears the hijab, was sitting in a cafe when she was attacked. Rana was 38 weeks pregnant. She had never met the man who kicked and punched her to the ground. The assailant had a history of violence against Muslims, and during his trial he was ejected from the courtroom for his continual racist interjections. I have met Rana and heard her tell her story, and it is powerful. It is deeply unsettling that in New South Wales this crime is not recognised for what it is: a crime against a Muslim woman because of her faith. Ramia Abdo Sultan, an accomplished hijabi lawyer, spoke to me about the frustration of the Muslim community that the attack on Rana was regarded by the law as a random assault. It was not recognised as a hate crime and it should have been. Quite simply, Rana was attacked because she was Muslim. That is the only reason she was attacked.

The fear experienced by Muslim women is very real. Ramia Abdo Sultan says, "As soon as you step out the door, you are a target because you wear a hijab." This sentiment is echoed by Muslim women across New South Wales. Prominent community activist and educator Sabrin Farooqui explains how Muslim women, especially migrant women, fear leaving their own neighbourhoods because the experience of being verbally abused is so common. Sahar Dandan is the founder of the GoActive Project with the Lebanese Muslim Association. I have been to visit the Lebanese Muslim Association. It is an incredible program that encourages Muslim girls and young women to participate in sport and to feel confident and engaged. Sahar sees discrimination experienced on a daily basis by teenage girls, who then seek to shut themselves away and minimise their religious identity.

It is my belief that the lack of protection from vilification is functioning as a form of segregation that prevents many Muslim women from participating in public life outside of their known communities. No-one should feel they must choose between expressing their faith and feeling safe. Every woman in this State has a right to feel safe and be safe, and it is incumbent on us as members of this Parliament to ensure that it happens. The Islamophobia Register records and verifies incidents of Islamophobia such as physical violence, hate speech, vindictive property damage and online abuse. It is important to note that the register is by no means complete. It includes the experiences of only those who know the register exists, and only those who choose to relive the

trauma of their experience. It includes only accounts that are possible to verify. Despite its limited nature, the Islamophobia Register is meaningful. It is evidence that fear and anxiety are justified. It refutes the notion that abuse and assaults against Muslim women are rare or random.

To understand the importance of this bill to Muslim women, it is necessary to understand what wearing the hijab means to them. Many women have spoken to me about how important it is to them to have the freedom to express their faith without fear. As well as being an act of devotion to God, the hijab has a multitude of meanings to the women who wear it. For some it is a symbol of agency and self-determination. It is a celebration of culture and an expression of sisterhood and solidarity. Ramia Abdo Sultan, the lawyer I mentioned earlier, told me, "Wearing the hijab liberates me from the expectations placed on women in general, in that I am free to choose the way I want to represent myself, my strength and the way in which I choose to be devoted to my faith and beliefs." Every member of this Parliament knows that legislation alone will not eliminate Islamophobia. There is so much more work to be done. In passing this legislation, we send a strong message that religious vilification in all its forms is not acceptable. Sahar Dandan of the Lebanese Muslim Association says the bill, if passed, will be:

...a clear sign to Australian Muslims that they are considered important members that make up the social fabric of this country. It means that we are one step closer to ensuring social justice and human rights are given to all Australian citizens.

It means that my identity is important enough to protect, that we can negotiate the discourse around Islam and Muslims and work towards a reconstruction of our own narrative without fear and what it means to be a Muslim woman living in NSW.

This bill is a significant reform. While I have focused my contribution today on the impact on Muslim women, I again acknowledge that this bill is about the rights all New South Wales citizens to practise their religion free of discrimination and vilification. Again I acknowledge the member for Liverpool, who has brought this bill to the House. I thank my party for having the courage to look at these important reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:49): The Government opposes the private member's Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021, which seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act to introduce protections against religious vilification. It opposes the bill for good reasons, some of which I will enumerate. I support the Government's position. Nevertheless, I am pleased that this Parliament is talking about protection for people of religious faith. The conversation has a lot further to go and should be much wider than this bill, but I welcome taking a step down this road. We heard from the previous speaker, the member for Strathfield, as to why we would take seriously the concerns of people of religious faith in New South Wales today.

This private member's bill has not undergone community consultation prior to being introduced into Parliament. The member for Liverpool referred to various submissions to the inquiry of the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 as justification for this bill. However, religious vilification was not an aspect of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, and while the committee considered these submissions, it did not make a recommendation for vilification other than that it should be further reviewed and considered.

In contrast, before introducing criminal provisions relating to public incitement or threat of violence on religious grounds in section 93Z of the Crimes Act, extensive consultation and reviews of serious vilification laws in New South Wales were conducted and observed by the Government. In 1999 the NSW Law Reform Commission finalised an extensive review of the Anti-Discrimination Act. Relevantly, the Law Reform Commission recommended that the offence of serious racial vilification be moved to the Crimes Act. In 2012 former Premier Barry O'Farrell, MP, requested that the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice inquire into the serious racial vilification offence in the Anti-Discrimination Act. The committee released a report on that inquiry on 3 December 2013. The committee came to the view that the effectiveness of the serious vilification offence in the Anti-Discrimination Act has been hindered by a number of procedural impediments that have prevented practical application of the offence by courts and prosecutors.

In November 2016 former Attorney General Gabrielle Upton, MP, requested Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian, AO, to undertake broad community consultation on a number of issues relating to serious vilification in New South Wales. Mr Kerkyasharian met with 50 groups or individuals during 2017. The report on consultation on serious vilification laws in New South Wales by Mr Kerkyasharian shows that many stakeholders considered that moving the offences into the Crimes Act could be beneficial, as it would clarify police responsibilities for investigating serious vilification offences. Some stakeholders supported including religion as a protected ground, and many agreed that the procedural requirements and maximum penalties should be consistent across all serious vilification offences.

The Government gave careful consideration to the reviews and community consultation before introducing section 93Z of the Crimes Act. Section 93Z makes publicly threatening or inciting violence on the ground of

religion as well as on a number of other grounds a criminal offence punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. Section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 commenced in August 2018 and replaced four serious vilification offences that were previously in the Anti-Discrimination Act with a single indictable offence in the Crimes Act 1900. The introduction of section 93Z followed extensive consultation on and reviews of New South Wales' serious vilification laws.

The intention of creating the single indictable offence was to: demonstrate the seriousness of threatening and inciting violence; broaden the grounds of protection to include religious belief or affiliation and intersex status in addition to the grounds of serious racial, homosexual, transgender and HIV-AIDS vilification, while updating the terminology of "homosexual" and "transgender" with "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to reflect modern terminology; remove disparities between maximum penalties for serious vilification of different protected groups; and reflect community standards through an increased maximum penalty. Consequently, following extensive consultation, section 93Z, which includes criminal offences for publicly threatening or inciting violence against a person or group of persons on the ground of religion, was included in the Crimes Act. By contrast, the private member's bill before us has not undergone the same level of community consultation. For that reason alone, we cannot refer this bill to a much more thorough process to address the broader needs of the community in relation to protection for people of religious faith.

The Government has noted already that this bill makes a change in one specific section of the Anti-Discrimination Act to provide protection to people who have a religious faith from vilification, and from vilification only. All the other protections that are provided by the Act to people on the grounds of race, sex, transgender status, marital or domestic status, disability, responsibilities as a carer, homosexuality or age are not extended to people of religious faith. That is my fundamental criticism of this bill: It is far too narrowly focused and fails to deliver real protection for religious believers in all the dimensions that matter to them. Having said that, I nevertheless wish to thank the member for Liverpool for at least bringing legislation to this House which acknowledges the gap in protection for people of faith in New South Wales. This gap may once have been considered a matter of mere academic interest at a time when respect for religious faith was generally shown and practised in society. If that was ever the case, I am afraid those days are long gone. Today people of faith face hostility and belligerence from some quarters and are left unprotected by the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act. I ask for an extension of time. [*Extension of time.*]

As an exercise to illustrate the point that the coverage proposed by the member for Liverpool falls far short of the protection afforded to people on other grounds, I will spend a few moments considering the definition of "discrimination on the ground of race" as spelt out in section 7 of the Act. Section 7 states, in a convoluted way:

7 What constitutes discrimination on the ground of race

- (1) A person (*the perpetrator*) discriminates against another person (*the aggrieved person*) on the ground of race if the perpetrator—
- (a) on the ground of the aggrieved person's race—

I might substitute "religion", if I am thinking of an amendment to the bill—

or the race—

or religion—

of a relative or associate of the aggrieved person, treats the aggrieved person less favourably than in the same circumstances, or in circumstances which are not materially different, the perpetrator treats or would treat a person of a different race—

substitute "religion"—

or who has such a relative or associate of a different race—

or religion. As I said, it is a bit long-winded and convoluted but it is protection from unfavourable treatment by comparison with another person who has a different attribute. Why is that not protection in principle or in broad terms not to be applied to a person of faith or, indeed, a person of no faith? Our community is diverse and has different perspectives. Why should not the same respect and the same protection be extended to all? Fortunately, that is what the joint committee report on the upper House legislation has recommended: that we do move to a much broader protection. I am obviously much more comfortable to go down that path rather than focus on the specific narrow path suggested by the member for Liverpool.

As the member for Strathfield said, the current Act provides for people on those protected grounds protection in the context of employment in terms of applications, selections and so on. One cannot discriminate against a person on the grounds of race or disability when advertising a position and selecting an appointee. Why should that not also apply to a person of faith? Why should they not be accepted on their merits? Why would we contemplate the possibility that somebody might be discriminated against in employment because of their faith?

To pick up the point made earlier by the member for Strathfield, for some people faith is a very visible thing, whether it is a hijab or a turban that is worn. If that is to come into play in the employment process we have to be clear that there is protection for that person fronting up for a job interview in that situation.

That applies not only to employment and education but also to accommodation and membership of industrial organisations or registered clubs. Of particular concern are qualifying bodies—for example, universities handing out degrees and qualifications. We hope that they do not discriminate on any of these grounds. We hope that tertiary institutions in particular are inclusive, accepting and broadminded institutions. Yet there are examples around the world of extraneous requirements sneaking into those qualifications that prevent people of faith from receiving a university degree. I do not want to see that happening in Australia or New South Wales. I do not believe it is at the moment, but when considering an anti-discrimination law for all citizens for decades to come, we should look at those issues and ensure the law is written to protect people on all reasonable grounds and in all reasonable contexts.

The Federal Government is also moving in this field, as it has a responsibility to do. What is generally termed the Ruddock report—the Religious Freedom Review—made a number of observations and recommendations, some of which apply to New South Wales. Most of its focus is on Commonwealth responsibilities, but I note that in recommendation 16 the inquiry recommended that New South Wales and South Australia amend anti-discrimination laws to render it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of a person's religious belief or activity, including discriminating against a person who does not hold any religious belief. In doing so, consideration should be given to provide for the appropriate exceptions and exemptions, including for religious bodies, religious schools and charities.

The final sentence picks up the fact that religion is not an individual, entirely private and separate element of a person's life. It is inherently communal and shared with other members of the family. The opportunity to practice their faith, worship communally, act communally and work together with those of their faith is inherent to religions. That is recognised in the international human rights documentation. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights explicitly reflects that a person has the right not only to believe but also to manifest that faith, act on that faith and teach that faith within their community. They should be able to do that without impediment. Recommendation 16 of the Religious Freedom Review picks up on the communal dimension of faith that is so important to believers which, at times, other elements of society do not appreciate or realise.

The review also picked up issues around vilification, blasphemy and social hostility. Those were considered and recommendations were made for the Federal Government to pick up. However, the main focus of the review as it related to the States was the observation that there are two States—New South Wales and South Australia—that do not currently have protection for people of religious faith as a ground in their anti-discrimination Acts, whereas the other States have had that protection for many years. That omission and difference between the States has frequently been recommended and referred to by reviews and investigations from relevant bodies. I am pleased that perhaps 2021 will be the year—if not, then 2022—when the gap is finally addressed and New South Wales provides protection to its people of faith that the rest of the nation has taken for granted for many years.

As a final observation, we all know that protecting people of religious faith can be complex because of the variety of faiths and the intersection of rights of different people in the community. The Ruddock report wisely and prudently referred to the Siracusa Principles to address and balance the interaction of rights to interpret how they should be given effect when there is tension or competition between the rights of different groups in the community. I cannot support the bill and I hope for a better bill in the near future.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:05): I make a contribution to the debate on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021, introduced by the former shadow Attorney General and the member for Liverpool, Paul Lynch. The bill amends the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 through the insertion of proposed part 2AA. The amendment would make it unlawful to vilify a person or group of persons on the grounds of a specific religious belief or affiliation.

For the purpose of the bill, religious vilification is: for a person, by public act, to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on the grounds that the person, or group of persons, has a specific religious belief or affiliation. The bill defines a public act as: any form of communication to the public, any conduct, not being a form of communication, observable by the public, and the distribution or dissemination of any matter to the public that promotes hatred towards a person or group on the grounds of religious affiliation.

The bill makes a minor amendment to changes already made to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 in the 1994 amendment. Section 4 of the 1994 amendment makes it unlawful to vilify against a person or a group of person on the grounds of race, including ethno-religious origin. Section 4 reveals the need and demand to make

vilification unlawful for religious groups. However, we currently see significant gaps in the legislation. Religious groups that do not fall under the umbrella of ethno-religious origin or religious groups that possess ambiguity as to whether they are of ethno-religious origin, are currently not protected legally from religious vilification. Further amendments must be made to close the gaps in the legislation, ensure confusion is combatted in the judicial process and protect all religious groups from vilification in New South Wales. That is what the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021 seeks to resolve.

In New South Wales we are fortunate to welcome a vast number of different religious beliefs and affiliations. New South Wales is a vibrantly multicultural State. It is our respect and tolerance of others that entices many families to choose New South Wales to be their home. We should all be very proud of that. In the electorate of Prospect in western Sydney, we have one of the most diverse communities in the nation. During my time as the member for Prospect, I have listened to the stories of hundreds of families from many different backgrounds who have fled their nations of origin to relieve themselves of religious persecution and make western Sydney their home. I wish to tell the stories of some of those families.

In the electorate of Prospect, we welcome a vibrant African equatorial community and other marginalised South Sudanese, Sudanese and African communities. In 1956, Sudan gained its independence from colonial powers. It was understood that under an independent Sudan the southern Christian majority of mostly Catholic and Anglican people would have full participation in the Sudanese political process. However, the Khartoum Government failed to deliver that promise, resulting in long periods of conflict from 1955 to 1972 and 1983 to 2005. During that time, approximately 2½ million South Sudanese Christian civilians—men, women and children—perished, and almost four million people were displaced.

Many died of starvation and disease, and towns were destroyed. Families were torn apart and many children were recruited as soldiers or simply enslaved. Currently around 24,000 South Sudanese people live in Australia, most of whom arrived between 2001 and 2006. The majority of South Sudanese immigrants chose to settle in the Blacktown and Prospect region in western Sydney. Our South Sudanese community is integral to the fabric of our western Sydney society. Our Christian South Sudanese community are hardworking people who cherish their families and are a wonderful contribution to our society.

In western Sydney we are also fortunate to welcome around 200 Coptic Catholic families to the area. In the electorate of Prospect, we have the first and only Coptic Catholic cathedral in Australia—St Mark's Coptic Catholic Church. In total, we have approximately 30,000 Coptic Catholics in Australia—the third largest Coptic community in the world. Coptic Catholics and Coptic Orthodox Christians are minority Christian groups in Egypt, making up roughly 10 per cent of the country's population. In Egypt and throughout the Middle East, Coptic Catholics are typically victims of persecution, and this has greatly increased after the Egyptian revolution of 1952 and the resurgence of the Islamic Brotherhood and ISIS. Coptic Catholic churches are subjected to repeated attacks. Persecution of Christians in Egypt by terrorists aligned with the Islamic State is worsening and takes the form of bombings and targeted massacres.

In 2017 on Palm Sunday, two Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria, Egypt, were attacked by ISIS bombs, killing at least 45 people. In the same year we also saw a terrible terrorist attack that killed at least 26 people, including children, in a gun attack on a bus carrying Coptic Christians south of Cairo. It was reported that some eight to 10 gunmen dressed in military uniform fired indiscriminately at a car, a bus and a truck on an unpaved desert road to the monastery of Saint Samuel. Between the periods of 2013 to 2017 about 550 protection visas had been granted to Coptic Catholics in Australia. Egypt remains a highly volatile environment for those of Coptic Catholic faith. However, in the electorate of Prospect we spread our arms wide in welcoming those of many faiths.

Other significant communities in the electorate of Prospect include our Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian communities. Our Assyrian communities affiliate with both the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. Together these communities possess thousands of years of history but due to violence, racism, religious and sectarian hate they have been oppressed for centuries. Assyrian and Chaldean people suffered 1,500 years of oppression and experienced genocide. During the First World War one million Greeks and Assyrians and 1.5 million Armenians were murdered because of their faith and their race through State-sanctioned acts of violence, deportations, death marches and massacres that attempted to end the collective existence of Christian minorities in what we now call genocide. The atrocities that occurred during this time can only be referred to as crimes against humanity.

The persecution continued in 1933 when Assyrian Christians were again attacked during the Simele massacre, where men, women and children were barbarically murdered. Priests were mutilated, girls were raped and children were run over by military cars. Further massacres happened in 1945 and 1946 in the northern regions of Iran, then again in 1962 in Iraq. In the past decade ISIS, in pursuit of its horrific mission to commit acts of genocide against Middle Eastern Christians, demolished several sites of historical significance that were thousands

of years old. Most recently, in the early hours of 27 September 2020, Azerbaijani forces launched large-scale air and artillery attacks on the indigenous Christian Armenian population in the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. Those acts of cruelty and injustice are terribly traumatising for those who have lived experience and for the generations of Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian children to follow.

Nonetheless, many Assyrians, Chaldeans and Armenians have made western Sydney their home and have greatly contributed to our multicultural community. I feel privileged to know many Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian families and regularly participate in discussions and events with community and church leaders. I have previously addressed the Chamber a number of times regarding the Tamil genocide, when the Sri Lankan Government incited and committed acts of genocide against the Tamil population over many decades. The Tamil population, which consists of both Catholics and Hindus, has been marginalised and alienated physically, politically and economically by the Sri Lankan Government since Sri Lanka's independence in the 1940s. In Prospect we also have a Bosnian community, who worship at Smithfield Mosque in the electorate and also share traumatic stories regarding the brutal three-year long war that followed the break-up of former Yugoslavia. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

As that war was largely fought along religious lines, Orthodox Christians, Muslims and Catholics were all greatly affected. Bosnian Serb forces, with the backing of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army, perpetrated atrocities against Bosnian Muslim and Croatian civilians. By 1995 approximately 100,000 people had been killed. Finally, we have around 1,000 Palestinian families in the electorate of Prospect of both Christian and Muslim faiths. They have suffered widespread discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds. Both Christian and Muslim Palestinians find it extremely difficult or impossible to worship freely and access some of their most holy and important sites in Palestine and Israel. For us in western Sydney and here in Parliament, these stories are difficult to comprehend and visualise but are tangible real-life experiences that many members of our community have endured. I believe I speak for all my parliamentary colleagues when I say that I am incredibly proud to live in such a tolerant and vibrant multicultural community.

Our community is heightened by the multiplicity of religions we have in our State. However, all religious groups can still experience vilification and are currently not protected in New South Wales. A large number have been vilified for their religion and have sought asylum in Australia, finally settling and seeking a new life in the electorate of Prospect. Many of those people still experience trauma to this day and experience shame due to their ethnicity or religious affiliation. In turn, that creates large-scale mental health issues and intergenerational trauma. It is not good enough. No-one should feel ashamed of their faith and religion. We have a large Catholic community in the electorate of Prospect, along with significant Protestant, Baptist, Pentecostal, Anglican and Uniting communities. Often these communities feel ridiculed and disrespected in public discourse.

I have spent my career fighting for human rights and attempting to bring about restorative justice for different faith and ethnic communities, whether it be moving a motion last year condemning ethnic cleansing and recognising the Republic of Artsakh or continuously campaigning for the recognition of the Tamil genocide. I will never stop fighting the scourge of religious and ethnic vilification. All my constituents, no matter what country they originate from or what religion they subscribe to, deserve to feel safe and deserve to feel respected. Most especially, I believe we must protect those who have come from already significantly traumatic backgrounds. Those who have suffered horrendous acts, like I have mentioned in my contribution to this debate, due to their religious beliefs must be protected in their new homes and in their new country.

The Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021 makes a minor amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to make it unlawful to vilify a person or group of persons on the ground of a specific religious belief and affiliation. Although the change may seem minor, it will make a remarkably positive difference to many lives throughout New South Wales. Our faith groups can feel protected and proud of the faiths they uphold, knowing full well that they are protected from vilification under the law and with the support of the State of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (11:18): It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Government in debate on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021 introduced to the House today by the member for Liverpool. I say at the outset the issue that we are considering today, which is one small part that would flow from the protections for religious freedom, has been a very sharp focus of my work in Parliament over the past nine months—in particular, the six intensive months of chairing a select committee of both Houses of Parliament considering a bill that was put forward by the Hon. Mark Latham from the upper House.

Although I urge the Government to introduce a review of the Anti-Discrimination Act [ADA] and consider the broader issue of religious freedom, I do not support the bill introduced by Labor for three key reasons. The first is that when the member for Liverpool justified the bill, he said that certain submissions to the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020, which was six months in its duration, support a civil protection for religious vilification being moved in this House. That is

simply not the case. Religious vilification was not a major focus of the committee's work. There was no recommendation to that effect, and because of that we cannot simply point to the joint select committee's report as a justification for the bill.

The work of that committee was an intensive six months. We consulted extensively. It was the largest committee of the Parliament; it had 14 members. It had its challenges because of its size and the broad views of the committee members, but we worked well together. As chair of that committee, I would like to say that I had something to do with the respectful nature of the debates we had. All the views of the Parliament were before that committee. An extensive number of stakeholders had the opportunity to present to that committee, make submissions and participate in a survey. We must look to that report as not only one that looked at the bill it was tasked to review but also the broader community and parliamentary sentiment around religious vilification and the broader issue of religious freedom.

The second reason that I oppose the bill is that, as recommendation 4 of that committee report made abundantly clear, a full review of the ADA must be undertaken—it has been on the Parliament's books for decades. The Act has been amended and it has had some additions. It works, but it could be so much better if the Parliament and the Government had a more systematic and holistic approach to religious freedom, including religious vilification, and went through that process in a measured, consultative and holistic way. As the report recommended, we must have a broad-based review to update the ADA and address the issue that has been brought to the Parliament by the member for Liverpool in the form of his bill.

As a point of reference, the criminal provisions that this Government introduced, which I played some part in when I was serving as Attorney General, with the reform we brought to section 93Z of the Crimes Act, led to a change to the law that the Houses of Parliament welcomed, but there was extensive community and parliamentary consultation on the changes to the Crimes Act. That was the Crimes Act and not the Anti-Discrimination Act. The issue of a criminal offence around religious vilification was an extensive consideration of the Parliament, and therefore I believe religious vilification in a civil form deserves similar contemplation, review and reflection because they are important protections in our community that celebrates its diversity every day.

New South Wales is one of the top 10 places in the world for diversity of religious and ethnic background, and I celebrate that. As the member for Vaucluse, my constituency has the largest group of Jewish people in the State, whether they are orthodox practising Jews or Jews who are more secular in their cultural practices around Judaism. I celebrate the fact that I am in this Chamber and I represent the largest group of those people in New South Wales. I am very alive to the issues and challenges that they face day to day when we see coverage on the misuse of Nazi flags and graffiti in public places that vilify and discriminate against Jews. As much as anyone else who has spoken to the bill, I understand the importance of religious freedom and the protection from religious vilification. Despite this being a really important issue, they are the justifications as to why I will not support the bill.

When a committee chair delivers a report to the Government, which I did on 31 March 2021, and participates in a take-note debate, they get about five minutes to speak. It is difficult to represent the depth and breadth of the effort that goes into a committee report. I express my gratitude for the milestone work that my colleagues in this House and the other House put into that report; I am very proud. It was one of the best experiences I have had in understanding the New South Wales parliamentary system. For context, the member for Liverpool was a member of that committee and he did have some different views. The report was not unanimous, but it had a supermajority and there were some recommendations that we all supported.

The Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill was referred to committee by the Attorney General. I acknowledge the members of that committee, including Mr Paul Lynch, the former shadow Attorney General and the member for Liverpool; the Hon. Catherine Cusack; Mr Jihad Dib; the Hon. Greg Donnelly; the Hon. Scott Farlow; the Hon. Sam Faraway; Mr Alex Greenwich; the Hon. Mark Latham; Ms Jenny Leong; Dr Joe McGirr; Ms Tania Mihailuk; Ms Robyn Preston; and Mr Gurmish Singh. That is an extraordinary group of people who came together to work together on the report.

We were tasked with looking at the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill that Mark Latham introduced into the Legislative Council, which proposed a wide-base amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act to make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of a person's religious freedom or activities. There were a number of provisions that were introduced through that bill. They were quite extensive in their impact as to what would constitute religious discrimination in a number of areas of public life. It touched on the areas of work, education, provision of goods and services, accommodation, registered clubs, State laws and programs. I was gratified that after presenting that report to Parliament, the Government's response was to support the report's key recommendations, which were to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act to include protections against religious discrimination. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

A very clear recommendation in that report was that we urged the Government to take on the not inconsiderable challenge of creating religious freedom in this State. It has been a long-time omission from the Anti-Discrimination Act, and that needed to be addressed. I urged the Government, my colleagues and the Attorney General, and I was very pleased with the response from the Government that it would embrace the key recommendations. The recommendation the Government will not embrace is the timing that was proposed by the committee to introduce a bill into the House by the end of the year. We have a responsibility to introduce a bill into this Parliament to remedy the gap in the Anti-Discrimination Act to create religious freedom.

That cannot wait until the Federal Government resolves the issue. I understand that the Federal Attorney-General, gratifyingly, has brought forward a bill for consideration by colleagues in Federal Parliament. That is a welcome development. The latest news is that the bill—it may be an amended version of the legislation introduced by the former Federal Attorney-General—will be considered by the Federal Parliament this year. Therefore, with that knowledge, my request to the Parliament and the Government is that as soon as that flows we waste no time in bringing forward our own bill to ensure that we have protection for religious freedom in New South Wales. We are one of a few States that do not have that freedom embedded in legislation. There will be no further reasons to delay getting on with the job, and doing it well.

I point to the report of the joint select committee that highlights a number of the issues that will need to be addressed in a review and taken into consideration in any bill brought before the Parliament. As I said, we received 192 original submissions, which is an extraordinary number. I thank members of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and the Clerk who were extraordinary in their support of me and the committee in its work. We had an online survey, which was a unique undertaking of the Parliament, to solicit broader public views on a matter of public significance. There were just under 20,000 responses to the survey. Evidence was taken from just under 60 witnesses across 47 organisations at our public hearings. That was an agreed sample of stakeholders and witnesses. There were challenges with timing and hearing evidence within a six-month time frame to bring forward the report.

I underscore that this report represents current thinking—contemporary testimony in evidence from a broad range of stakeholders from which the Parliament can take great courage. This is a structure and a skeleton upon which to build and close the gap that exists and protect the religious freedom of people in our State. The committee reflected on the work of Philip Ruddock, who headed up a religious freedom review report that said we should step up as a State and bring laws before the Parliament to close that gap. We took courage and advice from him. He briefed the committee, amongst other groups in the community. I appreciate all his efforts federally in this area. The Government does a great deal in this area by way of activities, programs and funding, which I will briefly bring to the attention of the Parliament. It is not just laws that protect people from religious discrimination in this State.

There is funding for the Stop Public Threats campaign, Multicultural NSW runs programs—including Remove Hate from the Debate—and our police are well resourced. The Parliament and the Government have a responsibility that they discharge in many ways through funding programs and through supporting the people who do the heavy lifting, particularly our Police Force and Multicultural NSW, to ensure that we take practical steps on the ground to support religious freedom day by day in our community. At that point I conclude my comments and reiterate that I reject the bill. However, I offer this caution: As a Parliament, we must bring forward a bill that addresses an absence in New South Wales law. We must have the protection that enables religious freedom in New South Wales.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:33): I thank the member for Vacluse. I was a member of the committee that inquired into religious freedom and I appreciate her chairing of that committee. It was a difficult committee to serve on at times but it is important to acknowledge what took place. Unlike the member, I am pleased to support the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021. I acknowledge and thank the member for Liverpool for bringing the bill to the House. The member's expertise and commitment to legal reform is well known to the House. This is not the first time that he has brought forward a bill such as this, nor the first time that I have spoken about this issue. When we see the normalisation of hatred, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of religious vilification, it is our responsibility as leaders to act.

The bill reflects the Labor Opposition's commitment to taking strategic action alongside the community to eradicate a scourge that often festers in hidden pockets of society. My electorate of Lakemba is one of the most ethnoculturally and religiously diverse communities in New South Wales. That may come as a shock to members, but there is incredible diversity. These protections speak to the day-to-day lived experience of many of my constituents. Later in my speech I will outline some of those lived experiences because, while we are in this place making the laws, we must understand their impact and importance. So often I speak to this diversity with pride. In New South Wales we practise 144 religions, speak 275 languages and have 205 different ancestries. Many

people have said and acknowledged that we are "the sum total of people from every nation on Earth". However, with that representativeness comes responsibility to build social infrastructure and to afford legal protections.

Each member in the House has members of their community who have been victims of religious vilification at some point in their lives. This provides the impetus for an uncomfortable but necessary conversation. Religious pluralism in New South Wales has always featured religious vilification. British settlers forced the conversion of Indigenous Australians to Christianity from the religious traditions of the Dreaming. The First Fleet imported historic grievances between Catholics and Protestants. The Indonesian Makassar fishermen and Afghan cameleers, who were majority Muslim and minority Sikh, introduced greater pluralism and experienced new religious discrimination. My first visit to Punchbowl Boys High School coincided with the Cronulla riots and the mass vilification of Lebanese Muslims that was occurring at the time. It was the day after, and it is a day that I will not forget. I saw young men looking to a future in a country where ethno-religious origin was viewed as suspect. I saw fraying of the social fabric that is necessary to keep us one city, one State, one society and one nation. The absence of that social fabric, which is underpinned by respect and the right to legal redress, is a vacuum of violence.

My every contribution as an elected representative is motivated by a cognisance that we must tighten that fabric, not rip it apart. I am proud to stand on my record during my time in Parliament and prior to that. I make a point of Australia's social history of religious vilification not to diminish a proud history of pluralism; religious diversity and religious freedom are a touchstone of what makes Australia great. It is for that reason I highlight its historic endangerment from vilification, which persists to this day. My personal experiences attest to vilification on a regular basis. I understand that, as a person with a public profile, I may be seen by some as fair game but, whilst I accept criticism for my performance as a member of Parliament, the vilification that comes with it because of my religious beliefs is something that I will not accept and should not cop. I have spoken about that a number of times. However, as a person with the ability to respond, I will do so—and I have done so, for example, a couple of years ago when my daughter was vilified on a soccer field.

But what happens to the person who does not have a profile, the confidence or the ability to "call it out"? It is not that they do not have the courage or they are not suffering; they do not have the platform that I have. I am always very conscious of the fact that I am in a privileged position. With that comes the important role of telling people's stories, of sharing people's stories. It is not to divide but to unite. There are hundreds of experiences I could refer to that I have become aware of over the years. The lived experience is not to be underestimated. As many members will know, I was a school principal before I came to this place. I worked very closely with a number of people. We had to take on many things to build bridges. What some members may not know is that I was also a commissioner on the Community Relations Commission charged with bringing together the very best of New South Wales, the very best of Australia. I was also on the board of the Together for Humanity Foundation, which encourages people to get to know one another. When people get to know one another and learn about each other's experiences, the feeling of otherness is replaced by a sense of respect and belonging.

An international study by Jonathan Fox from Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv detailed a global rise in religious-based discrimination and vilification, including in western democracies such as Australia. The study's disaggregated data showed that socially based religious discrimination, including vandalism and harassment, had increased by almost 30 per cent globally between 1990 and 2014. And here was I thinking that we had made some progress. Outright violence had increased by over 50 per cent in the same period. It is not only people of the Jewish faith reporting this but also people of all faiths. Unfortunately, there are members in this Parliament who demagogue religious minorities, including those of the Islamic faith, and sound a dog whistle to far-right extremists, who are most predisposed to acts of religious vilification. The threat of far-right extremism has been described by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation as real and growing. The Islamophobia Register in Australia reported that there were 349 verified incidents of Islamophobia in a two-year period. It defines such an incident as:

An event or occurrence of an Islamophobic nature that is either physical or online event or occurrence characterised as Islamophobia/Islamophobic including physical attacks, assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, non-verbal harassment, intimidation and online threats.

Those are verified incidents, but a lot go unreported. The report makes clear:

Lack of any legal consequence to minimise vilification of Muslims as individuals or a community contributes to continuing victimisation of Muslims on the basis of their religion.

I thank Charles Sturt University and the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy, amongst others, for their compilation of the report. In November 2019 the Executive Council of Australian Jewry reported a 30 per cent year on year increase in reported incidents of anti-Semitism. There were 225 attacks and 143 threats made by Australians against other Australians on the basis of their religious identity. I appreciate that disaggregated data does not capture adequately the trauma on an individual of religious vilification. I do not wish to leverage that

trauma for my argument. An attack on a person's religious identity strips them of their dignity, respect and the safety to which they are entitled in New South Wales. Religion is foundational to the identity of millions of people in New South Wales. Protection from vilification of religious identity is an effective yardstick to measure social cohesion and harmony.

The member for Liverpool has spoken at length about the requirement for legal reform. The Federal Government's Religious Freedom Review in 2017-18 noted that statutory protection in New South Wales against religious discrimination is limited. The Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021 has support from a cross-section of the community. The Parliament has received submissions requesting reform from a number of different religious groups, including the Lebanese Muslim Association and the Australian National Imams Council. Section 20C of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 made racial vilification of a person or group of persons on the grounds of race unlawful. In 1994 the Anti-Discrimination (Amendment) Act amended the section 4 definition of "race" in the Anti-Discrimination Act to include ethno-religious origin. The second reading speech of the then Attorney General explicitly provided parliamentary intent that the bill capture Sikhism and Judaism. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House for its indulgence. Notwithstanding that statement of parliamentary intent, there has been judicial doubt on the application of section 20C to religious groups as well as explicit carve-outs for people of different faiths. Furthermore, there have been no successful prosecutions that rely on that provision or its successor provision in spite of a rise in religious discrimination. That indicates that the Anti-Discrimination Act as worded has not adequately rendered parliamentary intent. Therefore, this bill serves as an incremental increase of intent on the earlier provisions enacted by a former Liberal government. I appreciate there will be changes made to the bill. Even if the Government votes against this legislation, we must ensure that religious vilification is included in the Act. It is no use having religious freedom if there is no protection against vilification; they must go hand in hand. A 1997 Law Reform Commission report, regarding the purpose of anti-vilification legislation, states:

One of the aims of vilification legislation is to reduce the threats to social cohesion and reduce public disorder by encouraging and preserving tolerance.

I would add acceptance. This may assist in reversing the inferior status of historically disadvantaged groups. Those purposes complement free speech and free expression, which are irreversibly married to freedom of religion. However, freedom of speech has never been an absolute right. The discretion of Parliament must balance free speech with any associated freedom it curtails, including the right to practise religion free from vilification. People use the excuse of free speech to mask bigotry. I can attest to hundreds of personal experiences of that. Freedom of speech comes with responsibility; it is not a mask for bigotry. Free speech must always be defended as a civil right. But when does it cross the line and become harassment, hatred and vilification? People who use the defence of free speech to espouse hatred, violence and ignorance towards people of other faiths perpetuate fear that may in turn lead to violence. A person who continually promotes hatred may not commit a violent act but someone else may become violent as a result.

I regularly speak at events about religious freedom, harmony, building bridges and understanding. Only last night I spoke to a diverse group of Australians about the role that we all play in society. In the past I have been invited to speak by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Australian National Imams Council, and YouthPower, which is an organisation that brings together people from a range of faiths, as well as at Sikh and Hindu events. I say to all of us, people of faith and of no faith, we have to get this right. I highlight my experience because without collective leadership, no bill will eradicate religious vilification. Leadership demands that we confront religious intolerance and vilification wherever we see it. We must openly cherish and champion diversity and pluralism as an ongoing cause that is foundational to our collective social success.

I will use one example of an inspiring personal story that members of the House may be aware of. Towards the end of 2019 a lady in Parramatta, who I think at the time was about seven or eight months pregnant, was attacked in a cafe. I was present when she spoke publicly for the first time about the attack. I was moved by her description of the trauma she experienced. In effect, she said the attack was based purely on her Islamic faith, made evident by her veil, and also because she is a woman. She added that she believed that because of the perpetrator's history of violence against women and Muslim women in particular. The perpetrator also made comments about Muslims before the attack. As she felt every blow, the woman realised that her attacker did not intend to stop. If nobody had intervened, she could have been killed. Let us not forget, this lady was heavily pregnant at the time. Members may remember the images of her crouched on the ground. As the man approached her table that night asking for money, it was clear that was not his intention. She said that rather than examining each person at the table, he looked at her and said, "You Muslims raped my mum." She chose to wear the hijab. Nobody has the right to take that choice away from her. Her attacker endangered not only her life but also the life of her unborn son.

There is so much more to say on this issue. I thank the member for Liverpool for introducing the bill. I also thank the members who have contributed to the debate. Finally, recently the Australian Human Rights Commission published its report on the outcome of its Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims project. The report made some key recommendations. I commend the bill to the House. I urge Government members, if they vote against this bill, to include religious vilification in the Act. Members of the House owe it to the people of New South Wales, a place where everybody should have the opportunity to live their best lives.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:50): Via video link: I am pleased to speak in debate on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021. From the outset, I state that I will be opposing the private member's bill, which seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to introduce protections against religious vilification. I support the sentiment of this bill; however, my speech will explain the reasons why at this point I need to speak in opposition to it. I acknowledge the contributions of members who have spoken in favour of the aims and objectives of the bill, but also in relation to the broader context of the Federal Government's efforts to deal with protection of religious freedoms. The Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 protects against discrimination on a number of grounds, including race, sex, homosexuality, transgender status, marital or domestic status, disability, carer responsibilities and age. The object of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2021 is to include religion as one of the grounds that offers protection from discrimination.

In our society over the recent decades the awareness of the fight against all forms of discrimination has been growing and has become interwoven in the democratic and diverse DNA of society's norms and laws. Unfortunately, and sadly, the religious vilification and discrimination against certain individuals and groups has increased alarmingly in recent times. We have heard specific examples from members emanating from their religious affiliation or from their electorates. The bill seeks to make religious vilification of individuals unlawful by amending the Anti-Discrimination Act. Previously there was an attempt, in a 1994 amendment bill, to make it illegal for some types of religious vilification in the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

LILLY CARSON AND HASTINGS VALLEY NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:53): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus student, Lilly Carson, on being awarded the Hastings Valley Netball Association [HVNA] Umpire of the Year on 25 September 2021.
- (2) Notes Lilly earned her National C Badge in early 2021 after impressing the officials with her umpiring skills and leadership qualities.
- (3) Commends Lilly for her dedication and commitment, which has seen her participate in the fast-paced Opens 1 Division.
- (4) Acknowledges Lilly is regularly on the sidelines for her club, inspiring and motivating her peers to work as a team and perform at their absolute best.

In moving this motion I also congratulate a couple of other award winners from the Hastings Valley Netball Association. In particular I congratulate Meaghan Cook, an incredible woman. She is the principal of the Hastings Secondary College and used to be a student there. She is obviously an avid netballer as well. She was nominated by her under-12B Port Panthers Quokkas team and was awarded Coach of the Year. Many of the girls in this team had never played netball before and were so grateful to have Meaghan's support, encouragement and care. Knowing Meaghan very well, I am not surprised that she approached her netball coaching the same way she approaches her role as principal of one of the largest public schools in the Port Macquarie electorate. The individual growth of those girls and their ability to play as a team is a credit to Meaghan. I thank her for her contribution in supporting these young women as they start their netball career.

I also congratulate Alexandra King. Alex was named as the Hastings Valley Netball Association Member of the Year for 2021. She was responsible for bringing the EmpowerPlay program to our representative teams, engaging them in topics that have an impact on their lives now and in the future. Alex is also a Hastings Valley Netball Association development team coach, coaching and encouraging our representative players in the making. She is always keen to assist the association. I again congratulate and thank her for her contribution. Of course, then there is Lilly Carson, who is the subject of this motion. As it states, she was recognised as the Hastings Valley Netball Association Umpire of the Year. She has worked so hard on her umpiring over the past few seasons and it is a credit to her that she has earned her National C Badge. She is a regular on the sidelines for her club, including the fast-paced Opens 1 Division. She also picks up extra games whenever needed. I say well done to Lilly.

In my younger days I was an avid netballer, as many members in this House would have been, including my colleague opposite, the former shadow sport Minister. It is such a great pastime and social activity. It is an opportunity to bring out the best in young girls and women. No matter what their abilities are, it is just great to get them as part of a team. Of course, that does not happen in clubs or associations without those people who take on those executive positions and volunteer roles. I acknowledge the executive of the Hastings Valley Netball Association. The president is Catherine Glover. She has had a challenging couple of years trying to make sure that players got through their netball games. Sadly they did not quite get to grand finals this year, but we wish them all the very best for the future. Other members of the executive are secretary Rosemary Andrews, treasurer Jodie Burge, senior vice-president Natalie Jordan, junior vice-president Denise Hillier, senior registrar Carole Field and junior registrar Leonie Spencer.

The coach coordinator for the association is Michelle Marino. Publicity officer Linda Dewbery does an incredible job: The association has an amazing Facebook page and it always keeps club members up to date. Finally, the minutes secretary is Ann Heaton. I thank all the coaches across all the clubs and associations, as well as the managers, the umpires and the volunteers who run canteens. It is a pretty big deal on a Saturday morning. They have to get there early to set up the courts and start with those junior players, and they are still there very late in the afternoon. I thank all of them for making sure that our netball associations continue to thrive and inspire.

The Hastings Valley Netball Association is such a hardworking group of people. Many of the women who are on the executive committee have been there for a long time. They were there when I announced almost \$1 million from the Liberal-Nationals Government for a major redevelopment of the Macquarie Park netball courts, which is our main netball centre in the electorate. It included an upgrade of the playing surfaces, new disabled access toilets and improvements to the clubhouse. At that time the president was Helen Miles, and I was joined by a whole range of local netball players. It was a really exciting day. The association had worked so hard on its application. It had a couple of not so successful applications but finally got it in the bag and was awarded over \$900,000 through the ClubGrants Category 3 Scheme.

The netball facilities at Macquarie Park are well loved and well utilised. However, I think everybody agreed at the time that they were desperately in need of an upgrade. Due to issues with drainage, some of the courts—particularly at the end of the set of courts—were unusable because the court surface was so deteriorated that the young women could not play on it for insurance reasons. It was really sad to see that because it meant that the number of games they could play was limited, but the redevelopment went ahead. Again, I give credit to the club. It was a major win for the local netball community. Our netball community has over 150 teams and over 1,200 players who use that facility. I am really pleased that the Government was able to support them through the ClubGrants Category 3 Scheme.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member and note that many men are taking up playing netball because of the excellent game it is. I also note that we have the core of a wonderful Legislative Assembly team in the Chamber, who are contributing to debate on the motion—Evans, Wilson and Voltz. Indeed, I am really looking forward to joining the member for Port Macquarie!

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:00): I speak to the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie acknowledging the hard work of umpires. Firstly, I acknowledge the quarter of a million women and girls who play netball across New South Wales. Mr Temporary Speaker Piper, I think you will find that when members talk about women's sport, this motion is it. Often when I come into this Chamber I hear some of my male colleagues expounding about women's sport, but what I do not see them doing is joining netballers to stand up for netball facilities. The member for Port Macquarie quite rightly pointed out how poor the facilities were in her electorate. That is the story of so many netball facilities. I will deal with that issue in more detail later. Obviously, I want to support the hardworking netball umpires and administrators who deal with a quarter of a million women and girls, which is a huge task

However, secondly, I pay my respects and the respects of my colleagues on the passing of Netball NSW's patron, Neita Matthews, who recently passed away. Neita was the patron and a life member of Netball NSW since the 1980s and entered the Netball Hall of Fame in 2011. Neita was patron of Netball NSW for a remarkable three decades. In keeping with the motion, Neita's dedication to netball was lifelong and she was the most respected netball umpire in the country. She had a relentless passion for the game, and was a tireless worker and mentor. She was the first Novocastrian and former Mayfield West Public School old girl to become an All Australia umpire. She was elected Netball NSW Junior Vice-President in 1968 and was the New South Wales umpire coordinator for 17 years. In 1987 she became secretary of the Oceania Netball Association and held this position until 1991. To Neita's family, friends, the Eastwood Ryde Netball Association and everyone at Netball NSW, on behalf of all my colleagues I pass on our condolences. Neita's passing is a great loss to the Netball NSW family.

My electorate of Auburn has a proud and long history in netball. It has twice been the home of Netball NSW, firstly with an 11-court facility at Wyatt Park and then with the home of netball at Netball Central

in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct. But as the member for Port Macquarie pointed out, the past two years have been an extraordinarily difficult time for netball across Australia, and New South Wales in particular. The structure that netball works on is that the competition pays for administration of the sport. In particular, the adult netball players subsidise the kids getting back on the court. Matters reached a very disturbing point last year when Netball NSW was within days of bankruptcy. Netball NSW continually made representations to the Office of Sport.

It is unfortunate that the Government could not pick up the Australian Institute of Sport [AIS] road map to get community sport back on the field because at the end of the day without that support we will lose some people to the sport forever. Overwhelmingly, we know that some of the people we will have lost are girls who will never come back, and that we also will have lost some umpires and administrators. Once a competition is stopped, it is a very difficult task to get it back up and get it going again. As I said at the start of my speech, quite often some of my colleagues talk about women's sport. A lot of it is lip-service because the big sports that women and girls play—netball and gymnastics—are the most underfunded in terms of discretionary grants made by this Government. We have just had an example of that in the Port Macquarie electorate and I know that in the electorate of the member for Heathcote netball players at Helensburgh had to pay from their own pocket the cost of a fence around their two netball courts because hoons were driving over the courts and ripping up the surface. This is what netball puts up with all the time.

Everybody knows how closely I examine sports grants and I know that netball organisations do not get consideration. It is a huge frustration when I hear about an organisation with 40,000 members applying for grants to put more lights on netball facilities with the intention of growing the game and I see grants going to rugby union facilities because the applicants say they will put one team on. I do not begrudge rugby union growing in popularity. I am a former chair of Women's Rugby Union, but let us be realistic about the sports that women and girls are playing. Gymnastics gets no consideration whatsoever yet it is the biggest sport available for women and girls. It is frustrating for the administrators of netball and gymnastics to constantly have to work on the smell of an oily rag when they see huge grants going to other areas of sport. It is a fact that there is no regional netball facility they can have a regional competition in one place outside the Sydney Basin. People from the bush have to come to Sydney to play netball. It is just crazy that there has not been any investment to the extent that netball deserves.

Netball is our women's professional sport. This is a sport that women have played since the 1950s and 1960s in droves. In my own area the Parramatta Auburn Netball Association is still a huge association. It is impossible to go anywhere without seeing evidence of how big netball is. Why that is not reflected in discretionary grants is beyond me. It is also beyond me why regional netball facilities are not provided—likewise with gymnastics, which is an elite sport, an Olympic sport and a Commonwealth Games sport. There is practically no investment in gymnastic facilities. Nearly all gymnastic facilities across our State are privately run and gymnastics is the most expensive sport in New South Wales. It costs \$2,000 for girls to be trained.

I am not saying that men and boys do not do gymnastics; obviously, they do and we have some great athletics emerging in New South Wales. But for women and girls, the most expensive sport is gymnastics. The Government does not invest in it. If members of this House want to talk about women's sport in the Chamber, here is the story: Netball, with its dedicated umpires and people like Neita, who have given their life to the sport, deserves a fair go from this Government.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:07): I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie on moving the motion, which congratulates Lilly Carson on her great accomplishment in the past year. Netball is a very, very important part of community sport. Obviously, everybody wants to ensure that there is a netball association of some kind. I thank the member for Auburn for mentioning, in particular, the Helensburgh Netball Club, which has struggled for years and years to try to keep vandals off their courts. I inspected the courts with a previous sports Minister and we walked across the courts. I am pleased to inform the House that significant funding has been allocated to Helensburgh to increase court space and for renovation of the courts. Approximately 180 women and young girls play netball at Helensburgh and the courts are becoming busier and busier. There is a risk of liability to have players on some of the damaged courts' surfaces.

Some netball clubs I wish to mention in the context of this motion are the Bosco Netball Club, the Engadine Eagles, the Flames Netball Club at Menai, the Heathcote Netball Club, the Loftus Zircos Club, the Menai Hawks Netball Club and the St Patricks Netball Club. The Sutherland Shire Netball Association is the biggest netball association in the Southern Hemisphere. It has an enrolment of more men and girls playing netball than any other club in the Southern Hemisphere. Netball is a burgeoning sport for men and women. It is a testament to all communities that those volunteers come out week after week, month after month, year after year and run netball. Members would not want to come up against a netball association committee. They are the toughest people you could ever come up against; they know what they want and they usually get what they want.

As the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Auburn have said, netball is a burgeoning sport. I have been a long-time advocate for women's sport and for getting more dressing rooms for women in sport. For example, in my electorate there is not one AFL club with a female change room, which is an absolute disgrace. That is partly council's issue, but as I have previously said in this Chamber we need to step up to make sure that women have the facilities to play any sport they wish to. In my electorate, the girls who play AFL have to change behind trees. That answers the question of why young women do not participate in sport after the age of about 13 or 14; it is just too embarrassing for them. I have been agitating for councils in my electorate to improve dressing facilities and change rooms for female participants of all sports. It does not matter what sport it is; there should be men's and women's dressing facilities.

I come back to Lilly Carson and her fantastic achievement. I acknowledge her work in inspiring and motivating her peers to work as a team and perform at their absolute best. That happens across New South Wales with young women and with the stalwarts of netball who have been doing that for decades. I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie on bringing the motion to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:11): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing the motion to the House and I congratulate Ms Lilly Carson on her great achievement. It is a great opportunity to get up and say a few things about netball and my experiences and the local community's experiences. I thank all the members who spoke before me. The member for Auburn said that there are 250,000 players and people involved in netball—what a fantastic thing!

I was thinking about netball, and my kids have actually been through netball like so many others. When I was a little bit younger, I played in a mixed netball competition. It was much more difficult than I thought it was going to be. I really struggled with it, and I take my hat off to all netballers for their skill and talent. My kids started off in the junior netballers; I think the youngest started when she was four. My eldest is now nearly 21 and is still involved, playing with her friends. Obviously that is less competitive and more of a social thing. Over the years I have been to my fair share of netball games on a Saturday morning.

I know the motion is about one particular umpire, but I thank all of the volunteers. Of all the community sports I have witnessed, the level of organisation and structure in netball is phenomenal. I learnt that the hard way when I had to be the manager for one particular game because the manager and the coach were away. I was the dope who put his hand up and said, "Yes, I will do it. No problems." But I actually forgot to return the scoresheet, and there was nothing more embarrassing than when they said, "Will the manager for such-and-such team return the scoresheet? We cannot start until you do that." I did the walk of shame, but I saw the wonderful organisation, the sense of volunteering and the lifelong involvement in netball. Many people who are involved in the administrative side, the volunteering and running the local clubs had obviously done the same thing as my daughters and started when they were four or five.

The march-past is something to behold; the first time I saw a march-past, I could not believe it. It just reinforces the commitment, the organisation, the sense of friendliness and the camaraderie. It does get competitive, and I started seeing that when my kids got into the 17 years and above age bracket, but there was an incredible camaraderie between the players. I also loved seeing the many players who gave up their time to coach, referee or help out in the canteen. I am really pleased to see that more males are getting involved in netball as well. It is an excellent and fantastic sport and it is quite difficult. As I said, I really struggled at netball, and I like to think that I am reasonably athletic.

It was also really good to see two New South Wales teams, the Swifts and the Giants, get into the final of this year's Super Netball. While the Swifts may have won this year, between the member for Auburn and I, we think that maybe the Giants could be the ones to watch next year. More people are getting involved in netball. I want to see it more available on free-to-air TV during good timeslots and I want to make sure that funding is available. We rely a lot on volunteering and goodwill, but I am sure that all members in this House can agree that we should contribute to help things get better, whether it is the change rooms, as the member for Heathcote said, better facilities, supporting the volunteers and making life easier for them or encouraging people to participate.

One thing we have missed during this pandemic, among so many other things, is community sport. It really brings the community together. When I go and watch the Bankstown City Netball Association or the Inner West Netball Association, which cover my electorate, I love to see how it brings people together who are new to the country and who come from a variety of different cultures. I congratulate Lilly Carson again and thank the volunteers. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing the motion to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:15): I contribute to the motion put to the House by the member for Port Macquarie. I thank her for bringing the motion because netball is, as other members have said, the game for girls and women. It is the most popular sport for girls and women. As a former netballer—I say former, but once I recover the brief athleticism and strength that I previously had when I did play, I will hopefully

be a netballer again in the future—netball is such an exciting sport. It requires a great deal of fitness, coordination and teamwork. Girls and women across the State, whether they are elite players or playing in community sport or in the backyard, have the opportunity to get involved in netball and learn great skills and be involved in their community. We know that community team sports are part of the fabric of local communities across New South Wales, including in my own electorate. In my electorate, netball remains the single largest sport for girls. We have a lot of very large sporting clubs across the North Shore, but netball is the biggest for girls. Yet, as we have heard from other speakers, it is often a struggle to get the investment, resources and infrastructure that more girls and women need to play the sport that they love.

I am pleased to support the motion and recognise people like Lilly Carson who have had achievements in netball. I know the New South Wales Government provides funding to sports clubs to increase participation in sport. My community has been the beneficiary of some funds that have targeted women and that have been invested in netball in particular. One of the teams in my electorate is the Mosman Netball Club. About 600-odd netballers descend on Mosman's Drill Hall courts every week to play, train and shoot some hoops. The New South Wales Government provided \$150,000 in funding for Mosman Netball Club to install lighting for the courts. When the courts were built by the council they were not built to competition-grade standard, and so competition netball cannot be played on them. That is probably a matter for another time. But by putting in lights in what is a very constrained geographic area with not a lot of land for new courts, the time for training is extended, which encourages more participation from different age groups and interested players. We spent years negotiating the installation of lights, getting them funded and working through the process, because the courts are on former Federal defence land. We experienced a lot of planning constraints and it was a hugely significant and challenging process.

I thank the Harbour Trust and Mosman Council for their work. Most importantly, I thank the Mosman Netball Club and particularly the parents who are the advocates and volunteers supporting infrastructure contributions for the women and girls in my electorate. The new lighting for the three outdoor netball courts will make them safer, more reliable and more accessible. The lights are also a boost for the Mosman Netball Club during winter, even though there was not much training during the winter just past. I particularly thank club president Vicki Albert, former club secretary Georgina Paynter and Councillor Jacqui Willoughby from Mosman Council, who is a long-time netball player and netball parent, for their unwavering support for the project. I also thank the committee volunteers as well as the players and members of the club.

Mosman Netball Club is also part of the Northern Suburbs Netball Association, which includes a number of our local girls high schools and the seniors North Sydney Netball Club—the club that I used to play for when I was fitter and healthier. I am excited about what the Northern Suburbs Netball Association does. They have already had sold-out clinics to welcome kids back to netball. They do a lot of work to get donations from the community, including for south-west Sydney throughout the pandemic and for breast cancer through Pink Day fundraisers. The girls and women who are players in the organisational structure of netball are real leaders in our community. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:19): In reply: I thank all of the members who have contributed to the debate this morning: the member for Auburn, the member for North Shore, the member for Heathcote and the member for Lakemba. I join the member for Auburn in acknowledging the incredible contribution of Neita Matthews, OAM, to Netball NSW. Given the contribution she has made over such a long time—decades and decades—it is no wonder that she was considered worthy of life membership in 1980 and entered the Hall of Fame in 2011. Extraordinarily, she has been the patron of Netball NSW since 1987. I also acknowledge her passing but, in doing so, I acknowledge her contribution to Netball NSW. I thank the member for Heathcote for sharing some of his stories of netball and the role that it plays in his community. I thank the member for North Shore, who talked about some of the improvements that have been made to the netball facilities at Mosman. I also thank the member for Lakemba. We forgive him for not getting the scorecard right. He will get there. It clearly demonstrates he needs more practice at it, so get back out on the sidelines and get it right next time.

Ms Lynda Voltz: He can be our orange boy next time.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: Yes. I also acknowledge his comment that often the people in executive roles in netball associations, including Netball NSW, have been playing and involved with netball for their entire life. I know that is how it was for me: I started netball when I was knee-high. My mum was in the canteen and she coached and umpired. I think we all have stories like that. He talked about the march-past, and I have to agree that they really are a sight to be seen each year. I missed it this year, but as a local member—and I know others in this House probably share this thought—gosh, it is a terrible job to have to judge it. I always try to fob it off to someone else—to suggest that some parents there could come together and make a decision. You do not want to upset any of the clubs, because they just put so much effort into them. They are to be commended for those efforts.

I acknowledge Netball NSW, because they play such an important role in making sure that netball continues as such a popular sport across our State. Their annual report last year will tell you that there are almost 100,000 registered members with Netball NSW, but there are probably even more who play the game but are not registered members. That is a huge group of people to support through the administration of the club. In closing, I also acknowledge the support that the Government has provided to netball as an organisation and as a pastime through Active Kids. That has been such a successful program. Particularly when a number of young people in a family are playing netball, it is quite a challenge. As the member for Auburn said, it is quite a costly exercise to play those sorts of sports. Active Kids provides two \$100 vouchers for parents, guardians and carers of school-enrolled children to use towards sports such as netball. Active Kids contributed \$5.57 million to netball in 2021 and since its inception has contributed \$24.29 million. That is quite impressive. I thank all of the people involved in netball across our State. My congratulations to Lilly Carson on her achievements.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COVID-19 AND WESTERN SYDNEY

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (12:24): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Thanks the people of western Sydney for their incredible effort in getting vaccinated, at rates higher than the rest of Australia and the world.
- (2) Expresses disappointment that Sydney was torn in two, with harsh restrictions enforced on communities across west and south-west Sydney.
- (3) Recognises the devastating impact of these restrictions, with turnover declines of up to 70 per cent by small businesses and the loss of 18 per cent of jobs in some areas.
- (4) Expresses concern that from 1 December 2021, these businesses will have no support whatsoever from either the State or Commonwealth governments.
- (5) Acknowledges the risk that Higher School Certificate students in local government areas of concern have been disadvantaged by not having the same access to their schools in the lead-up to exams, with less resources available to learn remotely.
- (6) Calls on the Government to ensure businesses can successfully reopen, people can get their jobs back, and that western Sydney can recover and thrive after years of underinvestment and months of harsh restrictions.

Over the past months the suburbs in the west and south-west of Sydney have experienced some of the harshest lockdown restrictions of any place in Australia throughout the pandemic. It has been so tough on our families, and it has been incredibly tough on local businesses. Despite this, we have seen an absolutely incredible response from the communities of western and south-western Sydney, who have come together in record numbers to get vaccinated and help us reopen. Unfortunately, with the lack of vaccines in communities in the western and south-western suburbs—including my own—communities were initially left exposed. The Federal Liberal Government's failure to secure enough vaccine supply to prevent this lockdown created a vulnerability in western Sydney. Unfortunately, the resulting lockdown restrictions then divided Sydney into two. No-one can make the case that the impacts of this outbreak have been felt evenly across Sydney; they just were not.

The Government must help our State rebuild, starting in Sydney's west and south-west, where we need it most and where the impacts of the lockdown restrictions were felt most deeply. The Premier must plan to bring our city back together. My community wants to live in one Sydney, not two. Our city wants to live together, not be pulled apart. We need a herculean effort from the New South Wales Government to bridge those divides, which we know were apparent long before the pandemic. We only have to look to small businesses in our city's west to see the impact the restrictions had. Small businesses suffered significant losses in trade. We are talking about losses of up to 70 per cent in those parts of Sydney. Just imagine how a 70 per cent downturn affects a business. Imagine trying to keep your business going and keep your team employed.

Through no fault of their own, businesses have been taken to the brink. The pain was felt most deeply in the suburbs of western Sydney. The impacts have been felt right across the workforce. Job ads are down 60 per cent. By comparison, ads closer to the CBD are only down by 25 per cent to 30 per cent. Those who lost work are crying out for opportunities to rejoin the workforce, and we need the Government working on this right now. Nearly one in five jobs was lost since the start of the lockdown in some parts of the south-west. The impact on those communities is far from over.

We also cannot downplay the impact that remote learning had on students across the locked-down areas. Teachers, parents and students themselves have all gone out of their way to manage remote learning, but we need students safely back in school. We all agree on that. Teachers desperately miss their students; students miss their teachers. For our kindergarten and HSC students it has been especially hard. It is vital that HSC students in the

western and south-western parts of Sydney are not disadvantaged in their exams. It is right and necessary that the impacts of remote learning are taken into consideration as those students undertake their final assessments and plan for their futures beyond high school. More support can help our students catch up as well. This is so important. The Government should extend the COVID intensive learning support program and should rapidly and urgently expand the number of school counsellors.

The COVID intensive learning program provides small group tuition in schools to help students catch up after almost two years of disrupted learning. This year's disruption has been far more significant, and I think everyone that has experienced remote learning would agree. The COVID intensive learning program must be available to support students well into 2022. This is something the Government should do straightaway to help families that have been severely impacted by the lockdown of schools. Teachers and parents can see the value of targeted support for students; having professionals that can identify problems quickly and rectify them is always the best approach. The Government should fast-track additional school counsellors in New South Wales schools to support children's mental health. These are sensible approaches that will ensure our State's education gets back on track and that families and students in western and south-western Sydney are supported after such a difficult four months.

Our State needs the Government to commit to ongoing support for students, workforces and businesses. The New South Wales Government needs to give businesses a chance to get through a stable reopening with support to ensure they reopen safely and stay open. Our State needs targeted support for students to ensure those that have fallen behind are not left behind. The Government should look to the following measures to support our State's recovery. First, extend the COVID economic support; the jobs crisis experienced in western and south-western Sydney is far from over. Second, extend the payroll tax reduction; the crisis faced by businesses in western and south-western Sydney is not over. Third, invest urgently in the building and upgrading of schools and social housing. Let us bring jobs back in western Sydney and get our kids back learning in classrooms that are fit for the future. The Opposition calls on the Government to ensure that businesses can successfully reopen, that people can get their jobs back, and that western Sydney can recover from these harsh restrictions.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:31): Via video link: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) to (6) with a view to inserting instead:

- (2) Commends the resilience of western Sydney and dedication of residents who have worked with the Government to abide by restrictions in order to manage the pandemic.
- (3) Recognises the investments made by the Government to support impacted businesses and workers.
- (4) Recognises that the Government has provided a road map to ensure that businesses can successfully reopen, people can get their jobs back, and that western Sydney can recover and thrive.

It gives me great pleasure to lead on behalf of the New South Wales Government in response to this motion. I extend my sympathies and condolences to all the families, not only of New South Wales but across this country, who have lost loved ones during this tragic pandemic. It has been dreadful and heartbreaking. The pandemic has not been easy for anyone, but there is no doubt that the western Sydney community has felt its impacts perhaps more than most. The good news is that New South Wales is coming out of the long winter months of lockdown, and the Government has a clear road map to reopening our community and our economy.

I am proud to say that from this coming Monday—perhaps even earlier—we are expecting to exceed the 80 per cent double vaccination rate in New South Wales. That will mean we can begin to further open our businesses and our fantastic public spaces. Children can return to school. Not long after, we are forecast to reach 90 per cent and more. I commend my own community, the community of The Hills, which has very much led the way, with first dose vaccinations now exceeding 96 per cent and second dose vaccinations above 90 per cent. It is an amazing effort. I congratulate all the people across the State who very wisely have been encouraged to undertake vaccination, which is truly the way forward for all our communities.

Unfortunately the insidious virus does not discriminate, just as it did not discriminate when we had to lockdown other areas such as the northern beaches last year. The good news is that New South Wales is again open for business. Going forward to some of the issues that have been raised by the mover of the motion, I am happy to say that the Government, together with its road map, has provided and will continue to provide outstanding support for businesses, workers and employees as we move ahead. As members would know, the Government acted very quickly and responsibly following the outbreak of the Delta virus in June 2021 with a business social support package of some \$7.7 billion. The 2021 COVID-19 business grants of between \$7,500 to \$15,000 helped save and sustain many of those businesses with an annual turnover of more than \$75,000, covering in the first three weeks of restrictions not only costs and wages but also applicable rents.

More than 190,000 applications from businesses have been received to date, with over 165,000 having been paid out; that is almost \$2.1 billion in stimulus packages from the New South Wales Government that has

been paid to businesses as at 21 September. That is on the back of the micro-business grants program, where \$1,500 per fortnight was available for small businesses or sole traders with an annual turnover of \$30,000 to \$75,000 which may have been experiencing a 30 per cent or more decline in turnover. That was very important support for people even in the smallest of businesses, giving them some sort of stimulus to remain there throughout the pandemic. Hopefully they can head around the corner and get some positive cashflows in the days, weeks and months ahead.

The JobSaver business and employer cashflow support program to maintain employment and staff for businesses impacted by the current health restrictions was delivered together with the Commonwealth Government. That was vital in recognising that once the pandemic seemed to ease at the beginning of 2021 there was a huge increase in re-employment, business viability and activity. Unfortunately that was impacted by the Delta strain, but the New South Wales Government did not shirk its responsibility and continued to provide outstanding support. There was a \$75 million support package for the performing arts sector, to be administered by Create NSW; a \$26 million support package for the accommodation sector; and \$5.1 million for the very important area of mental health. I do not think there is a member in the Parliament today who does not recognise that many people in our communities have suffered from the strain of mental health throughout these difficult times.

I was glad to see that my former ministerial portfolio area of multiculturalism received some vital support. I know that the CEO of Multicultural NSW, the very capable Joseph La Posta, will ensure that that funding is distributed to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. An additional \$3.5 million was extended to the Business Connect advisory, because there are still many businesspeople in our communities who do not recognise that support is available. We need to continue to send that message out there responsibly so that they can access and uptake those business grants and the funding that is available to keep their businesses and employees sustained, and hopefully reactivated, in the future. One thing the New South Wales Government does so well in these times is reduce tax. In the current financial year we have seen payroll tax claims of up to 50 per cent for businesses that are paying out less than \$10 million in wages and have experienced a 30 per cent or greater decline in turnover. That will be of enormous benefit, saving employees and supporting businesses in the future.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:39): I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Londonderry and in opposition to the self-congratulatory amendment moved by the member for Castle Hill. At the outset I thank our community for doing the right thing, following the rules, supporting each other and getting vaccinated. I also thank our frontline workers, who have been through a most exhausting four months. Western Sydney needs more support and COVID has been a tale of two cities. It has exacerbated the existing lines of disadvantage across our city. There has been a 70 per cent drop in business in parts of western Sydney. In the Parramatta area over 20 per cent of people receive some sort of COVID income support that will end on 1 December.

Earlier this week CreditorWatch published its warnings on business default. It warns that in my electorate 7.8 per cent of 8,634 businesses across the Merrylands and Guildford area are at risk of default, and that is the greatest level of risk anywhere in New South Wales. COVID has taken a huge toll and there have been many deaths in my electorate. Later today I will speak more about that in my private member's statement. There have been 454 deaths across New South Wales. My electorate had some of the highest rates of COVID infections. The Cumberland local government area has had 8,927 infections. It rivals Canterbury-Bankstown but has a population approximately two-thirds the size of Canterbury-Bankstown. For over six weeks suburbs in my electorate were named every day as suburbs of concern, particularly Merrylands and Guildford, and at its peak about 6 per cent or 7 per cent of the population of Guildford had COVID at one time. The Cumberland area was in hard lockdown from 23 July until last Sunday. Parramatta, the other part of my electorate, went into hard lockdown a few days after Cumberland.

Every week throughout the pandemic I have been volunteering with OzHarvest, preparing and handing out food hampers. On 1 July, at the start of the pandemic, we handed out 400 hampers. On 30 September we peaked at 924. That is how much more people are suffering now than they were months ago. They will not be ready on 1 December to go back to normal. OzHarvest is not the only organisation in my area supporting people by providing food hampers. Turbans 4 Australia and the Hindu Benevolent Fund have also been phenomenal in the support they have provided people. It is not just people doing it tough financially; people who have been in isolation and cannot get deliveries from the local supermarket because they are a week behind also have had to rely on charity, in many cases for the first time in their lives.

There were often delays of six to eight days in obtaining test results when people went to the Guildford pool testing centre. The Test and Isolate support payment, which this Government introduced only after Labor's lobbying, is totally inadequate to support people taking six to eight days off work waiting for test results. The

eligibility requirements for business support did not cover everyone who needed it in my area. Confusing messages created no end of problems. We need more support; mental health needs more support. I call on the Government to provide more support to western Sydney immediately.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:43): I speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Castle Hill. As the member for Seven Hills I am extremely proud of our local community and their effort in achieving outstandingly high vaccination rates, ensuring that the wider western Sydney community could come out of the health order restrictions as early as possible. It was a credit to the local community. I also recognise community leaders across western Sydney from both sides of the political divide and from many different types of interest groups who came together to assist this worthy cause of encouraging the community to achieve a high rate of vaccination.

The people in the local government areas of Parramatta, Blacktown and The Hills who I represent have done an incredible job achieving a vaccination rate of over 90 per cent first dose. The double dose rate is over 90 per cent for The Hills, over 80 per cent for Blacktown and almost 80 per cent for Parramatta. Throughout the current Delta outbreak the New South Wales Government has remained committed to being adaptable and responsive to keep businesses in business and people in their jobs. In response to the June 2021 COVID-19 outbreak the New South Wales Government reacted with a business and social support package of over \$7.7 billion. A substantial portion of the New South Wales Government economic response focused on western Sydney to turbocharge the recovery of the local economy that was hardest hit by the pandemic.

Most recently I was pleased to be with western Sydney colleagues to announce the \$5 billion WestInvest Fund to rejuvenate western Sydney communities and boost jobs across the area. The WestInvest Fund will allocate \$3 billion for future projects in a diverse range of areas: for example, local community infrastructure such as sporting fields, public and green spaces and modernising our local schools. The remaining \$2 billion will be reserved for high-priority projects to be developed in consultation with all our local communities and, importantly, industry across the area. Pleasingly, overall the economic recovery after the initial outbreak in 2020 was faster and stronger than expected and this gives us great confidence and hope as we work towards the reopening of New South Wales.

Since the start of the pandemic the New South Wales Government has announced over \$30 billion in stimulus and COVID-19 response measures, including tax deferrals and waivers. The New South Wales Government responded to the June 2020 COVID-19 outbreak with business and social support packages of over \$5 billion. These included up to \$2.1 billion for business grants and JobSaver cashflow support, which was delivered with the Commonwealth, to help businesses retain staff. The program has already received more than 14,000 applications and as at 28 July almost \$28 million has been approved for payment. There was a \$75 million support package for the performing arts sector, to be administered by Create NSW; \$26 million in funding for the accommodation sector; \$22 million in funding for temporary accommodation for those at risk of experiencing homelessness during the pandemic; \$5.1 million in New South Wales funding for support for mental health; and payroll tax waivers, grants and interest-free payment plans.

The New South Wales Government has increased the rebate for small businesses, including tradies, who can now claim government fees and charges from \$1,500 to \$2,000, and it has expanded to cover tolls. There will be ongoing support for western Sydney businesses, some of which will include business advisers across western Sydney; \$250 million in the Jobs Plus Program; funding for small businesses, with rebates for fees and charges; and upskilling for job seekers. I encourage the people in my electorate of Seven Hills to use their Dine & Discover vouchers as soon as businesses open to boost our local economy.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:47): Via video link: I am delighted to speak on the motion moved by the member for Londonderry about the economic recovery of western Sydney. I thank all our communities for getting vaccinated and allowing [inaudible] and, of course, the health workers who have kept us safe. Sincere and serious economic policy is more than another media event—another bromance photo opportunity at an inner-city organic gastro pub, downing a schooner and trying to look like a suburban local. I bet it was a handcrafted, watermelon-flavoured light beer. Talk about a confected image makeover! All the Premier needs now is his red "Make America Great Again" [MAGA] cap while shouting, "Make New South Wales great again!" after he gerrymandered and locked up south-western and western Sydney based on no scientific evidence, causing serious economic damage. Our communities should have the minimal amount of restrictions for everyone, not harsher restrictions for some just because they do not live in a Liberal electorate occupied by a senior Cabinet Minister.

My electorate office, like many others in western and south-western Sydney, is located in a small CBD on a main street. Oxford Road in Ingleburn is usually bustling with people and car spots are hard to find. At lunchtime it is usually much busier, as workers emerge from their offices to go for a walk or a bite to eat. However, in recent months that has not been the case. Parking spots are easy to find and there are almost no queues at the shops or

eateries. Some shops have even closed their shutters or reduced their opening hours. I fear that some shops will remain vacant for a considerable period. Main Street, Ingleburn, is very much a microcosm of western Sydney and south-western Sydney. Having endured a protracted lockdown, including an oppressive and unfair curfew, the region I live in is struggling to recover.

During the worst days of the pandemic and lockdown it was, of course, western and south-western Sydney that kept the economy going. Having done so much of the heavy lifting, our residents and the local businesses in our region need special help. Consider these sobering facts and statistics: Job ads are down by 60 per cent, small businesses have suffered loss in such trade of up to 70 per cent and 18 per cent of jobs have been lost since the beginning of the pandemic. More than any other part of Sydney, western and south-western Sydney have borne the economic sting of the pandemic. The emotional and social costs continue to grow. This Liberal-Nationals Government touts that western and south-western Sydney is the centre of its economic blueprint for post-COVID wealth. Nothing could be further from the truth. This Government fleeces my constituents with burdensome road tolls and unashamedly pork-barrels to favour its own electorates with public money. It insults teachers, nurses and other frontline public sector workers during a pandemic by only offering them a paltry 1.3 per cent pay rise. The list, of course, continues.

More than ever, western and south-west Sydney need special economic assistance. They need help from a government that understands the daily commute, the work/home/homeschool juggle and the struggle of those who live on part-time and unreliable work. NSW Labor understands those issues, and the aspirations and ambitions of the people of western and south-western Sydney. A couple of Dine & Discover vouchers, whilst welcome, will not cut it, nor will rehashing announcements about government spending. If this Government was serious it would fast-track urgent social housing and school repairs, and stimulate the local construction and trade industry. Only a New South Wales Labor Government can assist western and south-western Sydney to support economic recovery.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:52): I support the amendment moved by the member for Castle Hill. The pandemic has not been easy for anyone—or any region, for that matter. But the community of western Sydney has felt its impacts more than most. The western Sydney community is not only resilient but also rich with cultural and environmental diversity, and economic opportunity. In western Sydney we have a fast-growing, diverse and dynamic economy; a strong industrial base that generates \$56 billion dollars annually in gross regional product; one of the most diversified regional economies in Australia; demographics that present opportunity, including a diverse and educated workforce with some of the fastest sustained population growth in the OECD; and great lifestyles, from urban living to semi-rural, with vibrant CBDs, and world-class natural parks and waterways.

The vision for the Western Parkland City is to create 200,000 new jobs across a wide range of industries over the next 20 years. The airport and aerotropolis will attract infrastructure, investment and knowledge-intensive jobs, the benefits of which will flow into health, education, retail, hospitality and industrial activities that will power the city. Since that initial agreement, we have made incredible progress: The largest earthworks project in Australia has commenced in building the western Sydney international airport. Government commitments to investing in the connectivity for the airport and the Western Parkland City are evident in the \$11 billion committed to the Sydney Metro to the Western Sydney Airport. We have also committed more than \$1 billion in funding to commence development of the Bradfield City Centre, which is approximately 114 hectares in the heart of the aerotropolis, adjacent to the airport.

It will become a global hub for an advanced industry cluster, including defence and aerospace industries, manufacturing and logistics, future transport industries, construction technology and new energy and circular economy industries. The New South Wales Government has committed \$48 million for the high-tech first building of the Bradfield City Centre, which will include shared-use equipment to allow research institutions and industry to collaborate. It will be part of a dynamic, smart, future-ready precinct that will support 17,600 highly skilled jobs. The first building will be in great company. A rolling series of projects will further activate the city centre. For example, the CSIRO has announced its intention to relocate up to 450 of its employees and researchers into a state-of-the-art facility in the heart of the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis from 2026.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I do not know what mushroom the member for Londonderry has been living under, but I want to raise point 6 of the motion, which states:

6. Calls on the Government to ensure businesses can successfully reopen, people can get their jobs back, and that western Sydney can recover and thrive after years of underinvestment and months of harsh restrictions.

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

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I do not know what is happening here. In stark contrast, it seems that the member for Londonderry has forgotten the previous Labor record: Back in the Bob Carr build nothing days, nothing was built. I attended three announcements of the Sydney metro north-west that never happened. I sat in a room with Morris Iemma, who delivered nothing. The member for Londonderry needs to remember the Bob Carr build nothing days. This Government—

Ms Prue Car: You are living in the past.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: You are living in the past. You have always been in the past.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:56): By leave: What we have heard in the past four minutes is totally unrelated to the motion that was moved.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Opposition frontbench members will spread out and observe social distancing, please.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: The member for Londonderry has moved a motion regarding the situation western and south-western Sydney finds itself in as a result of the lockdown and restrictions that were placed on the communities that many of us represent in this Chamber, including the member for Hawkesbury. The member for Hawkesbury talked about the Bradfield city, the new metro in western Sydney and the runway. We are talking about what has been the decimation of many people in our communities.

Ms Robyn Preston: I'm talking about jobs—tradies' jobs, your people that you neglected in the Bob Carr build nothing days.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Many members on this side of the House aided voluntary organisations by putting together packages for people who could not even put food on the table and the member for Hawkesbury is still interjecting about the pain and suffering that has happened to people in western and south-western Sydney. I will give members an example: In western Sydney when the lockdown restrictions came in they were the harshest of any district or region in the country. People were placed under restrictions where workers had to get tested every three days to leave their local government area—for example, in Fairfield. But when they went to get tested the facilities and structures were not there. The places were closed and it was clogged: If you went to the Fairfield Showground, it was shut; if you went down to Endeavour Reserve, it was shut; if you went up to Brennan Street in Smithfield, it was shut. For the member for Hawkesbury to talk about a former Labor Government from 10 years ago—

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

Mr GUY ZANGARI: What is the Government doing now? I will say one thing about the people I represent: When the going gets tough, they get in and get their hands dirty. They dig in; they provide support. Religious and social organisations came together to collect fruit, fresh food and vegetables to help those people who could not put food on the table so that they could pay bills, pay the rent and pay the mortgage. What we had to listen to espoused in this Chamber is absolute sacrilege. Those of us who live, worship and send our children to school in western Sydney are absolutely offended by this. I support the motion put forward by our deputy leader and the member for Londonderry regarding the community getting out there and getting vaccinated, despite the Government dropping the ball when it came to messaging for vulnerable communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Labor had to get local members of Parliament to speak in their own languages and local councillors to speak in a multitude of languages because the Government simply dropped the ball.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Rubbish!

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Why doesn't the Minister for Local Government come to Fairfield and say what she just said in this Chamber? Shame on her!

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Minister for Local Government will come to order.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: She would not know a migrant if she saw one in the flesh. Shame on her.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:00): By leave: I was not going to make a contribution, but then I heard the member for Castle Hill decide to sanitise the motion by making an amendment. I cannot understand what precisely those opposite are trying to water down, because everything the member for Londonderry, our deputy leader, has said in the motion is accurate. What are they particularly concerned about? Is it the member expressing disappointment that Sydney was torn in two? Are we suggesting that it did not take place? Is that what the other side is trying to water down?

The other day we heard the member for Penrith, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, say in this Chamber that he did not notice that Sydney was torn in two, despite the fact that half of his community was also locked down with harsh restrictions. It is extraordinary to believe that the member for Penrith did not notice that the city of Sydney was torn in two, despite the fact that he sat in crisis Cabinet with people like the member for South Coast and imposed harsh restrictions, worker permits, mandatory testing, curfews, and stay home orders. Didn't he notice that he did that? It is extraordinary to hear the member for Hawkesbury suggest that nothing happened in Sydney either. Maybe she should talk to the member for Mulgoa, who night after night raised her concerns with her own Government about the harsh restrictions that south-west and western Sydney had to endure in the past 14 weeks.

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

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: It is unbelievable that they are trying to rewrite history when the reality is that this is a well-written motion. Everything in this motion is accurate. We need to see the economic packages extended beyond 1 December. Does the House want to know why Premier Perrottet wants to bring the 1 December lifting of restrictions date forward? It is not because he wants to free up Sydney. It is because he does not want to pay those economic packages to small businesses across south-west and western Sydney. Because we all know that, come the lifting of restrictions on 1 December, those economic packages go. That is what this is about. The Premier wants to stop those economic packages. That is what he is all about. He has always been about putting the boot into south-west and western Sydney. And the Minister for local Government knows that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Whether it has been toll increases, charges or fines, he has boasted about hurting the livelihood of the families in south-west and western Sydney. I commend the member for Londonderry for her motion. I am speaking because I do not want the motion amended. It is appalling that the very few western Sydney members that the other side has are prepared to amend the motion when everything in it is correct. The fact that they want to amend a motion that asks this House to extend economic support to the small businesses across our city is appalling. They should be ashamed of themselves.

We will watch how they vote in a couple of minutes because they have an obligation to care for those businesses that are now feeling the hardest restrictions they have ever felt. Many of those small businesses actually shut their doors last Sunday because the Government asked them to police government orders by checking vaccination records without any support. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves. They do not belong to the party that represents small business. We do a better job on this side because our party is fighting for the small businesses across Sydney.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Usually it takes one minute to read a motion live even if it is submitted via email. The member has six points in her motion. I have timed it, and it should take 4½ minutes to read. I reiterate that it normally takes one minute to read a motion.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:05): In reply: This is very disappointing. Imagine being a resident or a small business owner in a suburb like Fairfield, Bankstown, Campsie or Guildford and hearing your Government pretend that the division of Sydney into two did not happen. Any reasonable person who has watched what has happened in Greater Sydney can clearly see that the restrictions placed on western and south-western Sydney were different from the rest of Sydney and imposed harsh restrictions on businesses in particular, some of which will never recover. The only people saying that this did not occur under the Government of New South Wales are the Liberals. Did they actually spend the lockdown under a rock?

The member for Hawkesbury came into the Chamber and spoke about the Western Sydney Parklands when we on this side are talking about businesses and communities in western Sydney that will never recover, when the member for Fairfield is talking about local community organisations that pack 250 food hampers every day to keep people surviving, and when the member for Granville is talking about collecting food hampers with multicultural communities across her electorate to put food on their tables. It is utterly shameful that Government members cannot see that they just divided Sydney into two. They are so sensitive about it that they come into the Chamber and amend the motion to congratulate themselves. Let me tell the House who got us through this pandemic and lockdown: the people of western Sydney, who rolled up their sleeves and have some of the highest vaccination rates in the country. And this Government is sensitive about it. Maybe the colleagues of the member for Seven Hills should ask him why he tried to get some of his suburbs taken out of the harshest lockdown. He knew what it was doing to his community.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The member for Holsworthy knew what it was doing to her community. Imagine deserting your community right now! Imagine deserting the people of Casula, Leumeah, Chipping Norton and the

communities around Liverpool, who were put under the harshest restrictions seen in this country! The Government is putting its head in the sand. Instead of acknowledging the sacrifices of the people of western and south-western Sydney, it comes into the Chamber and tries to congratulate itself. That tells you everything you need to know about the Liberal Government. It thinks that all we are good for is paying the tolls, fines and taxes, and copping the harshest restrictions. The people of western Sydney got us through this lockdown. We were put under the harshest restrictions and we got through this. The people who divided our city are not us; they are the members of the Liberal Government, and the people of western Sydney know that. That is why this Government is so sensitive about this. The people of western Sydney and the frontline workers of western Sydney got us through this, and this Government divided us in two.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Minister for Local Government will come to order. The member for Rockdale will come to order. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. I call member for Rockdale to order for the third time.

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

The House divided.

Ayes14

Noes11

Majority.....3

AYES

Bromhead, S
Cooke, S (teller)
Crouch, A (teller)
Greenwich, A
Gulaptis, C

Layzell, D
Provest, G
Saunders, D
Singh, G
Taylor, M

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

NOES

Car, P
Finn, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R

Kamper, S (teller)
Mehan, D (teller)
Minns, C
O'Neill, M

Park, R
Parker, J
Zangari, G

PAIRS

Anderson, K
Atalla, E
Ayres, S
Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Catley, Y
Clancy, J
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Pavey, M
Perrottet, D
Roberts, A
Scully, P
Smith, N
Stokes, R
Tesch, L
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W

Dib, J
Conolly, K
Harrison, J
Doyle, T
Crakanthorp, T
Coure, M
Aitchison, J
Saffin, J
Hornery, S
Bali, S
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
Harris, D
McKay, J
Mihailuk, T
Chanthivong, A
Watson, A
Griffin, J
Daley, M
Lalich, N
Williams, R
Cotsis, S
Barr, C

PAIRS

Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K

Henskens, A
Lee, G
Constance, A

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes16
Noes12
Majority.....4

AYES

Cooke, S (teller)
Crouch, A (teller)
Greenwich, A
Gulaptis, C
Layzell, D
Piper, G

Provest, G
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Singh, G
Speakman, M

Taylor, M
Upton, G
Ward, G
Williams, L
Wilson, F

NOES

Car, P
Finn, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R

Kamper, S (teller)
Lalich, N
Mehan, D (teller)
Minns, C

O'Neill, M
Park, R
Parker, J
Zangari, G

PAIRS

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Bromhead, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Constance, A
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Pavey, M
Perrottet, D
Roberts, A
Smith, N
Stokes, R
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Williams, R

McDermott, H
Harrison, J
Doyle, T
Crakanthorp, T
Warren, G
Aitchison, J
Mihailuk, T
Washington, K
Scully, P
Voltz, L
Saffin, J
Hornery, S
Bali, S
Lynch, P
Catley, Y
Harris, D
McKay, J
Dib, J
Chanthivong, A
Watson, A
Daley, M
Atalla, E
Cotsis, S
Barr, C
Tesch, L

Motion as amended agreed to.

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

Ministerial Statements

TRIBUTE TO NORM PROVAN

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:17): On behalf of the Government I make a brief statement on the death of a great Australian and iconic New South Welshman, Norm Provan. Norm was simply one of the greatest rugby league players in the history of the sport and one of the most iconic athletes our State has ever produced. He was a Riverina kid who moved to the big smoke and made his mark on the footy field. A giant on the park, he played hard in attack and hard in defence—packing down scrums from the second row back when that actually meant something. Easts knocked him back but he got a start with Saints, and it was in the red and white that he would go on to write his name into the history books.

Norm played 256 matches for the Dragons including 10 of their famous 11 straight grand final wins at the Sydney Cricket Ground, the last five as captain. He wore his State and national colours with pride, playing 14 tests for Australia and 16 matches for New South Wales. Many thousands of players have played rugby league at the highest levels in Australia, but just 110 of them are named in its Hall of Fame. Only 13 are recognised as Immortals of the game, and Norm Provan is among the select few. But his iconic status is best reflected in the premiership trophy on which his likeness stands and the photo on which it is based.

Known as *The Gladiators*, the image depicts Wests captain Arthur Summons embracing Provan after the Dragons' controversial win, both of them covered head to toe in mud. Norm's exploits on the field were before my time, but that photo and that trophy inspired in me, like many kids, a burning passion for the game of rugby league. It captures the very essence of what it means to play your heart out while being gracious both in victory and in defeat. I know Norm's presence and inspiration will be felt for many generations to come. Norm was renowned for his integrity, his leadership, his courage and his trademark humility on and off the field.

When Ben Hornby broke his club record for the number of games played, Norm simply said, "All records are made to be broken." When the new NRL trophy was named in his honour, he said, "I've played a lot of football and I'm sure there are a lot of other worthy recipients." But few in the game would dispute that Norm Provan has earned his place in rugby league folklore. As St George club historian Ian Heads wrote in his book *March of the Dragons*:

Provan was born to lead. His honesty, ambition, will to win, courage, dignity, modesty, pride in his achievement, loyalty and fair play fitted him perfectly for the task.

As a sport-loving State, the people of New South Wales embrace many different codes. But rugby league is the people's game, and today the people lost a hero. Vale, Norm. We extend our deepest condolences to Norm's family and friends. May he rest in peace.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:20): As Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kogarah I pay tribute to the late Norm Provan, who passed away last night aged 88. Provan was a towering figure for St George in their record run of premiership wins and played 18 tests for Australia. Provan was not picked for the Eastern Suburbs rugby league team after trialling for them and in 1950 made his way to the St George Dragons. I have a feeling that if Norm was playing today, Nick Politis would be unlikely to make the same mistake.

He bowed out in 1965 with a win by the Dragons over the Souths in front of 78,000 spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground, although many more claimed to be there. As the Premier said, members would have seen the immortal *The Gladiators* photo taken by John O'Gready following the rainy, muddy 1963 grand final. When looking at the photo the eye is drawn to Arthur Summons, the smaller of the pair, gazing up at the six foot four Provan—the mini David against the St George Goliath. But that is until you look at Provan's face. Standing tall with his massive mitts around Arthur's waist, there is no condescension; there is just amazement that Wests had held the invincible St George to just eight points.

There is irony in the fact that the toughest game in the world is represented by a trophy with two blokes hugging, but that is why we love rugby league and that is why it is great. It is effectively unique to us; it is our sport. It is in the DNA of Sydney; it is in the DNA of New South Wales. The fact that in reality Summons was complaining to Provan about the referee—also one of the great traditions in Sydney—is something that I am sure we can easily forget and ignore from history.

Provan was a big man with a commitment to excellence. He stood apart as a player-coach and was not what is typically thought of as a macho footballer. He was said to be a teetotaler later in life and rarely finished even one beer in the sheds after a victory. There was some distance between him and the team, he said, because he never wanted to drop a very close mate from the side. That is the often untold part of triumph in sport: its

personal toll and its personal commitment. He was a captain, coach, father and grandfather with a commitment to excellence in sport. He led the Dragons to 10 of 11 premierships, a feat that will likely never be matched in first-class professional sport anywhere in the world. Vale, Norm Provan, for bringing enjoyment to Sydney and Australia, for his commitment to the game and for delivering a lifetime of memories to thousands of Australians who support the mighty Dragons.

Question Time

MS MELANIE GIBBONS, MEMBER FOR HOLSWORTHY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. More than 6,000 people in Holsworthy lost their jobs during the Delta outbreak. Is mid-term, mid-pandemic the right time for the member for Holsworthy to cause a by-election?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Obviously it is disappointing that the member for Holsworthy is seeking preselection for Canberra but our loss may be their gain. The reality is that she has been a fighter for south-west Sydney, and I am sure if she is successful in her preselection and becomes the member for Hughes she will be a strong fighter for that electorate in the Federal Parliament. The problem I have is there is just way too much talent in the Liberals and The Nationals. Everyone wants our members. We are an exporter of talent right across the country. Our members are in high demand. Now, we do not need anyone else to go, but the member for Holsworthy will be a great fighter in the electorate of Hughes. She has been a great fighter in south-west Sydney. We will keep fighting every single day for the people of New South Wales. If you look at our track record, that is exactly what we have done and it is exactly what we will continue to do.

As I said, it is very difficult for me to hold onto them all. It is *Young Talent Time* over on this side of the House—except for the member for Wakehurst. No-one is asking for Brad, although he does well, too. No-one is asking Opposition members to go to Canberra. We are a talent pool; they are a talent drain. Rather than having members get exported from NSW Labor down to Canberra, it is the exact opposite. They are trying to drag people such as Jason Clare from Canberra into New South Wales. Remember Jason Clare? They dragged him kicking and screaming down here; he did not want to come. They had to conscript him and he still said no. That is because no-one wants anything to do with those opposite, and I understand that. It is hard when you lead a team that bats deep: There is always going to be demand for our talents elsewhere. As I said, though, I do not want any more members leaving—everyone can stay where they are. However, it is a good sign when Federal politics knows that our members in the Liberals and The Nationals in New South Wales are such strong fighters for their communities that they want to pick that talent up and take it to Canberra.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Three-quarters of a billion dollars for a new Liverpool Hospital. That is what she did.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: She delivered Liverpool Hospital. All our members have great track records of fighting for the people of New South Wales. If at some point in time they decide to go to Canberra, I am sure they will make great Federal members fighting for the people of Australia. That is what happens when you have talented individuals on a talented team. That is the difference between the Liberal-Nationals Coalition and NSW Labor, which no-one in the country wants anything to do with. The facts speak for themselves. When members look at what the Liberal-Nationals Government has achieved with jobs and the economy in our time in office since 2011, we have turned around the economy and the fate of the State. We have driven jobs growth, built hospitals like the Liverpool Hospital, built schools and made record investment in infrastructure right across the board, with \$108 billion of infrastructure to come over the next four years. I know that my team is going to be in high demand now and into the future because every single day its members work selflessly for the people of our State.

COVID-19 AND STATE ECONOMY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:27): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government has helped our State bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger, [audio malfunction] and more successful than ever before?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:28): I missed the last bit of the question but it sounded good. I was out there with the member for Hawkesbury on Sunday at the Marsden pub in Marsden Park, where this week 120 people are back in work because we have been able to open up. That is not because of the Government; it is because of the great work of every single person across the State who has made the effort to get vaccinated. It is not just happening in Marsden Park and the Hawkesbury electorate, or in the electorate of the member for Riverstone, who was out there with us as well. I think it might even be in the Londonderry electorate; the people of the Londonderry electorate are very happy with the New South Wales Government. It is happening all over the State.

ANZ provided some data this week in relation to the spending on Monday 11 October when we opened up. It is pleasing to see that total spending in New South Wales was 20 per cent higher on Monday compared with the previous Monday. We have already seen the impact of opening up on driving economic and jobs growth. The pent-up demand was clear. ANZ called it "fashion and beauty", if members would believe it. Beauty services were up 870 per cent. Clothing was up 168 per cent on the previous Monday. Nail salons—a subject close to my heart—were extremely strong, up 2,300 per cent, which is incredible. Hairdressers were up, too. I note that the Leader of the Opposition's mullet is gone; he has been out there driving investment into the New South Wales economy. Interestingly, dining and takeaway spending was actually lower compared to the previous Monday but online bookings for restaurants were strong. Obviously we expect to see a bounce in dining and takeaway as we move through the next weekend. We also saw furniture and homewares spending lift substantially. In one day we saw great results for the people of the State.

The jobs data came out today. To September, since the start of the outbreak we have lost 234,500 jobs. Obviously that is concerning. It is a consequence of the sacrifices that people have made to keep people safe across our State. We have had to put restrictions in place. We are now opening up and we will get as many of those jobs back as quickly as possible. Members will know that last year we lost 270,000 jobs but recovered them all, plus 38,000 more. Earlier today I discussed the jobs data with the Treasurer and the Chief Economist. The advice we received was that had we not put the JobSaver program in, we would have lost 100,000 more jobs. Some 234,000 jobs were lost; it would have been well over 300,000 but for the investment of the New South Wales Government in the JobSaver program. We wanted the JobKeeper program, but in the end JobSaver provided important cashflow to businesses while alleviating the need for them to continue to pay their staff through the disaster payment from the Commonwealth. It has enabled many people to remain in work.

We put big dollars into that program since the June budget, the equivalent of building a north-west metro. We said from the outset that we would put families and people right across the State before the budget to keep people in jobs and keep businesses going. That is exactly what we have done and it has had exactly the impact that we intended it to have. There were \$7.7 billion in economic measures. The JobSaver program was the linchpin of our economic support package because it kept that link with the disaster payment the best that it could—that is why JobKeeper was better, but I will put that to one side—to keep those people right across our State in work. There were 194,000 paid applications as part of that program, and under that measure alone, some \$5.5 billion has been paid out. The Treasurer and I speak to a lot of businesses and the feedback on the ground about the support that payment provided for people has been incredibly positive. [*Extension of time*]

During what was an incredibly difficult period, the payment provided businesses the confidence to keep their employees on—and to now reopen and stock up. As the Treasurer outlines his economic recovery plan for the State, members have seen and will continue to see a range of initiatives that will stimulate the economy as we head towards the end of the year and the JobSaver program is phased out. Earlier this week the Treasurer announced the Summer Holiday Stock Guarantee. It has come through our consultation with businesses, learning from the experience in Victoria as we head into bumper summer trade. It provides \$20,000 to cover the stock of perishable items and \$10,000 for non-perishable items. That would have been crucial in Victoria and it is going to be crucial here. While we do not want to go into lockdown again, what we will do is provide confidence for businesses to invest as we head into the summer period. The Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate from Minister Damien Tudehope in the other place has been increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000. Allowing that to be used for tolls will be a great win for tradies.

Today the planning Minister and the customer service Minister announced \$66 million for the alfresco restart initiative, which will give businesses \$5,000 to create outdoor dining experiences and help with those costs. You have to get in quick; only 5,000 of those grants are available. The planning Minister is cutting red tape in regulations everywhere he goes, and there are \$500,000 grants for councils that want to embark on that program as well. We doubled down on Dine & Discover—everyone loves it, wherever they live. Even Labor members love it; they do not like to admit it, but they are spending the vouchers. We know that businesses right across the board will benefit from that program. We said last year that if it works we will continue to invest, and that is exactly what we are doing as we are going forward. Whilst members on the other side of the Chamber talk the economy down, we will continue to instil confidence in every business and every person across our State.

The SPEAKER: I have an indication of who will ask the next question and I will follow that order, which is a little bit different from how members normally seek the call. In return, I ask members participating online who are about to ask a question to not unmute their microphones until I give them the call and it is time to ask their question. We have had a little bit of a problem with audio feedback in the Chamber when members who are online unmute their microphones.

MS MELANIE GIBBONS, MEMBER FOR HOLSWORTHY

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:35): I direct my question to the Premier. The member for Holsworthy has decided to quit Parliament. Will the Premier immediately remove the member for Holsworthy from her Parliamentary Secretary position, for which she earns an extra \$650 per week, while she hunts for a better job?

Mr Brad Hazzard: She's still working.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:36): We stand for workers' rights on this side of the Chamber: your rights at work. I will get this one right: The member for Holsworthy is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General. I know she does an amazing job supporting the Attorney General, the families Minister and the emergency services Minister within the cluster. I have complete faith in her being able to continue that role, as well as complete faith in her in continuing her role in fighting for south-west Sydney. And that is the difference between the Opposition's side of politics and our side of politics. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is here at a time today when difficult jobs numbers came out for the people of New South Wales and she is focused on internal Liberal Party politics. Do you know what we are focused on? We are focused on the great people of New South Wales.

Today we are out making announcements in the planning space and the customer service space to provide opportunities for businesses to flourish and to get government out of the way so we can get people back to work. Today we announced the Dine & Discover vouchers that continue to stimulate the economy. They provide cost-of-living support for families and support for small businesses right across the State. We are out focusing on that and doing that every single day. Yesterday I was out with the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer to announce our green hydrogen strategy of \$3 billion, which will leverage up to \$270 billion of private sector investment and ensure that our kids and their kids have the best access to work into the future—a first-mover advantage, not just nationally but globally. It will provide opportunity to access markets like Japan, Korea and Germany. It is being ahead of the game—not just being nation leading but also being world leading in our approach and our support for small businesses with the stock guarantee, which I just spoke about.

Right across the board we have a dedicated team that not only fight for their local communities; every single day, they also fight for every single worker across the State. I am very proud of the team. I am proud that people want them and that they are in high demand, because I know and the people in Canberra know how dedicated our team is in New South Wales. We work every single day not just to deliver for people today, whether in schools, hospitals or public transport, but also ultimately to set a vision for the future. What people will see with this Government is not a government focused on the here and now; it is a government that wants to set up our State for success to take it from good to great and to take it to the next level for generations to come. It is a visionary government so, like yesterday, with the work the Treasurer been doing, the work that he has been doing in the environment and energy space, and while other governments around the world, and particularly in Australia, sit on their hands, this Government is looking to the future. I am proud to be part of a team that every single day tirelessly works not just for the people of south-west Sydney, but also for every single community across our State.

REGIONAL AND RURAL ROADS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:39): Via video link: I address my question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government is investing in our regional and rural road network?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (14:39): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. He is a local member who understands the importance of having better roads and transport in his electorate. He has been a strong fighter and continues to advocate for his community.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Myall Lakes to mute his microphone.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This has been an exciting day and a great week for the people of New South Wales. This Government has made great announcements about jobs, transport and supporting businesses. This Government is getting on with the job of supporting all people across New South Wales. Today I announced the next round of the Fixing Country Bridges Program, which was a \$500 million commitment that The Nationals made before the last election. As a Liberal-Nationals Government, we are delivering the infrastructure that matters in our communities. Round one of the \$500 million Fixing Country Bridges Program provided \$282 million for over 400 bridges in our communities across 53 local government areas. It is an absolute game changer for communities that are getting their old timber bridges replaced. Some of those timber bridges are over 100 years

old. Some have been damaged or washed away by floods, and some have been damaged by fire. They have then sat there, unused, for months or years, which was a huge impost on those local communities. The Fixing Country Bridges Program is a game changer. By opening the next round of funding, the Government will deliver more country bridges across the State.

Three bridges in my electorate of Bathurst received funding as part of round one. The local council had spent \$100,000 every year just to maintain those three bridges. As a result of this program the local council can now reinvest that \$100,000 into much-needed projects in the community. Some communities had to build detours, one of which was about 262 kilometres, because a bridge was unusable. That impacted on farmers and the cost of living for them and their communities. Some bridges have had weight limits, which has meant that the RFS could not be called in emergency situations because its vehicles could not get across those bridges into communities. This program is a game changer for our communities. This Government announced in round one it is spending \$2.17 million to replace Jacksons Bridge in the electorate of Murray. The existing 39-metre bridge has load limitations. The new bridge will allow high-productivity vehicles to cross, which is more critical and more important than ever, especially when farmers are facing a bumper harvest. The load limit on the new bridge will be 100 tonnes. It will be a game changer for those communities in that area.

Carrathool Shire Council sent the Government a letter to thank us for the funding of this program and the opportunities it provides those communities. I know the member for Murray is watching these proceedings and is very happy with the investment she has seen in her electorate. The Fixing Country Bridges Program is expected to create around 900 direct and indirect jobs in our local areas. It is supporting councils, contractors and bridge teams in our local areas. The good news does not stop there. Recently I announced the Government's Fixing Local Roads Program, which is another \$500 million investment to repair, maintain and seal priority roads in our local communities. These important upgrades to our roads mean that people can travel to work, to school, to the shops, and return home safe. Sometimes the big infrastructure projects get all the headlines but the small projects can make the biggest difference to the lives of people living in our communities. That is what you get under a Liberal-Nationals government: investment in projects that make a big difference to the lives of the people in regional and rural New South Wales. This Government will not stop there because we have more programs in the pipeline, more investments that will create jobs—*[Extension of time]*.

It is about investment in regional New South Wales and making a stronger and safer place for our communities to live. I listened to the budget-in-reply speech given by the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Myall Lakes will mute his microphone.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The member for Myall Lakes is a great member. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition spoke in his budget-in-reply speech about what he will deliver. How many times did he mention the word "regional"? Twice. How many times did he mention the word "Sydney"? Thirty. The Perrottet-Toole Government will represent people across all of New South Wales, whether they live in the rural and regional parts of the State or in the metropolitan areas. We will continue to represent and invest in our communities. It is no wonder that Country Labor has disappeared, when the Leader of the Opposition mentions the word "regional" only twice. That is why nobody out in the regions is supporting Labor any longer.

The Leader of the Opposition has spoken about making a tour. I am happy to put the itinerary together for him. If he travels the 657 kilometres of the Pacific Highway, he should remember that the investment of \$15 billion in that road was made by the Liberal-Nationals Government. When he travels south on the Princes Highway, he will see the investment the Government has made. He will see the Albion Park Rail bypass, which is a \$630 million investment to bypass 16 intersections and save 30 per cent of travel time. They are the result of investments by this Government. That \$630 million is probably the amount that Labor spent on regional transport and roads when it was last in government. This Government is spending billions of dollars, and we will continue to spend billions of dollars because we are the party that represents the people of New South Wales.

ROAD TOLLS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:47): I direct my question to the Premier. These are the toll bills from Jason, the owner of Clenton's Transport at Camden. Jason was charged over \$120,000 in tolls. Will the Premier guarantee to Jason and other business owners like him that there will be no more contracts signed with a 4 per cent annual toll increase and no more new tolls on our existing roads?

The SPEAKER: I can hear the member for South Coast.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:48): I thank the member for Prospect for his question. My commitment to his constituents is that with the Liberals and The Nationals in office, they will always have a government that puts downward pressure on the cost of living and cuts taxes, unlike Labor which introduced 11 taxes and increased tax 21 times. With this side of the House in office, they will always have a

government that is focused on the cost of living and bringing down costs for families right across the board, whether it is through programs like Active Kids, our toll rebate schemes, free car registration, half-price car registration for regular toll users or green slip reforms from the customer service Minister. Everywhere one looks there are government savings to be found. We have established a one-stop shop so, importantly, these savings are easily accessible through Service NSW, our digital leading platform.

The Government understands that no-one likes paying road tolls, but we have to build the infrastructure to make a difference to people's lives. We want to make sure there are alternatives to using those roads. When the Greiner Government was in office, a minority government in a hung Parliament, the Labor Party opposed the construction of the M2. The people of the north-west do not like paying tolls either but the alternative would have been for them to sit on Epping Road every day in a car park. That is exactly what Labor wanted them to do. Labor members in the upper House said at the time that no-one lives in north-west Sydney and no-one ever will live in north-west Sydney. That is the difference between the Coalition and Labor. They were never focused on the future, and they are not focused on the future now.

WestConnex is a transformative road that not only has enabled people to get home to their families faster but, importantly, has allowed Parramatta Road, the ancillary road, to flow faster as well. Imagine in years to come the congestion on Parramatta Road had we not built WestConnex. Those backward-thinking Labor policies of the past will never have a place in the future. The person who should know more than anyone else about the 4 per cent is the architect of the 4 per cent: the Leader of the Opposition. He worked for Carl Scully. He started the toll road transformation whilst he was working as a staffer in the Labor Government, whether it was the Cross City Tunnel, the Eastern Distributor—**Mrs Melinda Pavey**: The Lane Cove Tunnel.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The water Minister raises the Lane Cove Tunnel, which is an interesting project. On this side of the House, we look for alternatives. Yes, we built the road infrastructure and in certain cases we continue the asset recycling approach to unlock capital to invest in further infrastructure across our State, like our \$5 billion WestInvest Fund for western Sydney, about which those on the other side of the Chamber have been very silent. The Lane Cove Tunnel is an interesting project, as the Leader of the Opposition knows too well. Whilst this side of the House provides alternatives for those who do not want to use toll roads and for roads to flow faster, with the Lane Cove Tunnel project the Leader of the Opposition was creating tunnel funnels so that people were forced to take the toll road. That is the difference. He is the tunnel funneller of New South Wales politics.

We on this side of the Chamber believe in building infrastructure, providing alternatives and setting up our State for the future. What we see with Labor is the Grandpa Hawk of politics—politics that deserve to be back in the past, resorting to NSW Labor form: no policies, no substance. Labor has been 116 days now without a positive plan for our State. Its form is cancelling projects and not looking to the future for generations to come. Building infrastructure projects is hard. The Labor Party opposed WestConnex. There were difficult aspects to that project, such as housing acquisitions and the like. We accept that but the alternative is to play politics and not progress forward as a State. I will always lead a government that is looking to the future, that will build the roads and the public transport that make a difference to people's lives. We will not apologise for that. We know there are difficulties in doing so but we are not going to resort to what it was like under Labor in those dying days of its government—do absolutely nothing, do not annoy anyone, set up the State to fail. We turned it around and we will continue to deliver in the future.

PLANNING REFORMS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:53): Via video link: I address my question to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting business and community to get back on their feet through planning reform?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:53): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question about how we can get New South Wales back on its feet. I thank her for her hard work in supporting her community through what has been a very difficult time for everyone in New South Wales. All members have worked very hard to support our communities, which is a great reflection on the work this Parliament has done, particularly in the case of regional members.

Often there is a lot of focus on the travails and hardships of residents in Sydney. However, something members also need to reflect upon is that many of these regional areas that are tourist dependent, such as Port Macquarie, have really suffered from the lack of patronage in many of their businesses. Wherever one goes in the State it has been a long, hard winter for everybody, but particularly for those who have lost business or who have lost patronage in the hospitality and tourism industry. We are really keen to do everything we can. It is so exciting

to see the way in which the State has already started opening up this spring. Ever since we reached that 70 per cent vaccination point just last weekend we have started to see some great things.

Now it is time for us to embrace even more freedoms as we move forward into summer. Our Government is committed to making it simpler, faster and cheaper for businesses to get back on their feet. Together with the Minister for Customer Service, who has done a tremendous job leading these reforms, we are cutting red tape to encourage alfresco dining at cafes, bars, pubs and restaurants to allow more patrons to gather safely with friends and family in the great outdoors. We have committed to a \$66 million package that will breathe new life and activity into our streets and public spaces. Not only will this package allow our venues to welcome more patrons; it will also make the streets of our cities, suburbs, towns and villages more vibrant, exciting, interesting and delightful. Our \$66 million program will see more people out and about spending money in businesses up and down our high streets. It will see more festivals, more alfresco dining, more music, theatre and public art in our streets and public spaces.

As we emerge from the lockdown, life will not look exactly the same as before and it will not go back to business as usual straight away. But it does present us with an enormous opportunity to adapt, experiment and do things differently to make it easy for business owners to reach their full capacity in a COVID-safe way. Therefore, we are taking emergency measures to enable alfresco dining in a whole range of places that people have traditionally thought off limits. Under the temporary planning measures car parks, bowling greens and streets can become spaces for wining and dining. It will mean businesses like Batch Brewing Co. in Marrickville or Dad & Dave's Brewing in Brookvale can set up tables on their car park without the need for a development application, with the promise that Liquor & Gaming NSW will speed up liquor licensing times to a maximum of seven days. It will mean clubs like Pittwater RSL in my electorate or Laurieton United Services Club in the electorate of the member for Port Macquarie can use their bowling green for outdoor dining. What an amazing space and what a delightful opportunity.

While we have worked hard to slash red tape around alfresco, we have also scoured the globe looking at different strategies to adapt to our new normal. New York, Bogota, London, Paris and Milan have all closed their streets to cars and opened them up for people to dine, walk, cycle or enjoy arts, festivals and markets. This is why we are dedicating \$20 million to a second round of Streets as Shared Spaces right across the State, along with \$6.5 million for a new Open Streets program targeted at the 12 local government areas that were locked down the longest and hardest. Streets that were shut down by COVID will be re-energised by creative installations that bring delight, discovery and wonder. We are one of the world's great global places. Why go to New York for a hot dog when one can enjoy a kofta at Lakemba's Ramadan night markets? Why visit Paris for a baguette when one can dig into a pork roll in Cabramatta or Marrickville? The Open Streets program will breathe new life into high streets that were hit the hardest. We look forward to working with councils to see our streets truly come alive.

The \$66 million package also includes a \$15,000 grant for every council in New South Wales to host a summer nights festival. This builds on the successful Summer Night Fund Program initiated last year, which saw around 400 events and activations across the State with more than 3,000 additional people employed, almost one million square metres of public space brought to life and around 150,000 people attending. A good example was the Street Scapes project by Griffith City Council, which saw the town centre closed to vehicles for a series of "parklets", food kiosks, seating, live performances and workshops. We are bringing New South Wales back to life and back together. That is the commitment of this Government, and that is why we are working with the people and the councils of New South Wales to have a great summer ahead.

ICARE AND INJURED WORKER PAYMENTS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (14:59): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Did icare ever consider not repaying the nurses, police officers and firefighters who were underpaid thousands of dollars in entitlements by the Treasury Managed Fund?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:59): I thank the member for Coogee for her question and for the work she does on behalf of her community. I also thank all members in this Chamber for the care and concern they have for injured workers and those who need the support of icare. We need to make sure that we have a strong public insurer, and that is exactly what I will focus on as the new Treasurer of New South Wales. We need to make sure that we have a strong economy to support a strong public insurer, and that is what I will be focused on as the Treasurer of New South Wales. Our economic management should be, and is, the envy of the country. It has enabled us to build record infrastructure across New South Wales. Let us start with the North West Rail Link, or the NorthConnex project, the WestConnex or the Pacific Highway upgrade. Strong economic management has enabled us to build infrastructure and turbocharge our State.

Strong economic management, which is the economic management required to support injured workers, enabled us to stand by all workers as we went into the Alpha outbreak of COVID. It ensured that we were able to stand by those workers and bounce back better after the initial Alpha outbreak. That is what strong economic management looks like. Today's jobs figures following the recent Delta outbreak were devastating. For the June quarter around 260,000 jobs were lost. But had it not been for Premier Perrottet, who was the Treasurer at the time who implemented the JobSaver program in New South Wales, there would have been around an additional 100,000 workers—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: We do not do this often during question time—

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: It is Standing Order 129. The Treasurer was asked a very specific question: Did he ever consider not repaying the nurses, police officers and firefighters who were underpaid thousands of dollars? It is a specific question and the House would very much appreciate a specific answer. Either a yes or a no would do.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Treasurer is being generally relevant, but I ask him to come more directly to that point at some stage in the next minute.

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge the point of order from the member for Heffron. We need strong economic management to run a strong workers compensation scheme in New South Wales. As Treasurer, that is exactly what I will be focused on: making sure that we run a strong economy and that we bounce back better after this pandemic so that we can do things like supporting injured workers—so that we can ensure that our workers compensation scheme is there to serve those people who need it most. That means that it needs to be financially viable.

When was it not financially viable? When those members opposite were in government. They trashed the workers compensation scheme. They saw premiums going through the roof. Under their Government it was prohibitive for businesses to be able to support injured workers in this State. We have had to do a lot of work to reform the scheme and to make sure it is working for workers, not the other way around. That is what will happen while I am the Treasurer. We will have a workers compensation scheme that is there to support injured and disabled workers because that is what we need to do. That is what good government is about: providing a safety net for those who need it most.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The Treasurer has been going for four minutes and 20 seconds. You have ruled that he is to get to the point. He can answer yes or no and the matter is finished. He has still not even come close to it.

The SPEAKER: While the Treasurer is being generally relevant, it was a specific question and I draw him back to it.

Mr MATT KEAN: The member for Heffron should know better than anyone that when the Labor Government was in office the workers compensation scheme in New South Wales was not able to support all those workers—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: —who desperately needed it. It was a disgrace and the member for Heffron knows it.

The SPEAKER: Has the Treasurer completed his answer?

Mr MATT KEAN: I am happy to keep going, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for Heffron has taken a point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: What about yes or no, Matty?

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer's time has expired.

REGIONAL AND RURAL HEALTH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:05): Via video link: My question is directed to the Premier. On Tuesday the Premier told the House that New South Wales has the best medical system in the world and that there is no difference between health care in Sydney and in the bush. How then does he explain the horrifying evidence heard by the rural health inquiry, such as there being no doctor in Leeton hospital, patients being asked to bring their own bandages, sick babies being monitored by tea ladies in Deniliquin and a Murrumbidgee suicide rate that has risen 59 per cent since the Government was elected in 2011?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:05): That was more of a statement than a question, but I welcome it, and the Government welcomes the inquiry. The New South Wales Government welcomes any work that looks at ways in which it can improve its service delivery. The reality is that health care in regional New South Wales has received more investment under this Government than any other government before it, and that is because of the strong advocacy of The Nationals right across regional New South Wales, the constructive way in which The Nationals work as members of this Government and the dedication of the Minister for Health and Medical Research. I have gone through this, as the member for Murray knows all too well.

I am satisfied that she was listening the other day when I spoke about the significant investment the Government has made, particularly in regional New South Wales. Right across the board, the substantial increase in regional investment in health services across the State is unparalleled. Everywhere I go, I get a great opportunity. I have met with the former Deputy Premier, and I will be on the first plane with the current Deputy Premier to travel to regional New South Wales and see the significant investments. Where improvements can be made, we will make them, from Wagga Wagga to Dubbo. I remember going with the health Minister to Dubbo two years ago and seeing the substantial investment in health care in Dubbo under the Liberals and The Nationals. It is first-class health care, and that is what we want.

Mr Brad Hazzard: There's a new hospital in Tamworth. There's a new hospital in Griffith. There's a new hospital down the South Coast.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We could name them all, but I will run out of—

Mr Brad Hazzard: There's a new hospital in the Tweed. There are new facilities in Dubbo. Everywhere, absolutely everywhere.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Do members see? There are no interjections from Opposition members because they know it is true. When one visits the nurses and the doctors out there they often say—I see that the member for Wagga Wagga is in the Chamber—that Wagga Wagga hospital was promised numerous times by the Labor Party but was never delivered. The Government wants to make sure that wherever people live in this State, whether it is in Sydney or in regional New South Wales, they have the best access to services like health care and education. That is exactly what the Government has been doing. It has fixed up the backlog of Labor and it will continue to invest more. To the question, when there are inquiries, of course Government members will listen. Of course we will take that information on board. There are always things that governments can do better. But one thing is for sure: The Government has been able to invest record amounts because it manages money well. It makes the tough decisions that those opposite will never make. They will always protest and never deliver.

That is why we have never before seen such significant investment in regional New South Wales when it comes to health care and the construction of hospitals right across the State. Government members will not play politics with that; those opposite will. What we will do is make sure that every community has the care and support they need when they are ill and when they are sick, and that is exactly what the Government is focused on. It is exactly what The Nationals have advocated for the entire time the Coalition has been in Government. I know that firsthand because as finance Minister and as Treasurer I have sat at the Expenditure Review Committee. I have chaired that committee and seen the passion, drive and dedication of the members of The Nationals who are in Cabinet fighting every day for the bush. I also know it because I have worked with the health Minister on every one of our record health budgets. I have sat down with him late at night, going through the capital expenditure for health right across the board.

I remember numerous conversations when we sat down, went through the health advice and said, "You know what? Let's go further." We had the financial capacity to go further. In fact, I remember a specific conversation in relation to the Tweed Hospital, which was opposed by Labor—which did not go too well for them at the last election, just quietly. I remember those conversations. We sat there and, because we had the capacity to do it, we did it. That is exactly the difference between us and the Labor Party: We manage money well. We have laid solid foundations. We have built more health facilities than any government before us in this State and we are on track to build hundreds more. That is what we get from a Liberal government supported strongly by the dedicated team in The Nationals—which, unlike other parties in the bush, fights for regional communities every day.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:10): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting the agricultural industry to have the workforce it needs for the harvest and to power the State's economy?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:10): Ordinarily I would say that it is great to be back, but I am reminded of the last time I sat in this Chamber and cleared the place out. I caused many members to become well acquainted with their homes for 14 days. Again, my sincere apologies for that. The good news is that, true to form, I was not a very good sharer and did not pass on COVID. Speaking of good news, the good news keeps rolling on for the agricultural sector in New South Wales. It is powering ahead and has been right throughout this pandemic, keeping our supermarket shelves full and improving our terms of trade, with increased opportunities to export some of the best agricultural produce anywhere in the world to meet the growing world food task. I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He is someone who intimately understands the acute workforce needs of the agricultural sector, with his involvement in the berry industry on the Coffs Coast. He continues to be an incredibly strong advocate for that sector and all agricultural industries in his patch.

The irony is that after years of the worst drought in living memory—and of bushfires, floods and mice—the biggest issue now confronting the agricultural sector is not seasonal conditions or other externalities, but the shortage of available workforce to bring off what will be another record winter crop in the coming months. In fact, the latest report from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences predicts that the winter crop in New South Wales will be the second largest in the history of the State, worth just a tick over \$6 billion in the grain sector alone, with almost a record acreage of over 6.13 million hectares planted that has to come off over the coming months. To meet that challenge, the Government has continued to support the agricultural sector just as strongly as it did, if not more, during those terrible days of drought.

Today the Government announced another initiative to support our agricultural sector. I was very proud to stand next to our Deputy Premier to make the announcement that we would take a step that no other government in the history of Australia has taken: We will be offering public servants based in regional New South Wales the opportunity to take what we are calling "harvest leave". It will be a new special leave category that will allow the 4,500 public servants within the Department of Regional NSW, the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services who live in rural and regional New South Wales to take a week's leave that will not come out of their annual leave, long service leave or any other leave entitlements. They will be able to get out into the paddocks to drive a chaser bin, drive a truck, work a header, work the silos, go to the electorate of the member for Coffs Harbour to pick berries, go down to Young and pick cherries, and everything in between to help our farmers get this record crop off so that we can keep the wheels of the economy of rural and regional New South Wales turning.

I expect that we will see hundreds if not thousands of hardworking public servants based in every town across rural and regional New South Wales take up this opportunity because they live and breathe agriculture. They live in local communities that rely on that sector. They either come off the land themselves, have family on the land or have people in their social circles who are on the land. The good thing about helping out with the harvest is that no experience is required. If any members want to come out when the next stage of the road map allows, we would love to see them helping out. It is not only good work but also lots of fun. I say that from experience.

The announcement today is unprecedented. It is another example that this Government is taking every measure and pulling every lever that it has at its disposal to help the agricultural sector continue to grow. Worth nearly \$16 billion a year, it is one of the biggest sectors of the New South Wales economy. It directly supports and employs hundreds of thousands of people, and underpins the livelihoods of millions of people in this State and who live beyond the shores of Australia. We are proud to continue that work. [*Extension of time*]

This measure is the latest step. This Government spearheaded the development of the Agricultural Workers' Code, which guarantees the free movement of agricultural contractors and workers across State borders, regardless of individual border restrictions. We also established the Help harvest NSW online portal, which thousands of farmers have used to register their workforce needs and through which thousands of residents have sought work. We will be using that portal to connect Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services and Department of Regional NSW public servants with farmers who require helping hands with or without experience on their farms to get what will be another record crop off the paddock and onto the plate.

COVID-19 AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:16): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on the post-COVID road map to recovery for Corrective Services?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:17): I thank the member for his question. For every road map to recovery, there is an historical beginning. One of the largest challenges faced by the correctional system in recent times is the COVID-19 pandemic. I am pleased to be in the Chamber today, with our State having achieved the milestone of over 70 per cent of people being double

vaccinated. We are on our road map to reopening and recovery. Many media outlets have referred to this milestone as "freedom day". We cannot have "freedom day" without Dom. The announcement of freedom day created a bit of hysteria within the prison system. Many of our inmates were excited to support freedom day. Alas, I am afraid they will be somewhat disappointed. To the hundreds of regular COVID viewers watching question time online today, I make it clear that freedom day has a very different meaning to them and to me.

No-one is better placed than this Government to help this State recover from COVID and economic strife because we have done it before. When we came to office in 2011 we had to recover from 16 years of Labor mismanagement. We had to recover from the Tripodi virus, the Roozen flu, the Sartor shakes and that especially virulent disease, the Eddie Ebola. It did not take us long. In fact, by the end of our first term we had sent the Labor disease the way of smallpox. As I said, our journey on the road map began in 2011. This Government inherited an overcrowded correctional system with no capacity to accommodate the forecasted increase of inmates in coming years. In some instances inmates were three to a cell, reducing their ability to address their behaviour and reduce recidivism across the State.

The greatest achievement for Corrective Services has been the completion of the Government's historic almost \$4 billion construction program, with 12 new major facilities and multiple upgrades. That investment created thousands of temporary construction jobs across the State and many hundreds of new jobs, mostly in regional New South Wales. The greatest challenge to Corrective Services in decades has been the COVID-19 pandemic. I put on record my thanks to all Corrective Services staff for their great work over the past 20 months since the beginning of COVID. It should be noted that until recently COVID did not enter the prison network. For 18 months COVID remained on the outside of our prisons, which is a significant achievement. By the time COVID entered our prison system it had already entered schools, hospitals, aged-care facilities, businesses, Parliament and the community at large.

I say that not as a criticism of those places, but because everyone expected the prison network to be the first to be impacted by COVID. Indeed, it was the last. Unlike other facilities and businesses, we cannot simply close a prison for a deep clean and reopen the next day. Whilst over 1,000 positive cases were being recorded daily in the community, the prison system remained operational and new inmates were being remanded in custody. Starting in early 2020, correspondence to my office criticised Corrective Services' response to COVID, alleging that the prison system would be rampant with transmission and high levels of infection within days, let alone weeks. But weeks turned into months and months turned into a year. It took over 4,700 cases in New South Wales in 2020, 13,500 cases in New South Wales this year and over 18,000 cases and 18 months before the first case of transmission was recorded in the prison system. That is an outstanding achievement by staff at Corrective Services to hold that thin line that long. I acknowledge and pay tribute to them all.

Effective government in a post-COVID world requires operational planning and strategy. We have not seen much of that from Opposition members. I was wondering what they had been doing during this period. I now know. They have been working on their organisational structure. A copy has been leaked to me, which I am quite happy to table. I am somewhat confused and bemused. Just like "Noodle Nation", they have obviously been working hard on this. It seems that every Opposition member has a shadow portfolio. In fact, it seems that some shadows are shadowing the shadow Ministers. Nevertheless, this organisational structure explains the inner workings of the Labor Opposition and the true turmoil simmering within. Labor members are so deeply divided that there now seems to be an opposition within the Opposition. I always thought that when there was a leader from the right there would be deputy from the left, and vice versa. We have the member for Kogarah and the member for Londonderry, who are both apparently from the right.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Like you.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Not quite as far as me. I acknowledge they are somewhat on the journey but not quite there. [*Extension of time*]

With both the leader and deputy leader from the right, the left have had to appoint a shadow shadow Minister to shadow the shadow Minister for Education. But of course her shadow shadow shadow Minister is actually the shadow Minister for Transport. Now if members think that is confusing, they should put themselves in the shoes of Minister Mitchell and Minister Stokes. Does that mean if the member for Summer Hill is shadowing the member for Londonderry, she is actually on our side? That is just the start. It seems there are more shadow shadow arrangements. The member for Maroubra, the shadow Attorney General, is currently being shadowed by the member for Liverpool. Is he now the shadow shadow Attorney General? If we follow this logic, do The Greens then have shadow shadow shadow shadow spokespeople?

It does not seem to stop. It has become clear that there is also a shadow Minister for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Summer Hill, who I understand is shadowing the shadow Minister for Western Sydney as her shadow deputy leader, and she is shadowing the deputy leader very closely indeed. In fact, the

shadowing of the shadows is so shadowing it could be mistaken for a plot out of a 1950s cold war spy novel. Never to be overshadowed, I thank the honourable member for Wollondilly for this opportunity to give a public account of the fantastic job that Corrective Services has done through its road map to recovery.

The SPEAKER: Is the member for Heffron taking a point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: No, I raise another issue.

The SPEAKER: I do not know if now is the appropriate time.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I wish to inquire if you have received a resignation from the member for Willoughby or the member for Monaro?

The SPEAKER: You can ask that later. Now is not the appropriate time.

Ministerial Statements

STATE ECONOMY AND JOBS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:25): I wish to update the House on the September jobs figures. In September employment in New South Wales fell by around 25,000, which was better than was expected by many economists. In September in Victoria there was a fall of more than 120,000. Victoria entered lockdown after New South Wales and imposed more severe restrictions on activity. Nationally employment fell by 138,000 last month. The fall in employment in New South Wales over the span of the Delta lockdown is now more than 200,000 jobs, which is less than the 267,000 fall seen during the lockdown in 2020. The expectation is that the lost jobs will be recovered over the coming months as happened after restrictions were eased in 2020. The unemployment rate in New South Wales will probably rise from here as people resume the search for work, but last year's peak unemployment rate of 7 per cent is unlikely to be exceeded.

The unemployment rate in New South Wales fell to 4.6 per cent in September, from 4.9 per cent in August. The fall in the unemployment rate was driven by a fall in the participation rate as more people dropped out of the labour force. The national jobless rate was 4.6 per cent in September, which was a rise from 4.5 per cent in August. Underemployment was steady at 10.2 per cent, which indicates that spare capacity in the labour market may be stabilising. Indeed, hours worked bounced 2.7 per cent over the month, after a 13 per cent plunge over the prior two months. That said, over 127,000 people were stood down in August. Many of those people were expected to be classified as not in the labour force in September. However, last month in New South Wales there were still 82,000 people working zero hours due to economic reasons who were categorised as employed. That is nearly 70,000 more than before the lockdown commenced.

Government support has been crucial in seeing individuals and businesses through to the end of the current outbreak. Based on this support, Treasury expects that the economy, and with it employment, will recover quickly over the next few months as restrictions ease across the State. However, there is a risk that a spike in COVID cases could lead to further targeted restrictions, increasing the risk of an uneven recovery and longer lasting impacts on economic activity and the labour market.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:27): Via video link: I thank the Treasurer for his update on the New South Wales economy. This is a difficult time for our communities, but I appreciate we have to focus on what is important in regional communities and this State's economic recovery. We know that the lockdown was particularly harsh for south-western and western Sydney residents and the statistics prove that. Any economic support must be focused on those economies in south-western and western Sydney and the regions as well because the economic slowdown in central Sydney has a flow-on effect to our regional communities. We should not forget that regional communities also need strong economic support. In New South Wales we know how important it is to ensure that policy settings do not forget people in our regions who rely on income from Sydney, whether it is tourism or manufacturing, and we want to continue to do that.

The Government must ensure that it finds ways to add to the stimulus. Getting our social housing and education construction going will have a flow-on effect in the trade and construction industries, not only in south-west and western Sydney but also in the regions. Every part of the New South Wales economy needs to be looked after to make sure that our communities recover. It will be a tough time but I am confident through the hard work and ingenuity of people in our local community and the Government making sure that the policy settings are right, it will help our communities recover and get our economy back on track.

*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 days after assent as at 14 October 2021.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

COVID-19 and Education Delivery

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly provide all school children access to either online or face-to-face learning for the remainder of 2021 and allow unvaccinated teachers to deliver online learning for the remainder of 2021, received from **Mr Jonathan O'Dea**.

*Private Members' Statements***COVID-19 AND GRANVILLE ELECTORATE**

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:30): I speak about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in my electorate of Granville, which is probably the worst affected area and has large case numbers. I begin by acknowledging, as I did this morning, the huge efforts of the community in following the public health orders, getting vaccinated and supporting other members of the community who have struggled over the past four months. I again thank the frontline workers who have gone above and beyond during that time. I acknowledge Dr Kerry Chant, the NSW Health team and former Premier Gladys Berejiklian for keeping us informed every day as the situation progressed. It has been an awful four months and we have lost 454 people across New South Wales. There are many cases of COVID in my area and I wish to place on record the names of some of those who have passed away, and there may be others. Some people were active members of my community but lived outside the area, some had businesses in the area but were very well known in the communities of Granville, Merrylands, Guildford and the surrounding suburbs.

Aisha Hamdan was the first person I knew who passed away from COVID pretty early in the pandemic. Aisha has a large extended family across Auburn and Granville and was a very loved woman. Jamila Yaghi was a 38-year-old mum of four children who lived in Guildford for a long time and had recently moved to Bass Hill before she passed away, Simon Hadad was a resident of Granville, and Omar Naboulsi was a taxidriver for many decades. Hane Maroun, the wife of Sam Maroun who owns LJ Hooker in Granville, also died from COVID. Sam has been the backbone of Granville Rotary for decades and is still active in the business.

COVID also had a huge impact on businesses in my area. Even though many businesses were shut down and people stood down, many people in my electorate who are essential workers still had to go to work. A number of businesses were forced to close because staff members who had contracted COVID went to work, or customers with COVID entered the premises and as a result the business was shut for 14 days. I will give an example of an NDIS provider, Resilience to Recovery, which is owned by my friend Fida Hamed. This case had a profound impact across many families. Resilience to Recovery supports a family with six children, three of whom have disabilities. One of the children contracted COVID. She had not been tested and did not have severe symptoms until her mother fell ill.

By then, two of her siblings who have disability had fallen ill. It spread to their carers and it spread to a number of staff at the day care facility that they use—all just in that one day. As a result, a number of staff members and people who were there that day ended up being hospitalised, along with members of their extended families. One staff member who became infected with COVID was not particularly sick but infected their own kids. After they had spent 14 days with COVID they were then in isolation for another 14 days because their kids were infected, and then they had to wait for clearance. For a period of 31 days they could not leave the house.

Another one of the clients, Hala Ghamraoui, has profound disabilities. Twice I was told that it was expected Hala was going to pass away while she was in hospital. She was in ICU for quite a long time. She is now out of hospital. She also infected both of her elderly parents and I believe her father is still in hospital. This has been absolutely devastating for so many people in our community. I place on record the suffering that they have gone through, which came on top of the restrictions that they endured: the curfews, having to have authorised worker permits and not being able to travel more than five kilometres from their homes. It has been devastating.

PENRITH PANTHERS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade) (15:36): Tonight, with a big smile on my face, which has been hidden by the Penrith Panthers mask that I have been wearing proudly for the past few weeks, I will talk about the Penrith Panthers winning the NRL premiership—something that has made my community incredibly proud. What an amazing group of players they are. If players win a premiership I think they should get their names in *Hansard* so I will read the names of the whole team because that is just what should be done.

Fullback Dylan Edwards played basically half the season with a broken foot, and definitely all of the finals matches. He was exceptional in the grand final. It was a superhuman effort and a great performance. Stephen Crichton, one of the most amazing athletes, is a great example of someone who has come through junior footy in western Sydney. Paul Momirovski is a centre who is solid and stable. He is someone that others would want in the trenches with them. I say to all the guys at Canterbury that they must have figured out why we did not want to let Matt Burton go this year. I am sure he will play fantastically for them in the blue and white next year; we would still love to see him in a black Panthers jumper. Is Brian To'o not the toughest person in rugby league at the moment? It puts a smile on your face. And if you win a premiership, what else can you do but propose to your girlfriend straight after the game? Did that not make hearts sing across the nation?

Jarome Luai plays with so much energy and with a smile on his face. Nathan Cleary is a superstar and the Clive Churchill medallist—I say well done to him. Moses Leota came back into the team and was huge up the front. Api Koroisau is that smart little football player getting out of dummy half. James Fisher-Harris is a new dad. He definitely muscled up and played in the front row like we have never seen before. Liam Martin, the Temora Terrier, terrorises players out on the edges. He is one of the toughest men one would ever find. Kurt Capewell is a guy who practically relaunched his career at Penrith. He has been a great contributor to our footy club. I wish him the best of luck with his new role in Brisbane and thank him for everything he has contributed.

Isaiah Yeo is our captain courageous. He is an inspiration to his teammates. He sets the standard and I can tell him that plenty of people around the Penrith community follow what he does. He makes an amazing contribution to our community. We had Tyrone May coming off the bench. Scott Sorensen, who dislocated his wrist only a couple of weeks beforehand, was going around shaking people's hands as hard as he possibly could to make sure every person in the footy club knew that he was ready to play in the grand final. Spencer Leniu is a big impact player off the bench. Viliame Kikau is one of those massive huge-bodied players that people quite frankly just get frightened of.

I note the other people around the footy club. I thank chairman Dave O'Neill for his ongoing commitment to this footy club. His leadership at the Panthers Group and his commitment to the club do not go unnoticed. His passion for rugby league and for Penrith is something I wish to put on the record, along with that of all of his other board members. The professionalism and leadership of Brian Fletcher, general manager of Panthers Group, is first class and exceptional. General manager of rugby league Matt Cameron is probably the unsung hero of the footy club. He has done such an outstanding job.

I say to Ivan Cleary and his assistant coaches—Cameron Ciraldo, Andrew Webster and Pete Wallace—that sport is all about performance and we keep a scoreboard for a reason. At the end of the day, they are premiership-winning coaching staff. They have done an outstanding job with this group of people. When we look up "recruitment guru" in the dictionary we find a picture of Jim Jones. He has done an outstanding job with this group of people for such a long time. Elite player development manager Ben Harden has overseen the development of 13 of the players in this team. When people talk about the junior nursery, what Ben has been able to do has led to winning this premiership. I say to the entire performance and wellbeing team that they have kept players focused, healthy and engaged in the community. They have done such a fantastic job with that group of people. Beyond that, I note the people behind the scenes: for example, the commercial team and the administration team. There are lots of names to mention. Unfortunately I do not have enough time to name them all but they have all made a contribution to winning that premiership.

We are looking forward to seeing all of the players back in Penrith. It has been a slightly unusual year to win a grand final. We were not literally on the streets—some of us were probably on the streets at the time—and we were not in the stands, but we were cheering as loud as we possibly could from our couches. When Adam Reynolds had that kick for goal I am sure that I felt all of Penrith lean a little to the right as the ball sailed past the post. It was an amazing season and it is an amazing group of people. The Penrith Panthers have won the premiership. It was richly deserved because of their commitment, their dedication and their efforts.

PARRAMATTA MISSION

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:41): I congratulate Parramatta Mission on all its hard work in the community in the 200 years since the first Wesleyan Methodist chapel was opened at the Parramatta Mission Macquarie Street site. Attended by some of the town's poorest and most disadvantaged children and led by a pardoned convict, the school and the chapel were the beginning of Parramatta Mission's subsequent 200 years of community outreach, care and connection to the people of not only Parramatta but also Greater Sydney. Today Parramatta Mission, with its three congregations, has a significant footprint across New South Wales.

Parramatta Mission positively impacts the lives of many people and the community it engages with. Parramatta Mission achieves this via its pastoral, mental health, clinical, housing and hospitality initiatives, which enable it to provide services supported by its congregation, highly passionate staff and dedicated volunteers. Parramatta Mission provides crisis and transitional accommodation to youth, men and women and families, including those escaping domestic or family violence or at risk of homelessness. The 175 Hotel and Wesley Apartments in Westmead also provide hospitality with heart and have significantly helped families and friends with loved ones receiving treatment at both the hospital and children's hospital in Westmead.

Parramatta Mission also provides support services to assist the most vulnerable people, including emergency food assistance, laundry and shower facilities, financial counselling, legal advice by visiting solicitors, housing advocacy, Centrelink outreach support and referral to accommodation services. Meals Plus is entirely funded by Parramatta Mission through the generosity of its supporters. Parramatta Mission also works to assist people living with mental illness, family members or carers of people with mental illness, young people, those living in crisis and vulnerable communities or groups. Since the impact of COVID-19 Parramatta Mission has seen a dramatic increase in the need for its services, particularly within Meals Plus, which is located in the heart of Parramatta. With so many people experiencing the lows of income uncertainty and job loss, Meals Plus saw an increase of 25 per cent of new people attending the service and a 40 per cent increase in people needing food hamper relief.

I praise all Parramatta Mission's staff and active volunteers who have helped to deliver more than 70 services assisting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the local community and supporting people to lead fulfilling and independent lives. I acknowledge and thank the church council and board for their leadership and time. I also commend the partnerships with the community, religious groups, corporate donors and individuals who provide finances and volunteering to undertake this work.

Lastly I congratulate and applaud Paul Moussa on receiving the City of Parramatta 2021 Community Service Award. Paul is an outstanding coordinator of the Parramatta Mission's Meals Plus program and regularly goes above and beyond to ensure that everybody in the community is cared for with dignity and respect. Paul connects our local community to a number of services, meals and facilities at all hours of the day and night. I put on record personal thanks to Paul for his dedication and help over the 11 years that I have been in Parliament. He is a truly outstanding constituent and deserving of the community service award. At the beginning of the pandemic Paul worked quickly to ensure that necessary procedures were in place, converting sit-down meal areas to takeaway, and ensured that people continued to access what they required each day. Once again I congratulate and say well done to Parramatta Mission on its 200-year anniversary. It continues to be the spiritual, pastoral and social care for the people of Parramatta and beyond.

COOGEE BAY HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:45): One of the most special aspects of Coogee Beach and surrounds is that, despite it being perched on the edge of Australia's biggest city, it has all of the charm of a seaside village. In fact, Coogee is one of Australia's oldest seaside villages and despite many changes to the landscape of Sydney, has maintained much of its heritage charm. The beauty and character of our iconic Coogee Beach is deeply connected to the low-rise density of surrounding streets. Despite the Coogee basin being one of the most densely populated parts of Sydney, the relaxed village feel is why so many people choose to live there. It is why people from across Australia make it their beach of choice to visit and why Coogee is so desirable to tourists from interstate and overseas.

Undoubtedly, the Coogee Bay Hotel has been a mainstay of Coogee culture for generations. The existing heritage-listed Coogee Bay Hotel, the famous beer garden, the historic venue of Selina's and the boutique accommodation at the hotel are all iconic parts of the Coogee streetscape and form a beautiful silhouette as one heads back up from the beach in the afternoon. The new Coogee Bay Hotel proposal, however, is a significant departure from the iconic venue that stands there today. The beauty, character and even sunlight of our iconic Coogee Beach is under significant threat if this proposal goes ahead. In the eyes of the local community, it is completely unsuitable for our beautiful seaside village. Under the plans an apartment building comprising of up

to 60 units will be constructed above a new supermarket and shops, as well as a mega car park accessed via our little Vicar Street. All these would fundamentally change the nature of our Coogee village and would lay the path for further unsustainable overdevelopment.

Only four years ago an application to redevelop the Coogee Bay Hotel site with a 15-storey tower—then amended to nine storeys—was rejected. An expert review led by the NSW Government Architect found that the two alternative proposals were excessive in height, bulk and scale. The department of planning at the time stated that any future development of the site would be limited to three or four storeys along Coogee Bay Road and Arden Street and up to five storeys in the south-west part of the site. The new proposed development exceeds the height of the building development standards for the site and would see the height increased to 23 metres, almost double the 12-metre limit that applies across the entire site. I stand with my community in strongly opposing the scale of the Coogee Bay Hotel development plans. The size and scale of the proposed redevelopment of the site will forever change the cherished local and casual character of our area. It will destroy our Coogee village.

Whether we are talking about this development, 194 Oxford Street, the Bronte RSL, The Robin Hood Hotel, my view of development remains the same: Stick to the planning controls of council. Local environmental plans [LEPs] and development control plans are strategic documents designed by local councils in collaboration with their communities. They should be respected. Unfortunately they are not. Time and again our communities are fighting to stop unsustainable overdevelopment in our area. Sadly, under the Liberal Government it has been open season for developers as the Government has removed the power from communities. Developers everywhere now ask for more and more and, sadly, more often than not, they get it. Part of that is because of the backdoor access developers have to Ministers to have sites rezoned. In the past, councillors have made local environmental plans and reviewed them at regular intervals. If someone wanted to change the zoning, they spoke to the council planners before the LEP was adopted. That was how the zoning could be changed.

Now developers can use loopholes to ask for a rezoning of their property, notwithstanding that LEP reviews are years away. When a council says no, developers can go behind the back of the council straight to the State Government to make the council change its mind—a loophole that is available only to developers, not to local residents. And it has a devastating effect. The Government has created a two-tier system: backdoor deals for developers while local councils and residents are locked out of the discussion. I call on the Government to end the loophole. I also call on the developer of the Coogee Bay Hotel to review their development application. I urge them to respect our council's planning controls and not destroy our Coogee village.

TWEED VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:50): I have good news: The Tweed Valley Hospital is well underway. As the House knows, it is a \$700 million commitment with free car parking. With just over 14 months until the anticipated opening of the new Tweed Valley Hospital, the local arts community has been invited to submit expressions of interest for the Secondary Art Program for wall-based art within the hospital. It is an amazing opportunity for our local artists to submit their works. Tweed-based Hiromi Tango was recently announced as the artist for the main artwork for the new hospital. Hiromi will involve the local community in the creation of her sculpture garden, which will be suspended upside down from the ceiling in the main foyer. The plants will be flowy to give people a sense of warmth and wellbeing. It is a great entrance to our local hospital.

Concrete pours for the linear accelerator bunker, which will be used to deliver the radiotherapy services once the hospital opens, are about to commence. That is important because, as I said in previous statements, just over 2,000 people in our electorate suffer from cancer. They either have to travel to Lismore or Brisbane, and travelling to Brisbane in recent times has been more than difficult—I thank Annastacia Palaszczuk for her kindness once again! The contract for the multi-deck car park has been awarded to ADCO. The facility of eight levels will provide around 1,100 parking spaces for staff and the public on day one of the new hospital opening, with the ability to expand in the future. Final design works will commence in coming weeks with the construction due to commence early in the new year. That is an amazing step forward. Our previous Deputy Premier made a commitment that there would be free car parking. It is one of the first hospitals in the State to have free car parking and it is enormous for the staff. I pay tribute to Adam Hall, the union rep for the Health Services Union, who has been a fine advocate as well.

The facade is going up and the first concrete wall panels are being installed on the mental health inpatient unit, which is double what we previously had: We had facilities for 16 inpatients; the new one will accommodate 32. I am also pleased to announce that we are looking at a facility for eating disorders. A large number of people, particularly young girls, suffer from eating disorders and the nearest facility is in Newcastle or Brisbane. In local employment, over 300 personnel have been engaged onsite since the early works commenced in 2019, with 75 per cent of project workers residing in the Tweed local government area and the northern New South Wales area at the end of September 2021. It is fabulous: local jobs for local people.

A new time lapse video capturing the construction progress from the start of the main works in January this year is now available on the project website. Levels two and three of the hospital are starting to take shape, with concrete structure pours underway for slabs, columns, lifts and stair cores. On the lower section, installation of services, ducts, electrical, and water pipes continues. Outside of the hospital construction, works to commence widening of Cudgen Road and the main entry intersection for the hospital are due to commence in November. Permanent power installation works and works on electrical switching stations on the western side are also continuing.

The construction program remains on track to finish in 2022, with the hospital operational in 2023. I pay tribute to the Health Infrastructure team, Tim and especially Linda Brandon. She is the communications and engagement leader and has been loved by the wider community. We have 80-odd community reference groups participating in the construction of the new hospital, which is a fine example of what we are getting in our local community. We are in love with our local hospital. In these days of COVID, one of the best things we have is a brand-new hospital coming for the Tweed. It will service not only the people of New South Wales and the Tweed but also people in Queensland—as opposed to Queensland hospitals, which the Premier of Queensland has stated many times are for Queenslanders. I have news for her: Our hospital is for all Australians.

CENTRAL COAST WATER AND SEWERAGE OPERATIONS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:55): This afternoon I talk about Central Coast water. Central Coast Council has commissioned an independent review of the model governing its water and sewer operations, and I certainly support that action. I put squarely on the record from the start that this review, as current administrator Rik Hart has said, is not about privatising the operation of water and sewer. It is about looking at a more effective operational model that does not have the huge impact it is currently having on our local council finances. From the outset, members need to understand that Central Coast water is the third largest water authority in the State, after Sydney Water and Hunter Water. It is the only non-State-owned authority that is governed by IPART. Many years ago it was put under IPART's jurisdiction to make sure that its charges, et cetera, were fair for the community, but that is having an unintended impact on ratepayers and water users on the Central Coast.

The current book value of the water and sewer authority is \$3.7 billion. It currently has 281 direct staff and another eight support staff within council that support the water and sewer operation. This is the difficult part: It is governed under two different pieces of legislation. The council has identified—and IPART has agreed—that it is the only council that is caught in the regulatory crossfire between two Acts that have contradictory objectives. The costs of this are being borne by the community, and that is hampering the ability to deliver a high-quality and efficient service. It is also having a detrimental impact on the rest of council as the flow of revenue to cover costs can only go in one direction.

The way that it is currently structured, within the water operation are water, drainage and sewer. But if one of those areas makes a profit, it cannot be used for either of the other two areas. It cannot subsidise the operation. If water and drainage is making a loss, as it currently is, and sewer is making a profit then the profit from sewer cannot be used to cover the money that is being lost in the other two areas. That profit from sewer does not come back to the council, and ratepayers' money has to be used to subsidise the other two areas. There is clearly an issue there, and the current public inquiry into Central Coast Council has demonstrated that there is a serious lack of knowledge even within staff about how money should be treated in each of the operations.

The Auditor-General's office made recommendations in its report about how it is accounted for. It has clearly shown that a huge amount of revenue was being counted in general operations when it should have been in restricted funds under water, so the money was being incorrectly spent. People were not able to pick that up because the council has one bank account and dissections within it. For a long time I have been saying that it needs to be restructured so that there is a clear delineation between the water, drainage and sewer business and the general operations of council. If nothing else, they should be in two separate accounts so that there is no confusion.

When the council was formed, it made its first submission to IPART as one water authority. Unfortunately it was a terrible application, and IPART made a determination that removed \$38 million worth of revenue. That is not sustainable, and council has applied for that to be reviewed. But, once again, it is the ratepayers that are having to pick up the tab for the disaster that has been Central Coast Council since it was first amalgamated. I support the review. The council needs to get it right to protect the ratepayers of the Central Coast.

*Petitions***CLARENCE VALLEY MINING**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It being 4.00 p.m., private members' statements are now interrupted for the consideration of the paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons listed on the business paper regarding Clarence Valley mining, lodged by the member for Lismore.

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

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:00): Via video link: When I was asked to present the petition to this place, I readily agreed. I have long championed the protection of the water systems that flow in the north of our State. We are often referred to as the northern rivers region, and the Clarence is the biggie. The other major rivers in the Lismore electorate are the Richmond and the Tweed. We know that those rivers are in need of repair and restoration, and we are acting on that. Those rivers are our lifeblood, sustaining livelihoods and lives. This issue more than any other goes to the heart of water protection, both quantity and quality. I have yet to see a clean water mining site or a site where the water has not been depleted. We are told that the mining will bring jobs—and, yes, it will bring a few. But think of the thousands of traditional and sustainable jobs that will be lost if we have our waters polluted. If we let our water be degraded then we risk our heritage and the ongoing industries right across the region of dairy, fishing, cattle, sugarcane, blueberries, macadamias, timber and tourism.

The mighty Clarence flows from the McPherson Range and snakes its way with many tributaries through Tenterfield and Kyogle and under the Tabulam Bridge—all areas in my electorate of Lismore. The Clarence River catchment has a thin geographic footprint in my electorate. My call to action today is to protect our water. Today the focus is on the Clarence River catchment, which locals want to protect from mineral mining impacts. It is the basis of the petition and the specific ask of the New South Wales Government to give effect to the three concerns expressed in the petition: Stop mining exploration or exploitation within the Clarence Valley and surrounding local government area, as it would endanger the good river health that is vital to fishing, farming and tourism—as the petition says—and to respect the traditional landowners of the area, being the Yaegl, the Gumbaynggirr and the Bundjalung First Nations peoples.

I commend the Clarence Catchment Alliance for the voluntary work that it has undertaken to improve and protect our community. It is evidence-based and informative, and it is all aimed at looking after our water health. There is overwhelming support for the petition and opposition to mineral mining. Clarence Valley Council unanimously resolved to oppose mining in the Clarence catchment and to seek the support of both State and Federal governments to impose a moratorium on further mining exploration licences and to cancel existing licences. In its preamble it notes the potential to pollute the waters and that some mining measures would involve decimation of plateaus, causing large amounts of sediment run-off that could contain dangerous minerals and chemicals. It also has the support of neighbouring councils: Coffs Harbour, Kyogle and Glen Innes councils as well as the mayor of Tweed Shire Council have expressed support for the moratorium, the cancellation of the licences or both. I understand that the matter is with neighbouring councils. Tenterfield Shire Council was not able to do this. The council and I enjoy a close working relationship, and that will continue as we both work for the community's common good.

There are two other proposed mining developments in our area in the northern rivers region. One is in Tweed shire and one is in Drake, which is in Tenterfield shire. Both of them are in the Lismore electorate. The Tweed shire councillors were aghast when confronted with an exploration licence that was for gold and silver, among other things, and would cover a 118-square-kilometre area including 16 suburbs and villages and, can you believe it, Murwillumbah itself. The council stated its concern about the potential to negatively impact the water supply—including town drinking water, catchments of the Clarrie Hall Dam and the Bray Park Weir and the Tweed River—sugar cane production and, correspondingly, the tourism industry. They voted to oppose it and for me to act. For the record, the vote was five to two, but I have acted and I shall keep at it. In Drake, which is in my electorate, local fishermen remember as if it were yesterday the arsenic leaking from the Mount Carrington mine at Drake in the 1970s and the mutated seafood. The Mount Carrington goldmine project is back on the books. I have said I shall fight it with every breath, and I shall as it is really poor planning. Creeks that run close are part of the Clarence catchment. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:06): First I acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the petitioners to achieve over 10,000 signatures. It is a remarkable effort and certainly one worthy of debate in this House. I congratulate them on their effort and the sentiment behind the petition. I have lived in the Clarence Valley for over 40 years and I love it because of its natural beauty and the people who want to preserve its character and lifestyle. I say this with all due respect to the signatories, as someone who is not pro-mining, has no premeditated agenda and wants to be objective: I find it very difficult to accept the argument put forward by the petitioners to stop point blank all mining in the Clarence Valley and surrounding local government area [LGA].

It argues for no mining in the whole of the Clarence LGA, not just the water catchment but the whole 10,500 square kilometres of the LGA—no mining, no discussion, end of story.

That is a blanket refusal to extract the resources from the ground that we need in our everyday lives, resources that have built the very place that we debate in today—the bricks and mortar, the metal used on the roof or in the wiring to ensure our lights are on and our computers run. They are the resources we use to make our cars, trains, buses and everything else that allows us to function as a modern, twenty-first century society. I acknowledge that mining can be intrusive and can change a landscape. It does have the potential to degrade an environment. But until we have an actual development application to approve a mining activity, we have no idea of the impact it will have on the environment. We do not know what is to be extracted, how it is going to be extracted, what measures are proposed to mitigate damage to the environment, what traffic will be generated, what jobs will be created, what benefits there are to the local economy, whether there has been consultation with the community or whether the proponent has a social licence.

There are many other questions that remain unanswered until such time as a development application is lodged. Every case should be judged on its own merit, not discarded without the right to be considered. A mining application will have to answer all of those questions and satisfy local and State planning policies and legislation before it can proceed. New South Wales has a very rigorous planning and assessment system. Anybody in the development industry can attest to that. Do not take my word for it; try lodging a development application for a house or a pool and see firsthand the criteria that must be satisfied before one can proceed. There are many checks and balances in our development approval process to protect our environment and our communities.

Mining is not carried out today like it was in the past. The proponent must have a plan to rehabilitate disturbed areas and provide a security that is sufficient to cover rehabilitation costs in the event it defaults on its obligation. Miners are under very close scrutiny in this country and they are well aware of their obligations. If the application can measure up successfully against the planning policies and satisfy environmental, economic and social criteria, there is no reason to refuse it. If it does not, there is no reason to approve it. But unless a mining company has opportunity to lodge a development application, we will never know if the activity can be carried out in an environmentally and socially accepted way. It is throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

As I understand it, the current exploration licences in the Clarence Valley are for metals with high technology applications, like copper and cobalt. They are resources that are used to transition from carbon to a renewable energy future. If we want solar panels, batteries to store electricity, microchips for computers and electric cars, then these are the exact resources we need. If we can extract them without impacting on our environment, then we are well on the road to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. That is a target we all want to reach. The New South Wales Government has already set a target of reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2030, so we should all be mindful of the opportunities to continue to do so with the mining of those sorts of resources from our own LGAs. I love the Clarence Valley because of its natural environment and I will do everything I can to protect it. I will not support any mining activity that will degrade the very thing I love, as I showed with my North Coast colleagues when we banned inappropriate coal seam gas mining in the northern rivers region.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was going to give the call to the member for Murray, but I cannot see her very well on the screen. She might want to adjust her lighting. I will give the call to the member for Ballina and then come back to the member for Murray.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:11): Via video link: I speak in support of the Clarence Catchment Alliance's No Mines Clarence Valley petition calling for a moratorium on future mineral mining, both exploratory and active, in the Clarence catchment and surrounding local government areas. I do not share the trust or faith of the member for Clarence in our planning system. Certainly the track record in the past 16 years has been appalling. I thank the member for Lismore for sponsoring the petition. I recognise the Aboriginal people, custodians and traditional owners of the Yaegl, Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr nations, who have lived, loved and protected the mighty Clarence River and the Clarence flood plains for over 60,000 years. This land always was and always will be Aboriginal land. I congratulate the border communities of the Clarence Valley and the northern rivers region on signing the petition, and the Clarence Environment Centre and Valley Watch on their advocacy, as well as Clarence Valley Council and neighbouring councils.

This petition received over 10,000 signatures from individuals, organisations, businesses and councils that are concerned about the impact of mining in the Clarence region. If members want to talk about social licence, there it is. We have a strong record of opposition to mining in the northern rivers region. Clarence communities do not want their cultural history and precious biodiversity destroyed for the sake of a few short-term dollars. The social and environmental cost of mining in the region, a high biodiversity and heritage area, supersedes any other considerations. We have heard Aboriginal Elders and community members speak about how integral the Clarence River area is to passing on cultural knowledge in the region. Aboriginal people have told us of the significance of

this area. If the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces does not amend schedule 1 of the New South Wales State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 to add mineral mining and mineral exploration in the Clarence catchment as prohibited development, we will see even more harm caused to the traditional custodians of this country.

The Clarence Valley is situated in a unique biodiversity hotspot. It overlaps with the Bassian species of southern Australia and the Torresian species in northern Australia. It is home to some of Australia's most beautiful creatures, including the endangered eastern freshwater cod, platypus and eastern water dragons, and the surrounding forests are essential habitat for powerful owls, black-necked storks, brolgas and koalas. The list goes on and on. I have swum in the Nymboida River, a tributary of the Clarence that is one of the coldest and most exclusive freshwater rivers in Australia. It is too precious to lose. The Clarence River is also integral for providing fresh water to all of the communities surrounding it. Finally the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report made it abundantly clear that time is running out to act on the climate emergency and that the mining and burning of coal, oil and gas need to end as they exacerbate our climate crisis. I support the petition wholeheartedly.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:14): I acknowledge the contributions of previous speakers, including the member for Clarence, who spoke with passion and clarity in the debate. His point was that we can have it all. He does not support mining that will damage anything, but we are talking about exploration at this point in time. A government's role is to promote business and investment in a way that can work for everyone. This includes significant opportunities in the New South Wales minerals sector. In 2019 the Government released its NSW Minerals Strategy, outlining just how our State can unlock the benefits of all the potential high-tech mineral deposits. I am well aware of the concerns around some of those. My region has a possible highly profitable future mine based on rare earths and metallisation.

Minerals like lithium and cobalt are critical components of batteries, including those used in renewable energy storage. We talk about a climate emergency and types of renewable energy. Whether it is wind turbines, solar panels or battery storage, they all rely on minerals that need to be taken out of the ground. They do not grow on trees. They need to be dug up from somewhere in a safe way. That is the point. Electric vehicles have been in the news a fair bit lately. An electric vehicle produces no tailpipe emissions and involves less air pollution and lower running costs than petrol or diesel equivalents, but it uses up to 15 kilograms of cobalt. Again, this needs to be dug up safely. I am proud that in June the Government announced a strategy to increase the sales of electric vehicles to 52 per cent of car sales by the next decade. It is one of many things the Government is doing to help New South Wales achieve net zero emissions by 2050, including the nation's most ambitious hydrogen strategy, which was unveiled yesterday.

There is also growth in demand for more traditional metals, like copper—one of the metals that is being explored for in the Clarence Valley. Again I note those words "explored for", not "mined for". Exploration delivers vital investment dollars into regional communities, especially at a time when the economy is seeking to bounce back from the impacts of the COVID pandemic. A petrol-fuelled car uses about 20 kilograms of copper; a hybrid car, about 40 kilograms; and a fully electric vehicle, as much as 80 kilograms. A 1.5-megawatt wind turbine is manufactured with as much as 1,800 kilograms of copper. It does not grow on trees. Somebody has to dig it up from somewhere.

The development of critical mineral resources is also a key part of the regional development strategy set out in the Government's 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, which was launched in February. Minerals development is highlighted as an engine industry, with critical minerals specifically identified as an industry of the future along with recycling and waste management, high-quality food manufacture and ecotourism. All these things can work together. Jobs are essential to thriving regional communities. Critical and high-tech minerals exploration helps create jobs of the future in regional areas. Opponents of this exploration would also oppose coalmining, but if we are serious about diversifying coal-reliant communities then this type of exploration is one of the answers we need to be looking at.

Growing our critical mineral exploration and mining sector is also important for security of supply. In Australia and, in fact, right across the world, it is becoming a priority to find other, new sources over a wider range of locations so that the world is not relying on a small number of countries to supply global needs. We need to be investing in integrated mine-to-manufacturing strategies to help reduce supply risks, create jobs and ensure regional communities can continue to thrive. One of the key pillars of the NSW Minerals Strategy is making sure New South Wales has best-practice regulation that will ensure that miners in our State do the right thing. Everyone gets that there is a concern. But as the industry changes over time, we will continue to adapt legislation and systems to ensure they remain fit for purpose to support the sustainable growth of the minerals industry. It is a big part of our future.

Clear, robust, transparent and efficient regulations create certainty for industry and transparency for communities. Most importantly, the granting of an exploration licence is just a very preliminary stage in the

approvals process. A licence to explore is just that. The petition would cut off those vital investment dollars and deprive an important area of New South Wales from playing its role in the push towards a renewable future. There is exploration of about 10½ square kilometres, according to my colleague, around the Clarence region. Parts of the region could be explored safely. The petition cuts everything off. It cuts off the nose to spite the face. Let us be sensible. Let us look at ways we can explore and do things together for the betterment of all our communities.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:19): Via video link: Although the Clarence River lies a long way from my electorate, I can relate to the 11,000 people who signed the petition we are debating. The Clarence, I am told, is the second largest river in our State by volume and it flows with a regularity that is the envy of the irrigators I represent. But, like my own constituents along the Murray and Murrumbidgee, these petitioners do not take a single drop for granted. Their efforts to bring their concerns before the House prove how keenly they understand that water underpins all of our prosperity. The wealth of the land—the agriculture, the fisheries, as well as the stunning natural environment that draws in tourists from near and far—relies on the river and its tributaries. There is no reason why the wealth of this land should not last for generations.

There will be challenges, to be sure. Our changing climate will affect swift coastal rivers like the Clarence, just as it will the slow brown rivers of the country where I farm. But done intelligently and sustainably, and with foresight, wisdom and a sense of stewardship, our lands and waters will support our modern nation long into the future, just as they have supported our First Nations since time immemorial. But the mining that is proposed in the Clarence threatens that prosperity and sustainability. It puts at risk not just the natural environment but also the farmlands and the communities that depend on it. Of course, I am not against mining in principle. The wealth from within the earth is as essential to our society as the wealth we grow on the earth. Mining offers jobs, income and even—historically, at least—a sense of community, identity and pride among the workers. But we have to be smart. We have to be strategic about where we site our mines, and the catchment of our State's second largest river is not a smart choice. The diversity of the petitioners attests to this fact and it does not surprise me.

In my electorate, too, one thing that never fails to unite rural communities is the conviction that farmland and water resources should never be sacrificed for short-term gain. There is too much at stake. Back at home, some engineer proposed drilling through the aquifer to reach the gas deposits below. Can you imagine it? The water that had sustained a century and a half of sustainable farming and grazing could have been sacrificed for 10 years of fuel that the rest of the world is transitioning away from. It is the same in the Clarence. The modern methods of mining—the cyanide ponds, the chemical residues—risk contaminating the land long after the ore is sold, the jobs are gone and the profits are taken away. I am terribly worried that we have lost the ability to think in the long term. Politicians cannot think past the next election; businesses cannot think past the next quarter.

All across our State, I am shocked by the poor planning decisions that, even in 2021, just do not get how precious our water is. Along the Murray, thirsty almonds on sandy soils are sucking water away from the sustainable food crops that have fed our State for a century. The water Minister is still committed to floodplain harvesting that her own department tells her is illegal and that by the next drought will drain the mighty Darling dry. Water has just become another commodity, bought and sold like stocks on a computer screen and traded away in a heartbeat to make a quick buck, leaving a dry and poisoned land for our kids to clean up. In the Clarence the community is literally being asked to sell its river for gold. I am heartened by this petition and by a community united by its commitment to the long term and that sees the deeper truth: that water is more precious than gold.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (16:24): I thank the various members for their contributions to the debate on this petition. As Leader of The Nationals and resources Minister, I will clarify a few facts. The active exploration licences over the areas in question are entirely consistent with the NSW Minerals Strategy. As highlighted by Government members, we support the sustainable growth of the State's mining sector. It is crucial that we continue to take advantage of metals with high-technology applications, such as copper and cobalt. The Clarence Valley area currently has no mining proposals, and only three companies are undertaking mineral exploration on active exploration licences. Two of those licences relate to a disused copper mine, which closed down many years ago around 1917—even before the last pandemic.

During its life it was one of the most successful mines in the State, producing copper, gold and silver. The ore was mined a long time ago and the two exploration licences at the centre of this petition allow the legacy stockpiles to be located and assessed, which creates an opportunity for recovery over time and a benefit today from past mining. It is hard to see how anyone could oppose that. The mighty Clarence River and its more than 20 tributaries travel through many towns on the nearly 400-kilometre journey to the sea. That water network is important to everyone. No-one—whether an environmentalist, a teacher, a tradie or someone working in that town—wants to risk this. That is why the Government has stringent regulations for monitoring and managing water resources embedded in legislation for mining exploration and development approvals. The New South

Wales Government supports the sustainable growth of the mining sector and exploration activity to identify commercially viable opportunities for minerals.

This Government is also investing more money than ever in its Legacy Mines Program, with another \$108 million injected into the program in the June budget. A former goldmine in the Clarence electorate on the Timbarra Plateau has been developed in a wetland area at the head of the Clarence River, east of Tenterfield. The site of that former goldmine is now subject to a mining reserve that prevents any further exploration and mining at the site in perpetuity, highlighting the balance the Government is always seeking to strike when considering mineral exploration. Supporters of the petition are advocates for renewable energy, but those emerging technologies require batteries and critical minerals to power them, such as cobalt, cadmium and lithium. Exploring for those minerals is critical to the State's economy and vital for the nation's energy sovereignty. It is one thing to oppose coalmining, but to oppose all mining as a blanket position would imperil our drive towards a low carbon future. I acknowledge the views of Clarence Valley locals, but for the reasons I have outlined, the Government does not support the petition.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:27): Via video link: In reply: I thank those members representing the electorates of Clarence, Ballina, Dubbo and Murray, and the Minister responsible for resources and Deputy Premier, for their contributions and the respectful way in which we were able to have the discussion and start the debate. It pleases me to be able to do that because our communities want to have a respectful debate when we disagree. I say to the companies: You know you do not have a social licence to mineral mine in our northern rivers region and surrounding local government areas, which includes the Clarence Valley catchment. It is best to reconsider your intentions, which will cause a lot of destruction, a lot of angst and a lot of pain. You will not get to mine here.

We have fought off coal seam gas mining, which the member for Clarence mentioned. Despite some humps and posturing along the way, we ended up united on that. For me it started with water. I have read what the then National Water Commission and the CSIRO revealed about the impacts on our water, the quantity and quality, and was alarmed and set to work. I also thank my parliamentary colleague and Federal member for Page, Keith Hogan, who has expressed his opposition to this proposal, which he has expressed to both the Clarence Valley Council and the Clarence Catchment Alliance. He supports our advocacy to amend schedule 1 of the New South Wales State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 to add mineral mining and mineral exploration as prohibited development in the Clarence catchments surrounding local government areas that are our water source. I commend the petition to the House as the start of the debate.

Petition noted.

Bills

BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021

Returned

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting.

Private Members' Statements

COVID-19 AND RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:31): I reflect on the experience of the COVID lockdown during winter in Riverstone. I commence with the observation that our community was keen to work together to pull through. There was a high level of compliance with restrictions before we hit the nasty patch in June and July. People were practising social distancing and trying hard to do the right thing. They were conscious of each other and making life easy for people behind counters and so on as they did that. As we moved around at that stage before we were locked down, I felt that there was a good, strong sense of community as we worked together to deal with the challenges that we were facing. However, the Bondi cluster broke out and became a western Sydney cluster, which gradually spread throughout vast parts of western and south-west Sydney, including all the Blacktown Local Government Area [LGA], which encompasses the Riverstone electorate.

I do not say that to lay blame anywhere. Nobody wanted COVID; nobody meant to spread COVID. But those are the facts as it happened. In the suburbs of Riverstone people were locked down tightly and severely because we were one of the so-called LGAs of concern. From the early period of that lockdown, vaccinations started to become more readily available. If I reflect back just a few months, as somebody over 60 I was able to access the vaccine before other people, but many people in my electorate at that stage were clamouring for access to the vaccine. One of the most regular complaints we received was, "When do we get ours? How can we get it?"

That was just a reality of supply. As it was rolled out, more and more people were vaccinated. Going back a couple of months that was the clamour because people in Riverstone were only too keen to get on board and protect themselves. They understood that meant that everybody would be more protected.

The fact that we became an area of concern meant there was a very hard impact indeed. The impact was felt not just by businesses and workers—which we are all very conscious of—but also by school students, sports clubs and churches, and I think most heavily by families. Being confined to our homes and unable to visit extended family in their homes was one of the hardest things for people to cope with over the prolonged period. We should not underestimate the psychological effect of the difficult and draining impact of being denied access to those we love. We all knew of the impact on people living alone. In recognition, we amended the rules to recognise and address the impact on single people. Those psychological and emotional effects, as much as anything else, weighed heavily on the people of the electorate.

A particular feature of the areas of concern was the notion of authorised workers. Only authorised workers were allowed to leave those LGAs to go to work. Not everybody could go to work and, in time, those who were authorised workers had to undergo mandatory vaccination. There was a mandatory testing phase in the interim and then a mandatory vaccination requirement to allow people to go to work. Most people were only too keen to get their vaccinations. For others who had concerns—and in my mind it is valid to have a concern about your own body and health—being compelled to have something injected into your body as the price for being able to earn a living for your family was very hard to bear indeed. The fact that choice was not given in that process is one point of divergence that I had from the Government's management of COVID.

The blunt definition of "area of concern" certainly mattered to people in the electorate of Riverstone. It comes under the Blacktown City Council LGA, which comprises about 400,000 people and covers a huge area. The population is probably equivalent to that of five or six eastern Sydney council areas and the area is probably equivalent to eight or nine of them. The councils in the east were able to be treated separately and assessed on their individual merits. But because we were all in Blacktown we were part of one big LGA of concern. Many residents pointed out to me, "But my suburb doesn't have many cases." [*Time expired.*]

WHERE THERE'S A WILL CHARITY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (16:36): October is National Mental Health Month. I inform the House of an organisation that is working to improve the lives of people in the Upper Hunter. Where There's a Will has a mission to effect cultural change through improved wellbeing and mental health literacy in our schools, our families and our communities. I have had the pleasure of meeting the team to learn about its wonderful work to try to prevent adverse mental health outcomes and to increase the wellbeing of youth within the region. Where There's a Will is a community-led organisation that provides ongoing support to Upper Hunter schools through the implementation of positive education initiatives.

The organisation was established in 2016 by Scone couple Pauline and Hilton Carrigan and their family. Where There's a Will believes prevention through education for all youth, preschool to year 12, can equip children with the knowledge and skills to develop resilience and self-awareness from a young age. Its vision is a community of mentally healthy and resilient individuals. It should be noted that the World Health Organization has predicted that depression and anxiety will be the leading cause of disease globally by 2030. Currently 22 primary and secondary schools and 15 learning centres participate in the programs now delivered by Where There's a Will.

The key initiatives of the program are prevention through education, student leadership, measurement and mental health first aid. The programs delivered include visible wellbeing, implementing positive education in our schools with over 600 teachers; youth mental health first aid, which has involved over 1,000 community members such as teachers, parents and carers; teen mental health first aid, in which over 1,000 students have participated; and the Upper Hunter Youth Leadership Summit, which had 600 student participants. Those are just some of the truly amazing accomplishments of this organisation, which started only about five years ago. The Upper Hunter community has generously raised \$1.6 million over that time to fund the programs delivered locally. The Federal Government, through the primary health network, provided funding for a pilot, which is now being repeated in an additional three towns.

The New South Wales Government has also provided funding to Where There's a Will to create a model and framework so that other communities can gain, understand and experience the great work it does. The outstanding success of Where There's a Will has not gone unnoticed, as it has received several awards including the 2020 New South Wales Mental Health Matters Community Initiative Award and this year's R U OK? National Education Award. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the wonderful team at Where There's a Will: the founders, of course, Pauline and Hilton Carrigan; the board of Jane Callinan, Scott Shann, Lindy Hunt and Andrew Parry-Okedon; Kirsty Gray in administration; and Polly Yuille in media and communications. I also

thank all the volunteers throughout the Upper Hunter who have helped this wonderful organisation and all those who have helped financially.

Where There's a Will is a truly significant organisation helping our youth, families and members of the Upper Hunter community to equip themselves to have good mental health and wellbeing. Given the drought, the pandemic, and more recently the mouse plague, I am proud to represent an electorate and a community that is prepared to help one another through such challenging times.

COVID-19 AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:41): Via video link: I speak today about COVID-19, which is not surprising. Locals tell me they will be pleased when we can stop talking about COVID, but that time is not with us yet. I will speak about the pandemic, the response, the road map and the yet-to-be-determined COVID recovery economic plan, some elements of which are already known. First, I thank the entire electorate of Lismore, which takes in Tenterfield, Kyogle, Lismore, Murwillumbah and Tweed Valley. Many residents live in border communities, running from the Tweed-Murwillumbah side of the electorate to the Tenterfield shire, through the Woodenbong area and Urbenville. There is Old Bonalbo and Bonalbo and the electorate articulates north to Queensland, and the Hume, Liston and Jennings, which is Jennings-Wallangarra—Jennings in New South Wales and Wallangarra in Queensland. Jennings shares the Wallangarra postcode. There are issues like that all along the border, out to Torrington and Deepwater on the tablelands.

As I said to a Minister, last year we had the Federal JobKeeper program, the COVID-19 small business grant and other grants, and there was hope. This year it has been more challenging, particularly for our businesses. There was no JobKeeper but there has been JobSaver—I acknowledge the State stepping into the breach left by the Federal Government—and COVID small business grants. The dates for COVID small business grant eligibility were predicated on the start of the lockdown in the Greater Sydney area. I was told that they apply to all the State—to rural and regional areas and to my electorate—but it was very difficult for regional businesses to reach the threshold with the dates specified. We were impacted by the lockdown in Greater Sydney and then we had our own lockdown. I continue to advocate and argue for our local businesses in that regard. Some applications were accepted and businesses received a grant, which is terrific. But it was not provided uniformly and there was no real clear communication about the process.

I know there have been a lot of changes but the communication during the past few months has been poor, and it has been poor in rural and regional New South Wales. There has been no clear rural and regional COVID communications strategy. That has created even more confusion. We have to get on top of public health orders. Local members have become de facto interpreters of public health orders. That is not in the job description, but all of us are doing the best we can for our local communities. One can go to Service NSW and get advice. It has been terrific in a lot of ways, but sometimes it is not always uniform to our local communities and our businesses. Members of Parliament can send an email but it may take three days to come back. If one has a business knocking on one's door asking, "What do I do here?" that can be challenging. I must say that all of the businesses have wanted to do the right things.

All the MPs in this area got together in two different groupings. The first group comprised the member for Tweed, Geoff Provest, the member for Ballina, Tamara Smith, Catherine Cusack, MLC, with the Tweed mayor Chris Cherry. We all got together for a common interest, knocked on the door to Sydney and said, "Listen to us. We have issues here. We have concerns here from the community and we want you to take notice of it." We did that quite successfully. We also spoke to Queensland because we had the border issues. The second group comprised Chris Gulaptis, Gurmeh Singh, Ben Franklin, MLC, Catherine Cusack, MLC, Geoff Provest and me. We all came together. I joked that it was the "North Coast Cabinet" and it was all parties. Particularly, we were talking about the 80 per cent double dose opening up. Firstly we had said 70 per cent was too low for rural and regional New South Wales; then we said that for 80 per cent that it is aggregated and that it needs to be specific and particular. It needs to be for us. We need to regionalise the road map because the road map appeared to be predicated on the way the CBD wanted to do that. [*Time expired.*]

COVID-19 AND NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:47): When we think back over the past 18 months to what we thought 2020 and 2021 would be, it is amazing how quickly we have adjusted. We would never have thought that we would spend months not seeing our families or friends, our businesses would close, we would have reduced numbers in Parliament and we would wear masks everywhere we go. We would never have foreseen that at the beginning of 2020, yet it has become our lot. We have lived with it and we have adjusted. Hopefully now we are coming out into a better place where we can get back to seeing our friends and family, our businesses can begin to thrive again and we can all go on to living more normal lives, safer, healthier and happier.

During that time we had such disrupted lives. Our typical day-to-day lives were heavily impacted across the State, the country and the globe. When we were faced with COVID-19 we had to make a choice to keep our family and friends safe, and not only those closest to us but particularly those who work in our frontline industries. We focused heavily last year on this notion of staying at home so our frontline healthcare workers could save lives, doing the best that we could as a community to keep them safe and ensure they could do the job with the resources that they had. There were our doctors, nurses, paramedics and the broader front line: our emergency services and police. Then there were all the essential workers who were so necessary to us, such as the people doing deliveries and those making sure we had food from the supermarkets—and toilet paper, of course. We will never forget the rush on toilet paper. It was such a transition for all of us as a community. I look back on it and think that the worst of times has really brought out the best in us.

I reflected on my own community's contribution and activities during this time. I feel fortunate to live in New South Wales. Over that time we were blessed to have had the steady hand of our former Premier Gladys Berejiklian. We can now look forward together with extreme optimism as we begin reopening the State under the leadership of Premier Dominic Perrottet. In times of crisis we see the true character of our local communities shining through. I will mention just a few of the outstanding locals and the community spirit in my electorate of North Shore. They have raised money, donated, and assisted those in need not only in our local community but also in communities across the State.

Neutral Bay resident and full-time criminal lawyer Jane Meredith helped collect more than 10 tonnes of food and household basics for the Addison Road Food Pantry. It is a food pantry in the inner west that delivers to people across the State. Jane managed to mobilise a large group of volunteers who share the same passion and interests in helping people currently facing difficult times. She has had a lot of local businesses involved, including Cremorne Plaza, Bridgepoint, Chargrill Charlie's, the deli at Kirribilli, Simple Simons Coffee and Gelato House. They are people and businesses that were also impacted but wanted to give what they had to help other people who were impacted even more than themselves.

I also acknowledge our local healthcare staff. We are very fortunate to have the incredible hospital at Royal North Shore. The staff there, our local GPs and pharmacists all joined together in the fight against COVID-19. They did so in vaccinating our community but also with building the dedicated COVID ward fairly early on to make sure we had the resources not just for locals but also for the entire healthcare network to take care of people at Royal North Shore Hospital. I thank them all. I also thank local Mosman resident Jill Waller, who raised thousands of dollars to support our local COVID-19 frontline staff. Jill set up a GoFundMe campaign to provide a particular brand of face masks that are easier on the skin and more comfortable to wear and donated those to our Royal North Shore Hospital staff. Many members in this place know that personal protective equipment was having a real impact on healthcare workers, our nurses and doctors, locally and around the globe.

Mosman local Susie Agoston was incredibly busy during the height of the outbreak, gathering essential items for communities in need. She collected face masks and hand sanitiser for people in rural and remote communities who faced a long drive over significant distances to procure these crucial supplies. Many of these communities, particularly in western New South Wales, also have high numbers of Indigenous peoples who have been more susceptible to COVID-19. I thank Susie and all those in my local community who helped with those donations. These are just some of the extraordinary efforts from members of my own community. I acknowledge people who have donated or assisted people during this time.

I acknowledge the hard work of Mosman Chamber of Commerce and its president, Tamara Keniry. She has been a voice constantly advocating locally for our businesses. I thank her for joining me in a number of local business forums so that we could hear their concerns and support them. I opened this week visiting some of my local businesses. I thank Gina and Colin from Dymocks Neutral Bay, Haylee and the team at Miller and Green at McMahons Point, and Troy Anthony from Cafe Mosman, who all welcomed me back. The whole community is excited to welcome you back. We are optimistic for New South Wales, we are optimistic for our future and we are grateful we have you all.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN RAYMOND MASSARD

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:52): Today I pay my respects to and honour a great man, the late John Raymond Massard. John was born in Parramatta in 1958 to Gloria and Kevin Massard. He grew up with a love of the outdoors, his family and community. This led John to pursue a career in education, wherein he started his first ever job as a primary school teacher. Throughout my years as a member of Parliament I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to know John as a dedicated, compassionate and caring principal at Harrington Street Public School. It was no secret to those who knew him, but John had been battling cancer for many years. Despite these hardships, this did not stop John from lighting up a room with his charismatic smile and joyous attitude. As someone who has experienced cancer firsthand, I can only attest to John's bravery and

perseverance during the tough times and his unrelenting desire to brighten the lives of everyone around him during the good times and the bad.

John was well known within our community as someone who was not only a passionate educator and family man but also an avid cyclist who was mad about his football—soccer, of course—his dedication towards preaching at Greystanes Uniting Church, working with youth groups and having a good old time with his friends and family over a game or two. John was always a man who was clearly passionate about helping and supporting others and would stop at nothing to help those in need. On Thursday 6 May 2021 Harrington Street Public School held a very special memorial service in loving memory of John and his countless contributions to the school and the broader community over the years. Our community is much poorer for the loss of John and the warmth, love and kindness he brought to so many.

John was a remarkable man but, more importantly, he was a loving friend, father and husband. On behalf of the Cabramatta electorate, I express our sincere appreciation for John's many years of dedicated service to our community and for his commitment to education and empowering generations of children over the years. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Karen, and their three loving children, Sarah, Tracey and Tim. John was a truly remarkable man who made a tremendous impact on our local community. His legacy will continue to live on forever through us all. Vale John Raymond Massard, 1 November 1958 to 6 April 2021.

NSW RAIL MUSEUM

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:55): Via video link: It is with great delight and satisfaction that I bring to the House's attention that the Wollondilly and Southern Highlands regions will receive a major tourism boost, thanks to funding for the 32-kilometre Picton to Colo Vale rail loop line project. Last month I proudly announced that the New South Wales Government had awarded \$9.1 million to the project from the Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund. The funding will deliver a significant economic benefit to my community through a project that will support the continued success of the NSW Rail Museum. It brings the project's total funding to \$14.6 million since I took up the cause at the last election. Based in Thirlmere and just an hour from Sydney, the NSW Rail Museum has long been a popular attraction for families and rail enthusiasts drawn to Australia's biggest collection of heritage trains. Some of the rolling stock includes the iconic 3801 and the children's favourite, Thomas the Tank Engine. Mr Assistant Speaker, I am sure young James will enjoy getting on that one.

The project will upgrade the line between Picton and Buxton and reopen the section from Buxton to Colo Vale, allowing more heritage trains to operate from the museum. Reopening the loop line to Colo Vale adds capacity on longer rail excursions, which will create a more authentic experience of what it was like to travel during the golden age of steam trains. The upgrades include a stretch of track between the villages of Balmoral and Hill Top, currently inaccessible to the public, through one of the deepest railway cuttings in the Southern Hemisphere. Having been there myself, I can tell the House that Big Hill Cutting will be the highlight of the loop line when it is reopened. It will provide a unique experience that will draw and delight families and rail enthusiasts alike. I can also advise the House that the work has already commenced, which confirms the project's shovel-readiness. The NSW Rail Museum is the largest tourist attraction in the Wollondilly region and the upgrades are expected to support the recovery of an area devastated by the Black Summer fires and COVID-19. The villages along the line that will be revitalised were some of the hardest hit by those fires.

When the line was built in the 1860s, it revolutionised the lives of ordinary people by reducing the tyranny of distance and bringing them together. What better project can there be right now as we emerge and recover from a time of isolation from our families and friends. The original line brought the local villages to life and its reopening will do the same. There are plans for village market stalls to spring up along the line selling locally grown and made produce, further adding to the visitor experience and providing a much needed economic boost to local businesses. The loop line project complements the New South Wales Government's pilot scheme that makes it easier for farmers across New South Wales to start, run and grow an agritourism business. I am hopeful that the pilot plans will translate to a formal policy as soon as possible.

I acknowledge John Barilaro, the former Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, for delivering the project funding from the \$3 billion Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund. His department rightly saw the merit in the Transport Heritage NSW business case. I acknowledge the outstanding work of Transport Heritage NSW CEO, Andrew Moritz, and his dedicated team in putting this project together. They are looking forward to implementing it. Andrew rightly views the project as a game changer for the NSW Rail Museum and the local region. It has been a long-held vision of many members, volunteers and local communities to see heritage trains operate the full length of the loop line, which meets the increased demand for heritage train experiences. I also thank mayor Robert Khan and Wingecarribee administrator Viv May for joining me at the announcement. The project has truly brought our community and leaders together. There is only one more thing to say: toot, toot; all aboard!

GALLOP INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:00): I speak on the newly released findings of the Gallop inquiry, *Valuing the teaching profession*. The inquiry, commissioned by the NSW Teachers Federation, was released on 20 February 2020. It was conducted by an expert panel and chaired by Dr Geoff Gallop, a former Western Australian Premier and education Minister. It has been the first independent inquiry relating to the work of public school teachers in New South Wales since 2004. The findings of the inquiry are startling and require immediate holistic action from the New South Wales Government. It found that dedication to the service of teaching remains high. However, the profession of teaching has experienced unrivalled change since 2004 compared with many other professions. Teaching has become more complex and demanding. The inquiry also found that, despite the demands of teaching increasing exponentially, salaries have fallen well behind the average of other professions. It found that less than one-third of teachers believe they have time to do their job well. That alarming statistic requires further investigation and certainly a department response.

In April I met with Blacktown Teachers Association and Fairfield Teachers Association, which further brought to my attention the findings of the Gallop inquiry. We discussed the many concerns and profound challenges that teachers in western Sydney and throughout New South Wales are currently facing. Terry Moriarty, a maths teachers at Bossley Park High School in my electorate of Prospect, was one of the insightful teachers I met with. Terry brought my attention to the desperate shortage of counsellors and psychologists in our public schools. The recommended ratio of counsellors to students is 1:500. However, in many schools in New South Wales, the ratio far exceeds this. For example, at Westfields Sports High School there is one counsellor to 1,500 students. I ask members to envisage for a moment the enormous challenges that one counsellor must have in supporting 1,500 students. That can only create enormous workplace pressure for a counsellor and it can also result in students not receiving the individualised support they very much require.

The insufficient number of school counsellors means that teachers bear the brunt of the burden. The role of teaching has far exceeded educating. Teachers now act as educators, counsellors, and emotional and psychological support systems. The requirement for psychological support in schools has increased significantly with current world events. Our children are experiencing many hardships, especially due to the COVID-19 health pandemic. Social restrictions and online learning have negatively impacted the mental health of many, most especially our young children. Many Australian children are now doing it tough amidst a stressful plethora of COVID-19 grievances, impacts of natural disasters and socio-economic challenges. In my electorate of Prospect many students are refugees and have fled war-torn countries. That in itself poses many barriers for students as they embark on their educational journey.

Additionally, we discussed the intensification of teachers' work. Constant policy changes, rapid increases in technology, expansion of curriculums and new administrative duties mean that teachers are on average required to work 55-hour weeks. Teachers are forced to work those hours to meet all the needs of students and perform administrative duties. The NSW Department of Education has also passed the responsibility of administration onto already overworked teachers. It is no secret that an enormous amount of planning, time and effort goes into every school lesson.

Teachers are crying out for more release time, which would allow them to plan lessons more collaboratively. The Gallop inquiry has put forward six key recommendations, which the New South Wales Government should observe and consider accordingly. Those recommendations include considering teachers' salaries, increasing preparation time, increasing the number of permanent teachers, expanding the career structure for teachers, urgently increasing the number of counsellors and allowing teachers the time to work on the new curriculum. Teaching is an incredibly selfless profession that is imperative to the functioning of our community. To be tasked with the feat of preparing our children for their adult lives is nothing short of courageous. I find it surprising that a profession that has a firsthand impact on future generations and our own children's lives can be so under-resourced and underfunded. I urge the Government to take the Gallop inquiry seriously and make a greater effort to listen to our teachers.

ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:05): When I make a promise to our community, I always get it done. In my first term as an MP I worked hard to secure funding and approval for major projects that have saved lives and changed lives. I remember standing with Barry O'Farrell at Mount Pleasant who announced that if our community elected me, the New South Wales Government would build the Princes Highway upgrade at Gerringong. As promised, the project was delivered. During my first year as an MP I also worked hard to secure funding for the Berry bypass. After working with then Treasurer Mike Baird, we found the funds and got the commitment. As promised, the project was delivered. Both of those projects had been talked about for many years. But talk is cheap; actions speak louder than words. Now, as promised, the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade and a new Shoalhaven River crossing are currently under construction.

Whilst all of those projects are important, I could not be prouder to stand in this House and advise members that the Albion Park Rail bypass is now complete, as promised. I told my constituents that if they backed me, I would always fight for them; I would always keep my promises and I would always work hard and get results. I will never forget the day I stood with former Premier Mike Baird as we committed a future New South Wales Government to building the Albion Park Rail bypass. It did not take long for the non-believers to emerge. So many said, "I'll never be alive to see it." I was told by one person, who shall remain nameless, "Young fella, I've seen plenty of politicians promise this before. You are all full of it." And, no, it was not my dad, if members are wondering. Even though I had already delivered the Gerringong upgrade and secured funding for the Berry bypass when I made the announcement, people still would not believe it until they saw it—and fair enough, too.

I am so pleased to advise that earlier in the year we were able to open the northbound lanes of the Albion Park Rail bypass and, over the weekend, we were able to open the southbound lanes to traffic. The Albion Park Rail bypass will mean a huge reduction in travel times as we wave goodbye to the only sets of traffic lights on the Princes Highway between Bomaderry and Heathcote. In what was frequently voted the most hated section of road in regional New South Wales, the bypass means the people of Albion Park Rail get their streets back. Our community will have much faster and more reliable travel time so that they can spend less time in congestion and more time doing what they want to do. I take this opportunity to thank every member of the awesome team at Fulton Hogan. Not only have they delivered this project on budget, they have delivered it an entire year ahead of schedule.

I commend Fulton Hogan for meeting the targets it was set around employing trainees, apprentices, Aboriginal people and women in non-traditional roles on this project. Each of its employees who worked on the project—in any capacity—will be forever part of history and a project that has been a game changer for our region. Fulton Hogan did a wonderful job keeping our community informed of progress and impacts on traffic movement throughout the entire construction. I also thank my South Coast colleague Shelly Hancock, who was a fighter for the Princes Highway for many years even before coming to this place. I thank Transport for NSW and acknowledge the contribution of its team, led by Renee Ethrington and Sam Knight, throughout the course of delivering the project.

More than 2,800 jobs were generated across this project, with many of those workers coming from our local community. I acknowledge and thank those property owners who worked with me and had to give up homes and property to make way for this project. In particular, I acknowledge the Tate family, for whom negotiations were often difficult, but their patience and generosity has helped so many. I thank Shellharbour City Council for working with me to resolve land acquisition issues in order to progress the project. To that end, I thank all the sporting clubs that worked with the project team as we moved sports facilities from the Croome Road Sporting Complex to a new home to make way for the bypass. Their cooperation and involvement is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I thank the people of Albion Park Rail, Albion Park, Tullimbar and Calderwood for their support of me as their local member of Parliament. They trusted me to get the job done and I hope they are pleased with the result. But there is still more to do. I have secured funding to assist Shellharbour City Council plan for the Albion Park bypass, which will run along Tripoli Way. Whilst it is a council project, I want to do all that I can to help move that project along because we need to bust congestion in the CBD of Albion Park on Tongarra Road. To that end, I have secured funding from Transport for NSW and the New South Wales Government to help Shellharbour City Council plan for that local road project. Many members have passed through this place aspiring to do great things, to make changes and to obtain outcomes that matter. Whilst there is no shortage of self-praise by parliamentarians, all I ask of my community is that they judge me on my record. My loyalty and fidelity to them will always come first; it will always be golden and absolute.

COVID-19 AND SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:10): I recognise the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Seven Hills electorate, particularly during the recent Delta outbreak. Firstly, I thank every community across the three local government areas in the Seven Hills electorate: Parramatta, Blacktown and The Hills shire. Every suburb in the electorate, including Blacktown, Baulkham Hills, Constitution Hill, Kings Langley, Lalor Park, Old Toongabbie, North Rocks, Northmead, Pendle Hill, Seven Hills, Toongabbie, Wentworthville, Westmead and Winston Hills, has done a tremendous job getting vaccinated. In particular, I recognise the Winston Hills community for having the highest rate of double vaccination by postcode in the electorate.

I thank those communities for getting vaccinated at NSW Health sites at Sydney Olympic Park, at Westmead and Blacktown hospitals, or at their general practitioner or pharmacy. I also thank the local community organisations that held specific pop-up vaccination programs for the vulnerable. I note Mark Tough of St Clement's Anglican Church at Lalor Park for his work in assisting to vaccinate the many social housing constituents who live in the area and rely on his assistance. I also note the work of Vicki Wilde and her team at Karabi Community & Development Services for organising a vaccination site with assisted transport for the

elderly. Karabi is constantly advocating for the social housing community complexes nearby and the elderly they work for at those locations across Constitution Hill, Seven Hills and Wentworthville.

I recognise those at Glenwood who assisted in vaccinating the Sikh and multicultural communities across the Seven Hills electorate. I take this time to also thank the many volunteer groups that assisted communities in western Sydney through the recent lockdown, in particular across Parramatta and Blacktown. I particularly note the work of Turbans 4 Australia, a tremendous group that continues to serve multicultural and vulnerable communities across New South Wales, and whose generosity knows no bounds. I also note the difficulties placed on students throughout this time. As the husband of a Winston Hills teacher and a father of two school-aged children, I understand firsthand the incredible efforts to which our local educators have gone to ensure the continued learning of children across the Seven Hills electorate at this critical time. I thank all of the local schoolteachers. I know how hard they are working and the difficulties they face from my recent discussions with local teachers' associations.

I give a special acknowledgement and shout-out to the schools that went the extra mile in that home learning environment, including Lalor Park Public School, Seven Hills Public School, Seven Hills West Public School, The Meadows Public School and Toongabbie East Public School. I also thank the nurses, doctors, allied health, environmental health, security and administrative staff at our local hospitals for their incredible work. I know from my conversations with Adam Hall at the Health Services Union, and from speaking with his members, how tirelessly they have served the community at Blacktown hospital, Westmead Hospital and The Children's Hospital at Westmead. Many of my constituents work in the transport and logistics sector. They have gone above and beyond during the Delta outbreak and I thank them for their work. I know from my correspondence with the Transport Workers Union that their truckies have also been the backbone of western Sydney during the pandemic and I thank all those who work in logistics and transport for their efforts during this time.

I am pleased with the New South Wales Government's announcement of additional Dine & Discover vouchers. I know that many small businesses in the electorate of Seven Hills—particularly the cafes and shopping centres in Winston Hills, Kings Langley, Lalor Park and Seven Hills—will welcome this announcement and I urge all of the constituents of Seven Hills to come out and support our local small businesses. The range of views and opinions in calls and correspondence has been wide but at each turn of the Delta outbreak I have fed those matters back to the crisis Cabinet. Having grown up in the local area and attended the public schools in our electorate, and as a serving police officer in both the Merrylands and Hills areas and having worked as a prosecutor across western Sydney, I know the strength of the people of western Sydney. They are fantastic communities and they will grow bigger and stronger as a result of recent events.

CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL BUDGET

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:15): Members may not be surprised that I again speak about the plight of the Central Coast Council. One of the lesser known effects of its financial difficulties is something called depreciation. The council has had to take out privately sourced loans to be able to continue to operate. Part of the conditions of the loans is that the council has to work within a very tight budget. That has meant that it cannot add any new infrastructure because that would add to the depreciation schedule. We have been told in private meetings with the administrator, the chief financial officer and the CEO that means that the Central Coast Council cannot build any new infrastructure that is funded outside developer contributions for the next 10 years.

One can imagine—particularly in my part of the world, where a lot of new development is going on—telling constituents that even if the State or Federal governments give the council a grant, it has to give it back because it cannot build anything new. It can renew infrastructure, but it cannot build anything new. The result is that many community groups are in a situation where they are applying for State or Federal government grants and the council cannot write them a letter of support. Wyong Tennis Club is an example I highlight to show how big the problem is. The club has a shed that was built in the mid-1980s. Like many things in my electorate, it was built with material and labour donated by club members. The building is a tin shed consisting of two toilets, a small kitchenette and an awning. It is well past its use-by date, with evidence of rusting at the base of some of the uprights. The club has to do some major maintenance. A plan to build a new clubhouse has been prepared. The club will source the money and supply the labour to do the work, but because the building is on council land the council cannot encourage the club to do it.

Recently the club was told that the council cannot write a letter of support, despite the fact that the council had approved a development application for the new building. The council gave the club a development application to do the work but cannot support the club to get a grant to pay for the work. This is an amazingly crazy situation that does one's mind in. I ask the Minister for Local Government, Mrs Shelley Hancock, to look at how the council can work around this depreciation issue. We cannot have a situation where, for the next 10 years, nothing new can be built. That is ridiculous. It is a terrible situation. The current administrator and the new CEO,

David Farmer, are doing an incredible job to get the finances back to where they need to be, but this infrastructure cannot be knocked back. The tennis club is not the only organisation in this situation; there are other organisations as well. As local members we get the Community Building Partnership program grants and if the construction is on council land the council has to say it cannot be done. That is an incredibly crazy situation.

Having talked to councils in other areas, particularly in western New South Wales, I am aware that this depreciation issue is affecting not just the Central Coast Council but a range of councils across the State that are being locked in because of this depreciation requirement, which has only really been in place for the past two years. Before that it did not apply. The Government has to look at this matter and find a workaround so that councils are not hamstrung by this depreciation schedule, which then financially impacts ratepayers. The Central Coast had a 15 per cent rate rise and a reduction in staff and services, and now we are being told there cannot be any new infrastructure either, even if the council is not paying for it. We are happy to sit down with the Minister and have a discussion to see if we can work out how we can start building new things on the Central Coast during the next 10 years.

TEACHING PROFESSION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:20): Schools, teachers, students and families with kids at school have been under enormous pressure during pandemic restrictions, with significant impacts on learning and student welfare. Recently I met with public school teachers and parents over Zoom, as they have been doing with classes for months. School communities are looking forward to getting back to classrooms and group activities, and to reuniting friends and classmates. The New South Wales Advocate for Children and Young People's consultation with young people identified seeing friends and getting back to school as key concerns. There is strong community support for a return to face-to-face learning as long as COVID transmission and classroom ventilation can be safely addressed. Teachers raised serious concerns about the changes to teachers' roles through increasing administration and reporting responsibilities and rapidly changing technologies, with a new curriculum from 2022 adding stress. Teachers need extra time allocation for administration and reporting.

Teachers told me that there is limited support and training for them to take on new roles and higher responsibilities, especially as assistant principals and teaching principals. Teachers need support and additional non-teaching time if they are to carry out these responsibilities. That situation is made worse when teachers' salaries have stagnated and compare badly with other industries with equivalent qualifications and skills. Experienced teachers' pay increments stop in their mid-thirties, at a time when other professionals are receiving greater financial reward for their expertise and experience. The Government's public sector pay caps must be removed and pay rates increased to retain experienced teachers, reward their know-how and attract young people to the industry.

Media reports have included education department data showing that there is a serious shortfall in teacher numbers across New South Wales. The teachers I spoke with confirmed this is a serious issue for inner-city schools and we are already behind with teacher supply and retention. Education economist Adam Rorris estimates the public school system needs to recruit an additional 11,000 full-time teachers over the next 10 years to meet student enrolment growth. I was shocked to hear that there is no clear transition to permanency for teachers, with casual teachers stuck as casual without a career path. Teachers told me there are too few relief teachers, giving examples where there have been no relief teachers available for months at a time. Relying on a variety of casual staff limits continuity for students and puts extra strain on other teachers who must carry mixed classes. Students need continuity in learning and should not be left with a variety of relief teachers who are moved back and forth into different classes for long periods.

Teachers also told me about the serious lack of counselling resources. They reported no capacity for ongoing support for students who are struggling with serious psychological distress, exacerbated by the pandemic restrictions and anxiety. The Government must provide additional counselling positions and permanency to these positions to make sure students learn and progress. I heard teachers' passion and tangible care for their students' learning and welfare. The wider community now understands some of their expertise after struggling through home learning. The ongoing disparity between funding for public schools and students and private schools is a serious concern. Total government funding for private schools increased by more than six times that of public schools between 2009-10 and 2018-19. Funding per private school student increased by more than 22 per cent compared to only 2.4 per cent for public schools—nearly 10 times the increase for public schools. That is completely unfair and it seriously disadvantages students and our future.

Well-resourced schools and well-trained, supported and experienced staff are more vital than ever with lockdowns risking students falling behind. We will need extra resources to help students catch up on learning and social development, to process the pandemic experience and to get back into routines and assessments when they return to school. This applies to all students, not just those dealing with the hurdles of HSC exams. Additional

resources for schools to address the ongoing impacts of the pandemic should be seen as a key part of the recovery. Restarting schools needs an investment like any other industry.

I call on the Government to recognise the vital contribution of teachers to our community, economy and future. We need teachers who are properly compensated for their expertise and experience, with supported career paths and transitions to permanency, including for part-time teachers. They need adequate non-class time, and training and support for changing roles and increased reporting and administrative duties. Their students need adequate counsellor support, with dedicated positions to match the students who need extra help to learn and progress. After the pandemic experience, we know we need expert teachers. To get them, they need the recognition, training, support and compensation to match.

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (17:25): Sudden cardiac arrest can impact anyone, anywhere and anytime. In my community, my friend Ian Hutchinson was going around Narrabeen Lagoon on a normal Tuesday morning—he is a fit guy—when suddenly he came off his bike, gasping for air, with the colour drained from his face. He had stopped breathing and was suffering a cardiac arrest. Ian is just one of many who experience this life-altering event but his personal story has served as a catalyst for increased awareness about cardiac arrest throughout my community. Across the country, about 25,000 to 27,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests occur every year. There are about 68 deaths every day from cardiac arrest and in my local community on the northern beaches about 250 people die every year—an average of five people each week. Of the 25,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest occurrences, only about 10 per cent, or 2,500 people, survive. The sad news is it affects young people as well. About five people under the age of 35 die of sudden cardiac arrest every week.

I am glad to say that Ian Hutchinson, whilst dead for several minutes, ultimately emerged as one of those lucky 10 per cent who survive a sudden cardiac arrest. Restart a Heart Day is held every year on 16 October. It aims to raise awareness about cardiac arrest and helps people learn CPR, giving them lifesaving skills and the confidence to use automated external defibrillators, or AEDs. When someone has a sudden cardiac arrest, time is of the essence. Defibrillation within the first three minutes is vital to increasing the chances of survival from around 10 per cent to more than double that. Thanks to Pittwater local Helen Jones, I recently caught up with Greg Page, the former Yellow Wiggle, who had started the charity Heart of the Nation. He shared his story of how he collapsed on stage during a Wiggles performance and lay dead for three minutes until a bystander performed cardiac pulmonary resuscitation and was also able to access an AED that saved his life.

Greg's mission, just like Ian Hutchinson's, is to increase community awareness and resources to save lives. His plan has three steps. First, he has highlighted how AEDs can improve survivorship of sudden cardiac arrest by more than 200 per cent. While there is increased access to AEDs in public places such as sports fields, surf clubs, shopping centres, gyms and workplaces, the gaps are often in residential areas, where 80 per cent of sudden cardiac arrests occur. That is why Heart of the Nation is encouraging the community to get their street, unit block or cul-de-sac to come together and co-fund AEDs. This is something Ian has done in his own street. He and his neighbours had a street party and crowdfunded the purchase of a defibrillator that is stationed at a local carport. Everyone knows where it is and knows that it can be accessed in an emergency and has the capacity to save a life. What better neighbour could you have, Mr Assistant Speaker!

Across New South Wales councils vary in their approach to defibrillators in public spaces. Northern Beaches Council is a notable example for its extensive defibrillator infrastructure, communication and mapping—no doubt a testament to the strong advocacy of many community members like Ian, Greg and Helen. Northern Beaches Council has installed and maintained a number of lifesaving ZapStands that are available 24 hours and it has installed portable defibrillators in or around many council buildings and properties, including community centres, surf clubs, pools, bowling clubs, golf clubs and libraries. Many of these have been introduced in partnership with the \$4 million New South Wales Government Local Sport Defibrillator Grant Program.

In many ways, Pittwater is leading the charge with the rollout of AEDs, which I am particularly proud of. But as Heart of the Nation is aware, installing AEDs is only one part of the puzzle. We need to ensure that people know what to do if someone is suffering from a sudden cardiac arrest. This Saturday, Restart a Heart Day and Heart of the Nation are inviting everyone to join in on what they hope will be the world's largest CPR class, presented by Surf Life Saving NSW and Channel 9 at 3.00 p.m. It will be filmed at the beautiful Balgowlah surf club in my community. I encourage everyone to join and learn a lifesaving skill.

In my new role as transport Minister, I am also keen to see the increased proliferation of AEDs across our public transport network. I will be tasking Transport for NSW to look into how we can procure more AEDs for our new train fleets. The issue of sudden cardiac arrest underlines the critical role that our train guards could play in a life or death situation. It explains just how important those staff are to the New South Wales public. I would

also like to see AEDs potentially rolled out across all electorate offices, which are most often located on busy high streets at the centre of the community. I first spoke about sudden cardiac arrest, and the growing importance of AED technologies, in this place 12 years ago. We have come a long way since then; however, there is still a way to go. I am so proud of people like Greg Page, Ian Hutchinson and Helen Jones, who are doing incredible work in this crucial area. I encourage everyone to get behind their efforts and support Restart a Heart Day this Saturday.

COVID-19 AND VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:30): The pandemic lockdown has had a major and deep impact on our local school communities. Despite the challenges of remote learning, changing health advice and COVID safety requirements, remarkably they got through it together in my electorate. I cannot thank them enough for their patience, their commitment and all the goodwill that made it possible. Last week I spoke to a group of teachers from my local schools, including Double Bay Public School principal Lauren Sten and assistant principal Katherine Arrowsmith, and Rose Bay Secondary College teacher George Stamell. They shared their insights on how the pandemic and lockdown had impacted their work and respective school communities. More than ever, we appreciate the vital role our teachers play in our community. They have kept our communities going, along with our essential workers: our nurses, our police officers, our paramedics and our SES volunteers. I genuinely and warmly thank them all.

During the three-month lockdown, I also spoke with our local school students. In particular, I was incredibly impressed by a group of year 12 students who came together to support each other and their peers. They compiled a student survey that they wanted to show to the Government that addressed how it could better support them through their HSC exams. We had a videoconference and the findings of that survey were presented to the New South Wales education Minister, Sarah Mitchell. I thank those students for their advocacy on behalf of their peers. I particularly single out for praise Rose Bay Secondary College captains Hattie Shand and Hordur Zoega, and The Scots College deputy head boy Charlie Sayers and head prefect Max McCathie. They were remarkable. They were preparing for their HSC and yet were able to bring together all their peers and advocate for them to the State Government.

In addition to Double Bay Public School and Rose Bay Secondary College, I express my sincere gratitude to all my local schools. I thank Ascham School at Edgecliff, led by head of school Andrew Powell and head of junior school Judi Butcher and board chair Janet Anderson; Bellevue Hill Public School, led by principal Suzanne Bennett and the P&C president Helene Suskin; Bondi Beach Public School with Gai O'Neill as principal and long-time P&C president Rob Keldoulis; Bondi Public School with principal Natalia Greguric, who started just this year, and P&C president Zoe Pester; Cranbrook School with headmaster Nicholas Sampson and president of school council Jon North; Galilee Catholic Primary School in Bondi led by principal Anna Novak; Holy Cross Catholic Primary School in Woollahra, led by principal Louise Minogue; Kambala in Vaucluse led by interim principal Dr Amanda Bell, AM, and president of school council Ainslie van Onselen; and Kesser Torah College in Dover Heights led by principal Roy Steinman and president of the board Shaul Schapiro.

I also thank Kincoppal-Rose Bay, School of the Sacred Heart, with principal Maureen Ryan, head of junior school Danielle Albertini and school board chair Dr Mark Sinclair; McAuley Catholic Primary School, Rose Bay, with principal Nicole Jones and Parents & Friends president Emma Harcourt; Montessori East, Bondi, led by principal Bruce Russell and school board president Sara Hoffman; Moriah College, with principal Rabbi Smulker, president of board of directors Stephen Jankelowitz and president of the Moriah Foundation Judy Lowy; Reddam House, led by head of senior school Dave Pitcairn and head of junior school Dee Pitcairn; Rose Bay Public School, led by recently appointed principal Cherie Stone and P&C president Jackie Bando; Rose Bay Secondary College, led by principal Melinda Bright and P&C president Kara Milker; The Scots College, Bellevue Hill, led by principal Dr Ian Lambert and college council chairman Wayne Richards; Vaucluse Public School, with relieving principal Philippa Allen and P&C president Nadia Kaye; Wairoa School, with principal Carmel Seeto; Waverley Action for Youth Services, led by CEO Dr Terri Said and president Leo Wassercug; and Woollahra Public School, with principal Nicole Molloy and P&C president Ellie Hourigan.

That is quite a list but I thank them one and all. Our families and schools got through the lockdown period with its many challenges because all of those people—the parents, the carers and the wonderful students—came together to hold each other's hands, figuratively and literally. I look forward to visiting those schools soon, and on behalf of the Vaucluse electorate I thank them.

CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:36): I welcome the opportunity to speak about Concord High School in my electorate. I have spent time meeting with teachers, parents and the principal in recent weeks, all of whom are passionate about their school community. Their sentiment was consistent: They are doing the best they can in the conditions they have been given, but the school needs urgent attention and action. Since being elected

in 2011, I have witnessed the greater demand on school places at Concord High School, with the number of enrolled students now currently sitting at approximately 1,300 in a school equipped for around 900. I hold a fundamental belief that education is vital in our society and that every student should have an equal opportunity of access to quality education and, in turn, an equal opportunity of outcome to succeed and be their best. My community has been fortunate to have access to some of the best primary schools with state-of-the-art facilities and technology.

Since 2011 great advancements within the parameters of the education portfolio have been made with projects such as the total knockdown and rebuild of Lucas Gardens School and the opening of two new public schools, Victoria Avenue Public School and Russell Lea Public School. However, there is a long way to go for high school improvements in my electorate. Concord High School is the only public secondary school in my electorate. I am consistently proud to see that the school gets great academic results. I am always impressed by the calibre of the students' academic and co-curricular achievements when I visit the school and attend the end-of-year presentations. It is a wonderful school educating the next generation and supporting hardworking families, but it is feeling the pressure of rising enrolments and that cannot be ignored by the Government or the department.

There is no shortage of private, independent and Catholic secondary schooling options in my electorate and surrounding suburbs but, fundamentally, equity should always exist. In essence, that means that families should have the choice of viable schooling options, both public and private. Ultimately, that assumption is challenged when students are attending overcrowded schools where facilities require maintenance and significant upgrades. Three main areas of concern to the school community that must be addressed are: student numbers, school amenities and funding. Referring to school numbers, the school must be included in transparent communication with the department. That is an important step in order to understand and ascertain projected enrolments once the new high school at Wentworth Point, Sydney Olympic Park, opens.

That information is vital for robust and productive planning to take place for the future needs of the population. There are plans for increased development in years to come and the school must be in a position where it is supported in absorbing population growth. Referring to school amenities, there needs to be a holistic vision for the future of the school to give the community certainty about planned upgrades and an overall infrastructure pipeline. Currently there are around 14 demountable classrooms at the school, with more projected. Demountable classrooms must only be a temporary solution, not a 20-year thing. Immediate arrangements must be put in place for better quality bathroom facilities rather than demountable bathrooms, outdoor seating and sporting facilities, a new school hall to accommodate all students and a vision for the aging buildings that require upgrading or, at the very least, maintenance.

Referring to funding for the services the school provides for students, my discussions with the school have led me to understand that there is a real need for more counsellors to support students, particularly during this challenging time. Mental health must be prioritised and part of that is increased access to services as well as to provide more opportunities for extracurricular activities. I am committed to working alongside the school community to get the best outcome for school students and families in my electorate. I have had some productive discussions with Minister Mitchell on this matter and she has listened and been supportive. Recently I toured Concord High School with the principal, Mr Victor Newby. I recognise the passion Mr Newby has for the school and its community, and I thank him for his work. I have also been working constructively with the Concord High School P&C executive, who must be commended for their dedication in fighting hard to ensure that this great school gets its fair share of funding.

COVID-19 AND LISMORE ELECTORATE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:41): Via video link: I continue my contribution regarding COVID and I relay some of the vaccination rates in my electorate by local government area: Lismore has 84.8 per cent first dose and 53 per cent second dose; Kyogle has 82.1 per cent and 57.2 per cent; Byron has 75.7 per cent and 47.1 per cent—I include Byron because at the next election part of the Byron shire will come into the electorate of Lismore—Tweed has 83.2 per cent and 58.2 per cent; and Tenterfield has 81.1 per cent and 53.1 per cent. For the North Coast and Tablelands area there is a bit of a difference but, generally, the North Coast for Aboriginal communities is 60 per cent first dose and 35 per cent second dose. That is as at 5 October 2021. Sometimes it is hard to get a correct reading on all the figures when one looks closely because there are a few different systems operating—there is the Federal and there is the State—and there is not always interoperability among those systems. So there is no line of sight but those are the best figures we have to date.

When we said that there are workers and customers who cannot be at second dose with the road map and opening up that started on 11 October last week, we did so for a number of reasons: first, because we did not have the vaccination rates up; and, second, because of the vaccine access. At some point we had Pfizer sent in and then that was taken back to Sydney. We were told we got those 40,000 doses for year 12 students back but, again, there

is no line of sight with these things. To give members an idea of how people are responding, including local councils and the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, on Tuesday night Lismore City Council passed the following urgent resolution:

... that the Council urgently write to Janelle Saffin MP, Premier Dominic Perrottet and Deputy Premier Paul Toole seeking urgent changes to the NSW Government roadmap reopening for regional communities who have not achieved the same rates of vaccination as metropolitan communities;

1. Change access requirements to restricted premises to allow access for people with one dose of a vaccine;
2. Extend the date for repeal of clause 4 (a) to allow workers with one dose to be able to work beyond 1st November;

To that point, many workers had their second dose organised, but it comes sometime after 1 November. The resolution continues:

3. Delay regional travel until at least 1st November or when regional communities consistently reach 80% double dose;

Today I read in one of the newspapers that the Premier had said that that was going to be a matter discussed in the COVID and Economic Recovery Committee today. I hope that it was. The resolution continues:

4. Retain financial support for impacted businesses until 1st December;
5. Request that the Member for Lismore consider making a Private Members Statement to Parliament on this matter.

I have included that in my private member's statement. I add another contribution from Councillor Gary Verri, one of my long-term councillors from the Tenterfield Shire Council. He speaks about border communities, which I spoke about a little earlier. Councillor Verri sent an email to the Premier, which stated:

I am a Councillor that represents A Ward of Tenterfield Shire, the Ward starts on the outskirts of Tenterfield town and adjoins the Queensland border as far Northeast as Woodenbong, the area of White Swamp is closer to Brisbane than it is to Tenterfield, therein lies our problem, all of the visitors to the tourist venues in A Ward are entirely dependent on the Queensland border being open, while I realise that the NSW government can't get the Queensland government to open the border, I believe that the NSW government could and should help the border businesses.

The villages of Liston, Legume, Jennings depend entirely on QLD for patronage to the businesses in those villages, Urbenville also relies to some extent on QLD. Some of the border tourist ventures haven't had visitors in months and at present there is no point in opening until the borders are open without restrictions, at Jennings the hotel was going to celebrate its centennial next year but as the licensee points out the till is empty, there is not enough in the till to trade, Jennings is the smaller part of the twin towns of Wallangarra/Jennings and relies on Wallangarra for most of its patronage. I'm not standing for Council in the upcoming elections so I'm writing to you out of a sense of duty. Kind Regards Gary Verri, Councillor A Ward.

That points to a lot of the problems we have in border communities. It can be very challenging and difficult. I thank the Cross Border Commissioner James McTavish and his team, Emma and Caroline, for all of the terrific work that they do and continue to do in very challenging circumstances. I would like to add a few more things.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Lismore that she has five minutes to make a private member's statement.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: How long do I have? I cannot see the clock.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: We gave you an extra three minutes.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I will conclude my remarks and I will continue this conversation over the next few weeks. Thank you for the extra time.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:47): It is a pleasure to talk about one of my constituents who I spoke about over 12 months ago in the House—that is, Debbie Downer and her family. At the time Debbie had publicly revealed that she was homeless. That was a very difficult time in her life but I am pleased to inform the House that Debbie and her children now have a home, thanks to her advocacy and the good work of the Department of Community and Justice staff on the Central Coast. But it was not easy. Debbie had to be at the point where she was on the street with her children before a public housing home could be provided. It should not be that way. Debbie could not find a home in the private rental market. There is a tremendous shortage of public housing in the State, which is what I will talk about this evening.

I talk first about the figures for this State. My question numbered 6181 was answered on 28 July this year and I was advised that in 2010-11 there were 130,664 public housing dwellings in New South Wales. By 2019-20 that figure was 125,334, which shows a decline in public housing across the State. Previously I reported to the House that the Central Coast has 200 or more fewer public dwellings than it did 10 years ago. This Government talks a lot about building but when it comes to public housing it is not building, it is selling. The truth is this Government is determined to privatise the public housing system in this State in the same way it is determined to privatise any State asset that it can get away with. Privatising public housing is a big part of the story why housing

is so unaffordable in this country. Dozens of public housing dwellings in my electorate and on the Central Coast have been sold off over the past 10 years. Most were purchased by investors and then used as private rentals in an increasingly unaffordable private rental market.

When I reported Debbie's situation I also reported a public housing property in Bateau Bay at 5 and 6 Faye Close, Bateau Bay. That property had been vacant and boarded up for several years. The building, as I observed it—and I have spent some time in the building industry—was structurally sound. It needed a bit of work but it would have been perfect for Debbie and her family. I asked the Government about the home and what it was going to do with it. I suggested that it be fixed up to provide much-needed public housing on the Central Coast, but the media reported that the Government sold the property for just over \$800,000. In another question on notice I received an answer that the net profit obtained by the Government for the sale of that property was \$124,000. It was not much of a return. I have asked further questions on the gap. It is an appalling outcome. A home that was empty and structurally sound could have been easily renovated and repurposed. It is now lost to the public housing system. It was sold several months ago and when I had a look at it last week, it was still empty and boarded up.

The for-profit private development sector cannot and will not provide the affordable housing we need in this State. All it has provided us with is poor quality apartments. We have seen reports in the media this week that more apartments built in the Canterbury area falling apart. That is all we have got out of the private sector over the past 10 years, as well as a growing property-owning investor class who do not build new homes, only crappy apartments; they buy and sell homes built by other people. We need serious and large-scale investment in public housing in this State. Other countries have done this and we can do it too. All that is absent is the will to do it. We have over 50,000 people on the public housing waiting list. People want public housing in this State, which means we need to build more public housing in New South Wales.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I totally agree. I thank the member for The Entrance.

Community Recognition Notices

STEVE HOLDEN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I extend a huge congratulations to Superintendent Steve Holden from the Bland-Temora Rural Fire Service on his retirement. Steve has served with Temora-Bland Rural Fire Service for over 38 years. Steve commenced his duties as a firefighter with the Temora Town Fire Brigade in 1983 and in 2003 when the Temora and Bland Fire Brigades amalgamated into the Bland-Temora Rural Fire Service Steve successfully applied for the Superintendent Manager's position which he has held for the last 18 years. Along with Steve's many roles as superintendent Steve also helped to instigate the state's first Rural Fire Service Museum at the Bundawarah Centre in Temora. The NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer fire service, with their members providing fire and emergency services to approximately 95 per cent of New South Wales. Steve is one of 76,319 firefighters within the NSW Fire Rural Fire Service and one of 1,500 RFS volunteers in the Bland-Temora Zone. I personally thank Steve for his 38 years as a firefighter and wish him all the very best in his retirement.

BLAND SHIRE LIBRARY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I extend a huge congratulations to the 30 children who successfully completed the Summer Reading 40-Day Challenge provided by the Bland Shire Library. Over 65 children aged five to 14 years signed up to partake in the Summer Reading 40-Day Challenge. Of these 65 children, 30 children successfully completed the challenge reading each day for 40 days. The Summer Reading Club program is an annual event hosted by the library encouraging reading to be a lifelong habit for children as well as enticing reluctant readers to participate and be rewarded for their efforts. The program also helps children keep their literacy skills up over the long summer break. Being able to read is extremely important for our younger generation as it is scientifically proven to improve your physical and mental wellbeing. I thank all libraries and schools within the Cootamundra electorate for allowing children to partake in challenges that will improve their literacy skills. Congratulations once again to the children who successfully completed the reading challenge and I encourage all children from the Bland shire to partake in next year's challenge.

WHY I LOVE TEMORA COMPETITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I acknowledge Temora Shire Council for its creation of the "Why I Love Temora" competition. The competition asked children in Temora to create a video about why they love their home to go in the running to receive a cash prize that could be spent at local businesses in the shire. The competition was created to recognise the younger members of the Temora shire community and hear more about why Temora is a great place to live and visit. I was fortunate enough to be a part of the judging panel for the competition and the creativity and passion of the children who entered was very encouraging. The winners of the competition were:

Benson Holt who mentioned the great agricultural resources around Temora.

Alby and Jobe Balchut who love the Temora doughnuts.

Bella Thorp who showcased so many of her favourite Temora spots.

Rosie Wooden who mentioned how she loves being a kid in Temora.

Scarlet Edis who loves the volunteer efforts of the Temora community.

Well done to Temora Shire Council for creating the "Why I Love Temora" competition and congratulations to the winners.

JUNEE SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Well done to the Junee Shire Council for creating a range of successful school holiday activities for local children these previous holidays. The range of activities were held at the Junee Library and the Junee Recreation and Aquatic Centre. They provided children of all ages the opportunity to experience something new. The activities included:

A movie day which showed the Tom and Jerry movie with free popcorn and drinks.

Three different craft mornings where children created dream catchers and pom pom monsters.

A range of VR games on the Junee Library's PlayStation.

Fitness Fun Games and Pool games that gave children a great supervised exercise opportunity.

It is wonderful to see these opportunities for children of the Junee shire to participate in. Keep up the good work Junee Shire Council and continue to create new activities for the children of Junee.

DYING WITH DIGNITY AND GO GENTLE AUSTRALIA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the important work that is being done by Dying with Dignity NSW and Go Gentle Australia, in relation to Voluntary Assisted Dying. In particular I want to thank Penny Hackett, President of Dying with Dignity NSW and Kiki Paul, CEO of Go Gentle Australia. Dying with Dignity NSW has been advocating for assisted dying laws since the mid-1970s. Go Gentle Australia was founded in 2016 by Andrew Denton and has worked alongside dying with dignity groups across five States in support of voluntary assisted dying legislation. Their work has resulted in every other State in Australia having passed these important laws. The work of these two organisations is crucial in providing the information and expertise needed on this issue. I thank them for the invaluable work they continue to do.

SYDNEY SECONDARY COLLEGE STEM SHOWCASE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the STEM Showcase hosted in Semester 1 2021 by Sydney Secondary College at Leichhardt. I had the pleasure of attending the showcase to judge the Year 7 Sensor One category. I would like to congratulate all of the students involved for their innovative ideas, designs and products. I would also like to acknowledge the staff in particular Trish Johnson, Head Teacher TAS. I would like to congratulate the winners across all categories, including:

Year 7 Digital Technologies students Lilah Randall, Hallie Dwyer, Yevin Jung and Ellie Illic for their Turtle Incubator. And People's Choice winners Chloe Bennett, Poppy Haigh, Anna Morrow and April Thwaite.

Year 7 Engineering System Amelia Dries, Angelique Greentree and Lailah McIntosh for their Hydraulic Bridge. And People's Choice winners Julia Maher and Simone Rocha.

Year 8 Food and Agriculture students Tabitha Alex and Isabella Nguyen for Seasonal Treats. And People's Choice winners Jonah Dortman and Fidel Sweeney.

Year 8 Mixed Materials students Archie Cook, Daniel Lang, Luka Radis, Nicholas Svoronos and Guy Zvi for Bumble Bee. And People's Choice winners Cooper Dowse and Dylan Welsh.

Congratulations!

SIXTY-EIGHTH COMMEMORATION OF THE KOREAN WAR

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—On Tuesday 27 July the Maitland RSL Sub-Branch hosted the Sixty-Eighth Commemoration of the Korean War (1950-1953) at Maitland Park Korean War Cenotaph. Only five years after the end of the Second World War, on 25 June 1950, North Korean forces crossed the border and proceeded towards Seoul, taking the capital within days. They continued towards the port of Pusan. Almost immediately, the United Nations Security Council had the support of 21 member nations to defend South Korea.

Australia committed personnel from the Royal Australian Navy [RAN], Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF], and the Australian Regular Army [ARA]. Over 17,000 Australians served during the Korean War, with 340 killed and over 1,216 wounded. A further 29 were prisoners of war. Australian forces served for the next three years in the defence of South Korea. The Armistice ending three years of fighting on the Peninsula, and two years of negotiations, was signed on 27 July 1953. To the present day, the border between North and South Korea approximates the border as it was in June 1950 and a state of war technically continues to exist. Australia maintained a presence in the country until 1957.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The Australian Red Cross Maitland Donor Centre engages in the vital and lifesaving work of blood donation collection. I do not use the term "vital" lightly. It is estimated that one in three people will require blood, plasma or platelets in their lifetime. Despite this high level of need, only one in 18 eligible Australians donate blood. This donated blood is used in a myriad of ways to help treat cancer patients, road trauma victims, premature babies, pregnant mums, and people with blood disorders. These are just a few of those who need blood or blood products every day. I encourage the people of the Maitland communities to support the important work of the Maitland Donor Centre as they currently need 110 more donors over the next two weeks to meet patient demand. Thank you to the centre's hardworking and passionate staff who are committed to ensuring our community has access to this life-changing and vital product.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—October is National Mental Health Month. This year's theme is Mental Health: Post Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience. It could not be more appropriate. I would like to recognise the often challenging, yet critically important work of the many agencies and programs supporting the mental health needs of people who make up the Maitland communities, especially as we face the new ways of being that emerging from lockdown is likely to bring. Community members may have engaged with 'R U OK?' Day; perhaps they have made sure to contact that friend who is doing it tough; perhaps they have made a call to a helpline to try to find some help and support. Many of us have tried to find that particular program, that worker, that information that will make a difference to our own, or our loved one's mental wellbeing. This month recognises the importance of all of those actions. I commend the efforts and commitment shown daily by those members of the Maitland community working to support and encourage mental health, and I commend the personal bravery of my constituents who are making choices to seek ways to improve their own mental wellbeing.

FINALISTS IN THE EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARDS 2021

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The NSW Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards 2021 provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase the individuals and teams that are making important and unique contributions to the very start of our children's' educational journeys. These educators are all setting the new benchmarks of excellence as individuals and organisations. The growth and development of the children, and families, they support and the many linked contributions they make to our community, are valued and appreciated by all of us. I congratulate Bright Beginnings Childcare of Maitland, the Hub Preschool and Early Education Academy of Rutherford, and the Hunter Valley Grammar School Early Learning Centre in Ashtonfield as finalists in multiple categories. Three local educators are also individual finalists and I especially congratulate them each on their commitment, dedication and high-quality work:

Ms Chelsea Jukes: Trainee of the Year Awards Certificate III in Early Childhood Education

Mr Jason Naismith: Male Educator Excellence Award

Mrs Sarah Bilton-Smith: Regional Educator Leader Excellence Award

I congratulate you all on your efforts, energy and excellence, which are recognised by your acknowledgement as finalists in these awards. Thank you for your care and education of our children.

TUMUT REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Since the devastating bushfires of 2020, the Snowy Valleys region has been working to rebuild and renew. The Tumut Regional Chamber of Commerce has played an important role in helping businesses, particularly over the past 18 months, so I was delighted that the organisation was named as Outstanding Local Chamber at the Murray-Riverina Business Awards, ahead of two other worthy nominees, the Wagga Business Chamber and the Albury Business Chamber. I congratulate the Tumut chamber on this outstanding achievement. In August, I attended the Tumut chamber's annual awards night and saw a number of local businesses commended. Congratulations to outstanding employee Dean Krause of Roddy Engineering; outstanding young business leader Evan Feather of Rural Health; outstanding business leader Samantha Taylor; employer of choice Little Possums; excellence in customer service winner The Bush Chemist; excellence in

innovation winner Tom's Outdoors; outstanding start-up The Village; excellence in small business winner Tom's Outdoors; excellence in business winner Little Possums, and business of the year The Bush Chemist. Regional and rural businesses have faced the additional challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend these winners, and every business owner for their hard work and dedication.

MARGARET BRAIN

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Wagga Wagga's Margaret Brain, known as Sister Marg Dennis, will be remembered as a kind, loving and compassionate woman and a nursing pioneer. Marg Dennis was I believe the first nurse practitioner for the south-west region in New South Wales and among the first 10 in our State. Colleagues have described Marg as a "powerhouse" who treated every patient as if they were a member of her family, and consistently demonstrated exceptional standards of care. My wife, Kerin Fielding, and I met Marg when we moved to Wagga Wagga in the 1980s. Later, she and I were in charge of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital's emergency department together. Marg was especially dedicated to educating nurses in rural areas so they could provide better emergency care. She pioneered many courses such as the First Line Emergency Care course. She brought nursing and medical education together with her wonderful focus on teamwork. Many health professionals regarded her as a key figure in their development. Through her care and her teaching Marg helped save thousands of lives. I wish to extend my sympathies to her husband, Rob, her son, Phil, and their family on the loss of this extraordinary woman.

ASHLEY VAN RIJSWIJK

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Tumut's Ashley Van Rijswijk has made a big splash in her first performance in international swimming. The 21-year-old was included in the Australian squad for the Australian Tokyo 2021 Paralympic squad. Ashley performed strongly in her first event, the 100-metres breaststroke SB14, and finished first in her heat, securing a spot in the final, where she ultimately finished fifth. Ashley, who celebrated her twenty-first birthday while in Tokyo, took third place in her heat for the 200-metre women's individual medley SM14. It was a wonderful result for Ashley, who had initially thought she had just missed out on selection for the squad. Her selection came after years of dedication and hard work. Ashley began her career as a member of the Tumut Swimming Club, before moving to the Wagga Wagga Swimming Club. Ashley's call-up came after she worked hard to overcome the disappointment of the COVID-19 pandemic leading to the cancellation of the World Para Series and the closure of many swimming pools. I commend Ashley for her outstanding achievement and for the inspiration she provides to many. I look forward to hearing more about her achievements in the pool at future competitions.

STEPHANIE SMYTH

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—For Adelong resident Stephanie Smyth, 17 years with the Bendigo Bank was just a small part of a lifetime of service to the community. A mother and grandmother, Mrs Smyth has been a leader in her community since the early 1980s. She has held numerous leadership roles in a number of sporting organisations. A long-time president of Adelong Community Enterprises, Mrs Smyth retired from this role and took on the position of community liaison officer. Adelong Community Enterprises now owns a number of community businesses in Adelong which play an important role for the town and region. Mrs Smyth has been a successful advocate for many community projects including a new town swimming pool, free wi-fi on the main street and the establishment of a fuel station. Mrs Smyth has also been a member of the Visy Community Consultative Committee, Adelong Junior Sports Foundation, Adelong Agricultural Show Committee and Meals on Wheels. Following the Black Summer bushfires, Mrs Smyth was heavily involved in assisting the community with advice on insurance claims and grant applications. I commend and thank Mrs Smyth for her many years of dedicated service to her community.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Each year Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges outstanding members of the local business community with the Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards. It is my pleasure to sponsor the Outstanding Young Business Leader category, which recognises an inspirational young person aged between 18 to 35 years who owns or part owns a successful business. The award recognises young business people who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction and innovative ideas whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of up and coming young business people. The winner this year was Jonathon Power, Managing Director of Empowered Community Services. My congratulations to Jonathan, an outstanding young man whose lived experiences supporting both parents who have lifelong disabilities and time as a Disability Support Worker inspired him to found Empowered Community Services. The 2021 finalists for the Outstanding Young Business Leader category were: Shakira West, owner of Kouture Hair Artistry; Jared Styan, Co-founder and Business Manager of Lake Macquarie Sailing Tours; and Bec Hogan, Creative Director at

Gem Rock Media. My congratulations go to all four finalists, who are all extraordinary young business people in their own right.

LAKE MAC BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Each year Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges outstanding members of the local business community with the Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards. These awards acknowledge and support individual business accomplishments in Lake Macquarie City, recognising and highlighting achievements, and ultimately encouraging all businesses in the city to strive for excellence. There were a number of winners from the Charlestown electorate I would like to recognise. Leah Gabolinscy of Ramsay Health Care won the Outstanding Business Leader category in part for her work leading her team through the COVID-19 pandemic, including at Lake Macquarie Private Hospital in Gateshead. The Charlestown-based Rainbow Clinic, an occupation therapy clinic which helps children and their families, was awarded Outstanding Employer of Choice. Gateshead-based Fire Response, which provides firefighting and protection equipment and expert advice, was awarded for Excellence in Small Business. Design Anthology, also based at Gateshead, is a product design studio awarded for Excellence in Innovation and Adaptability. Spotlight Group, which in 2020 opened a store in Bennetts Green, was awarded for Contribution to the City. My congratulations to all of the outstanding winners and nominees for their contribution to Lake Macquarie.

LAKE MAC BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS – OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Each year Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges outstanding members of the local business community with the Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards. These awards acknowledge and support individual business accomplishments in Lake Macquarie City, recognising and highlighting achievements, and ultimately encouraging all businesses in the city to strive for excellence. Amongst the winners this year was Charlestown's wonderful local community centre: The Place Charlestown. The Place offers community outreach and support, with everything educational, developmental and social activities on offer. They opened a Kindness Cupboard last year, run the Well-I-Am Course, a Young Parents Group, and the Be Connected Digital Literacy Program, among many more. They also lease space to fantastic community groups such as ReadyUp Skills, Turning Point Counselling, the Deaf Society and Massage Space. Before being closed due to the COVID lockdown, The Place launched a Kindness Cupboard for people to drop off pantry staples for vulnerable people. My congratulations to Cristelle and her outstanding team on all the work they have done for the Charlestown community. This is a very well-deserved award, as my numerous mentions of The Place in this Parliament make clear.

THE UNSUNG HEROES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—Outside of our health professionals, emergency service personnel and teachers, there is another group of people who I call unsung heroes—the people who work in the community sector. These committed and passionate workers—both paid and volunteer—underpin our communities every day, supporting those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. They are there in times of emergency and they have been there for almost two years during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarded as essential workers, all work tirelessly to provide emergency relief, information and referral, health and other support services to those who need it most. In the Blue Mountains these organisations include: Belong Blue Mountains Community and Neighbourhood Services; Springwood Neighbourhood Centre; Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre; Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre; Connect, Thrive and Gateway Family Services; MOCS—Mountains Outreach Community Service; Blue Mountains Women's Health Centre; Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre; Blue Mountains Food Services; LinkWentworth Community Housing; Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre; MYST—Mountains Youth Services Team; Headspace Katoomba; Platform Youth Services; Mountains Community Resource Centre; Dare Disability Support; Western Sydney Community Forum; and the State neighbourhood centre peak body, the Local Community Services Association. Unsung heroes indeed. I applaud you all.

AMAR SINGH – TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I offer my personal congratulations to Amar Singh, Founder of Turbans 4 Australia, on receiving the Rotary Club of Sydney Community Peace Award. On 21 September, the United Nations International Day of Peace, the Rotary Club of Sydney recognises outstanding individuals and organisations who actively promote peace at a grassroots level. Amar Singh is a very deserving recipient of the Community Peace Award. In 2015 Amar Singh founded Turbans 4 Australia. From its very foundation, Turbans 4 Australia has practised the Sikh beliefs of equality, respect and benevolence by extending a helping hand to support vulnerable people in our community. During the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires, Turbans 4 Australia volunteers travelled to the New South Wales South Coast to assist those affected by bushfires. More recently,

Turbans 4 Australia has supported our western Sydney community by providing essential food packs to people affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Thank you to Amar Singh and the entire team at Turbans 4 Australia for promoting peace and assisting our society's most vulnerable at an especially difficult time for us all. You serve as an inspiration for all who seek to do good in our community.

MARNEL LAGARDE RETIREMENT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I offer my personal congratulations to Marnel Lagarde for her retirement after 36 years as Manager of Parramatta/ Holroyd Family Support Inc. Marnel has grown Parramatta/ Holroyd Family Support Inc. from a local mothers' group to a service that provides family and domestic violence support across the Parramatta and Cumberland Local Government Areas. For the past 36 years, Marnel has improved the lives of children from all cultural backgrounds, addressing issues like childhood development, social isolation and family violence. Thank you Marnel for your commitment to delivering efficient and preventative service to improve the wellbeing of children and families in the Holroyd community. I wish you a wonderful retirement to spend with your family and friends. I also wish Linda Marsonet all the best in her new role as Acting Executive Officer of Parramatta/ Holroyd Family Support Inc. Linda has worked for Parramatta/ Holroyd Family Support Inc. for over 10 years, along with many varied roles in the community sector. I am confident that Parramatta/ Holroyd Family Support Inc. is in good hands and will continue to service children and families in a highly effective and impactful way.

PHARMACIES AND GPs

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—During the recent COVID-19 lockdown, pharmacies and GPs have worked tirelessly on the frontlines to ensure our community is vaccinated against COVID-19. In the electorate of Prospect, we have many pharmacists and GPs who have stepped up to the challenge of increasing vaccination rates in the Fairfield, Cumberland and Blacktown Local Government Areas. I have spoken with many pharmacists and GPs in Prospect who have taken part in the COVID-19 vaccination program. I was impressed with how quickly and efficiently these pharmacies and GPs rose to the challenge. Some pharmacists report that they individually vaccinate 80 to 100 people a day. Pharmacists and GPs in the electorate of Prospect have worked hard to combat stigma and hesitancy behind the different COVID-19 vaccines. Although there was an initial challenge with many people hesitant to receive a vaccine, pharmacists and GPs have informed and put many minds at ease. Now the local government areas of Fairfield, Cumberland and Blacktown have some of the highest first and second dose vaccination rates in the State. Thank you to all of the hardworking vaccine providers in the electorate of Prospect that have worked day-in and day-out to ensure our community is safeguarded against COVID-19.

NSW POLICE FORCE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—During the recent COVID-19 lockdown, our NSW Police Force has worked around the clock to ensure our community is protected against COVID-19. In particular I would like to acknowledge the Police Area Commands of Fairfield, Cumberland and Blacktown who have had an enormous responsibility enforcing public health orders in our lockdown LGAs. During the recent lockdown, the role of Fairfield, Cumberland and Blacktown PACs have been extensive. The NSW Police Force has been tasked with the difficult job of ensuring compliance of the widespread public health orders. Additionally, the NSW Police Force has worked on the frontlines to regularly check in with people who are close contacts or who have COVID-19. This is a difficult job but has been crucial in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Finally, the NSW Police Force has worked with many charities and organisations like Good360 Australia and The Parks Community Network to deliver essential goods and food hampers to people affected with COVID-19, and families who are struggling financially. Thank you to all officers in the PACs of Fairfield, Cumberland and Blacktown who have put their own safety at risk to ensure our community is safeguarded during an incredibly difficult time.

FRANK AND JEAN ATCHISON

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Frank Atchison who started as a foundation member with his wife Jean at the Tuncurry Dunecare Group. Frank and Jean dedicated themselves to growing and planting grasses, trees and shrubs native to the area to stabilise the dunes. This is one of the longest-running dune care groups in NSW—a fact many put down to the socialising at morning tea feasts Jean provided for more than a decade. Jean sadly passed away in 2015. Frank is still considered a local legend. I congratulate and thank Frank and Jean for caring for nature and contributing so extensively to the community in the Myall Lakes.

BEV OLD AND JENNY OSLEN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Bev Old and Jenny Oslen of the Forster Tuncurry Lions Club. Both volunteers have recently been recognised as "Star Volunteers" by local media. Together Bev and Jenny volunteer for duty at the Mini Golf Park, distribute Lions Mints to various outlets and

collect stamps and glasses for fundraising. They also complete deliveries for Meals on Wheels, bringing a smile to people's faces. I congratulate Bev and Jenny on this well-deserved recognition and thank them for their selfless work within the Myall Lakes community.

TAREE UNIVERSITIES CAMPUS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Taree Universities Campus, its board and CEO, Donna Ballard. Taree Universities Campus has now been open for 12 months making the fulfilment of study more attainable for the people in the Myall Lakes. To date, they have 80 students registered with the campus. This number is no small feat for a concept like TUC, especially since it was achieved whilst set against a backdrop of fires, floods and then a pandemic. Having students now able to study locally will ensure the talent within and prosperity of the Myall Lakes. I congratulate students and board members alike on their first 12 months of TUC.

CHARLOTTE COOPER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Charlotte Cooper. Despite only being in year 6 at Holy Name School where she is Vice-Captain, Charlotte is a skilled athlete playing representative basketball for the Newcastle Hunters, and representative netball for the Great Lakes. Charlotte received the Coaches Award from a Ben Simmonds Basketball Camp she attended, her team won the NSW County Championships and she has been given the Academic Excellence Award and the Sports Award. I congratulate Charlotte on her success as a bright athlete and wish her all the best for her future which is no doubt full of sporting accolades.

KAMBAN KAZHAGAM FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—I bring to the attention of the House the fifteenth anniversary of Kamban Kazhagam. Kamban Kazhagam was founded in 2006 by Mr Jeiram Jegathesan to promote, celebrate and teach the Tamil language. The organisation is named after the renowned Tamil poet Kamban, who is the author of the acclaimed twelfth century Kamba Ramayanam. I have attended many Kamban Kazhagam events and love that they engage young people in the teaching of the Tamil language and its application in prose, drama and poetry. I have seen the way in which Kamban Kazhagam has enriched our community through the annual Kamban Tamil Literary Festival, Pongal celebrations at New South Wales Parliament, the regular acknowledgement of Tamil leaders, and support of the Tamil Seniors. They also ensure their celebration of Tamil culture is intrinsically linked to life lessons. I thank Founder and Chairman Mr Jeiram Jegathesan, Patron Nallur Kandaswamiyaar, President Mr Shanjievann Gunaratnam, Vice President Ms Poorvaja Nirmaleswara Kurukkal, the Advisory Board, and all other members of Kamban Kazhagam for their continued service to the community. I congratulate Kamban Kazhagam on this milestone and wish the organisation many more successful years.

CASE TEAM

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I recognise and congratulate the efforts of the Community Action for Suicide Elimination [CASE] team in Hay as they continue to build community support networks to educate people about mental health. The CASE team works closely with schools and the wider community to increase awareness of mental health stigma and suicide prevention measures. This year, the team worked with Hay War Memorial High School to secure a mental health day at the school, where increasing awareness on the topic has been prioritised. The work CASE undertakes is difficult but extremely important in regional Australia. The entire CASE team are to be commended for their dedication to such a worthy cause, and I encourage them to continue their work within Hay and the wider community.

TIMEEKA COLEMAN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I recognise a young member of the Griffith community, Timeeka Coleman, for her sporting achievements. Timeeka has been an active and loyal member of the Griffith Basketball Association since first joining the Griffith Demons as an Under 12. She has devoted countless hours to the sport—not just playing, but training and travelling, as well as refereeing and coaching other juniors. Timeeka was first selected to play for New South Wales at the PSSA National Championships in Darwin whilst in year 6, and has since represented NSW Country at a number of tournaments. Recently, she was selected for the Under 16s NSW Country basketball team at the National Championships in Perth. Timeeka is a sporting role model within her community, having also represented our region in netball, touch-football, athletics, swimming and AFL. She was recently selected for a second State team this year, gaining a place in the NSW All Schools AFL side. I commend Timeeka for the time, effort and passion she has devoted to representing our region in sport, and congratulate her on her incredible achievements.

PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I acknowledge the recipients of the Pride of Workmanship Awards. These awards are held every year by the

Hornsby District Rotary Club. The awards acknowledge an employee, irrespective of age or vocations, who have displayed outstanding qualities in approach, attitude, dedication and commitment to their job. I would like to thank the Rotary Club of Hornsby for continuing to support these awards and acknowledge the amazing people who work in our community. The 2021 award winners were Bethany Halmy and Cathy Carlton for physiotherapy and occupational therapy, Ryan Daniels for IT administration, Julie Simpson for administration management, Nigel Hook for automobile engineering, Shweta Kumar for retail and Dr Prue Honson for veterinary science. Congratulations to all the winners and thank you for your commitment to your work and our community.

YOUR FAMILY PRACTICE MEDICAL CENTRE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I thank the Your Family Practice Medical Centre at Lakewood in the Camden Haven for their outstanding work helping to vaccinate the local community. To date they have administered more than 10,000 jabs since the COVID-19 vaccinations began in March this year. With current vaccinations rates in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA at 94.4 per cent first jab and 70 per cent second jab we are amongst the highest vaccination rates in regional New South Wales. The team at the Your Family Practice Medical Centre have played a significant role ensuring that residents in the Camden Haven have received their vaccinations. The team also offered bulk vaccination services to larger employment groups in the local area as a way to offer better access and protection for workers. The Medical Centre continues to hold daily vaccinations clinics as well as working on Saturdays to get the vaccination job done. I congratulate Practice Manager Deidre McInerney-Nash and her fellow staff members and doctors as we move closer to the magic 90 per cent vaccination rate and we return to a more normal life.

DUNBOGAN BOAT SHED

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate local resident Damien Lay for his tenacity and determination to restore the iconic Dunbogan Boat Shed following the devastating floods in March this year. The Boatshed is located on the picturesque Camden Haven River and was originally built in the 1940s. The Boatshed which is a popular café was decimated during the floods with the destruction of equipment, stock, fridges, part of the jetty as well as a number of boats. Damien has worked tirelessly over the past six months to rebuild the Boatshed which has now reopened bigger and better than ever before. As a thank you to the Camden Haven community for their ongoing support, Damien is installing some public art at the Boatshed. I am looking forward to officially reopening the Boatshed on 2 December and I congratulate Damien on his efforts to re-establish this much loved local business.

HASTINGS BIRD WATCHERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge the work of the Hastings Birdwatchers Club who participated in another successful World Migratory Bird Day on 9 October. The official day with the theme "sing, fly, soar, soar like a bird" was a great success identifying migratory species travelling between the Arctic Circle and the Antarctica. Birds start their migration around mid-August, stay for seven months and then commence their return journey in mid-March. There are 37 species of shorebirds that depart their Arctic breeding grounds to fly south to their Australian feeding sites. The birds call home at local lakes, wetlands, riverbanks and dams. In Port Macquarie, Pelican Island is an important feeding and roosting location for shorebirds including the critically endangered Eastern Curlew. The Hastings Birdwatchers Club has been conducting formal monthly surveys of the island since 1985 and recorded more than 125 species of birds, 18 are migratory shorebirds and six are resident waders. The club is to be congratulated on their outstanding contribution to protecting our wildlife and the environment in which they live or when they visit the Hastings.

MNC REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge the work of the Mid North Coast Refugee Support Group and the Mid North Coast Community College for their efforts to assist refugees in our local area. The groups have teamed up to help fill aged care and disability support jobs for refugees as they make a new life in one of the best coastal locations in New South Wales. That comes as a challenge for some people as they enter an area with an affordable housing shortage like we have in Port Macquarie. The call has gone out to church groups and older people who may be interested in opening their homes to refugees. The Mid North Coast Refugee Support Group has resettled 12 Tamil asylum seekers into the Port Macquarie-Hastings community over the past three years. The New South Wales Government's More Jobs More Care has enabled these people to find fulfilling work in the local disability sector which is good for employment as well as for disability clients. I congratulate Mid North Coast Refugee Support Group and the Mid North Coast Community College on this initiative.

ELDERSLIE HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINCY TEAM 2022

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I am proud to congratulate the elected Elderslie High School Captaincy Team for 2022, School Captains Emelia and Mary. Vice Captains, Bailey, Adam, Jacob, Mikayla,

America and Jade. To be selected by the school community and your fellow peers is an outstanding achievement and one to be proud of. These students are ready and rearing to represent and get involved in making a difference for their school. I and many others are excited to see what the future holds for these students. Congratulations again to these students for their elected captaincy and I wish you all the best in your final year.

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY TONY WOLF & SONS QUALITY PRINTING

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Today I inform Parliament of a well-known family business in the Camden electorate, Tony Wolf & Sons Quality Printing who have recently celebrated their sixtieth anniversary on 9 September. Ian and Leanne Wolf have been heavily involved in the Great Narellan Business Chamber, with Leanne being on the board, including organising the Premiers Breakfast events and Ian previously running Christmas in Narellan over many years. Ian and Leanne have also consistently supported local charities and are a big part of the social and economic fabric of the Camden LGA. I congratulate Tony Wolf & Sons Quality Printing on a successful 60 years and wish you many more to come.

HARRY HUNT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I acknowledge a constituent and the owner of Hunts Hotel Liverpool, Mr Harry Hunt. Despite Harry's full-time schedule as a business owner and father, Harry continues to put other people's needs first out of genuine care for their welfare. Harry, along with his team at Hunts Hotel, have spent a number of weekends cooking for the homeless. Although the tourism and hospitality sector has been greatly affected during the pandemic, this has not stopped Harry and his team from giving back to the community. Harry was recently awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Shining Stars Foundation Street Outreach Service, and I congratulate him on this achievement. Harry continuously shows how humble and selfless he is, with a genuine desire to make a difference in lives of others. Harry is well deserving of his award.

ABBEY FINLAY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I acknowledge Abbey Finlay on her involvement in the South West Sydney Academy of Sports online courses and nutrition sessions for athletes. Abbey also recently hosted a cooking workshop led by Sydney West Sports Medicine and Parramatta Eels dietitian Kelsey Mutton. This is a great opportunity for young athletes to learn more about the importance of nutrition within their sport. This initiative from the academy is a valuable tool during lockdown for athletes to obtain not just skills within their chosen sport but also for behind the scenes work such as recovery and leadership.

HABILIS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate I commend the effort of the Habilis group to research, plan and obtain funding to establish accommodation with onsite support and holistic care for very vulnerable people with severe persistent mental illness that excluded them from other housing options. I met with Habilis representatives some years ago when they told me about the complex needs of this small cohort of people for whom there is no practical option, so they often move between hospital, prison and the street. The Habilis team planned a small community service that would have strong health expertise to help residents stabilise their health and make a life. Habilis now has a Summer Hill site and approved development application for 20 serviced apartments, a caretaker's unit, a clinic and commercial space. They have attained grants and donations needed to support the construction. I am pleased to support New South Wales government funding towards this initiative and look forward to Habilis providing much-needed supported accommodation for vulnerable people.

WATER WISE SYDNEY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate I commend City of Sydney efforts to reuse and conserve water. A decade ago, the City of Sydney under Lord Mayor Clover Moore's leadership developed a Decentralised Water Master Plan in response to evidence that water supply and rainfall would drop as a result of climate change. Since then, the city has carried out major projects to reduce water use, recycle water and reuse stormwater, including the Sydney Park Water Harvesting Scheme, Green Square Town Centre Water Re-Use scheme and recycled water pipelines in George Street and Wynyard Walk installed during light rail construction. Over 20 small parks have had alternative water sources installed or upgraded, over 250 rain gardens that clean stormwater runoff have been installed and 47 Gross Pollutant Traps preventing hundreds of tonnes of litter from entering our waterways are in place. Now the city will work with Sydney Water to help building owners reduce water waste and improve water efficiency, including recycled water use and dual plumbing in the massive Waterloo Estate redevelopment. This is vital work on the driest continent facing more serious and more regular droughts. It is vital that this work continue.

MRS MELISSA JOBSON

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—It is with a mixture of emotions that I acknowledge and sincerely thank Mrs Melissa Jobson, my Kiama Electorate Office manager who will finish up with me and our team after eight years. Melissa has been a loyal, dedicated and hardworking member of our team who has revolutionised my office and its service to our community. I have no doubt that a very large part of my success has been Melissa's leadership and management of my office. She is unflappable and focused and has always gone over and above in her service to me and our community to assist anyone who comes through our doors. Whilst all members of Parliament rely on our wonderful staff to survive and thrive in our roles, I say with clarity and confidence that no member of this place has anyone nearly half as good as Melissa Jobson. She is simply a superstar. In addition to her work responsibilities she is a loving wife and mother to four wonderful children. Melissa has balanced all her responsibilities with absolute distinction and she will be an enormous loss. I wish her every success on her next exciting chapter of her life.

LEO XU

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I recognise Leo Xu who is an outstanding chess player from Kogarah Public School. Despite only being in year 4, he is an integral member of the St George League Chess Club and one of their youngest members. He is also ranked sixth in New South Wales in the U/10's chess competition and he is the top board representative for Kogarah Public School. It is for these reasons that Leo Xu received a Youth Achievement Award as part of the tenth anniversary of the St George Community Awards in 2020. These awards honour some of the many individuals, community groups and businesses who go above and beyond each and every day to make our community even stronger. Leo has also won the U/12's Wollongong Chess Tournament and finished in second place in the U/10's NSW Junior Chess League competition. These are all fantastic achievements and I have no doubt that he will continue to rise as an incredible chess player. I wish Leo Xu all the best in his future endeavours.

KOGARAH INDIAN BAZAAR

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I acknowledge Madhurani Khanna and the outstanding team at Kogarah Indian Bazaar. Throughout the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Madhurani organised a support service for families who were in isolation and unable to obtain the food and essentials that they required. Her business is also a one-stop shop for groceries as well as unique cultural and festival items and it is a service loved by many local residents including me. It is for these reasons that Kogarah Indian Bazaar was honoured with a Business Achievement Award as part of the tenth anniversary of the St George Community Awards in 2020. These awards honour businesses, community groups and individuals who go above and beyond each and every day to make our community stronger. This is an outstanding achievement and it is a great way to honour Madhurani and the team who do a fantastic job at supporting our community and providing assistance to those in need. Congratulations again to everyone at Kogarah Indian Bazaar.

MELODIE CROUCHER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I recognise Melodie Croucher who is an outstanding member of our local community. After retiring from teaching in the early 1990s, Melodie recognised the need to help newcomers to Australia overcome their social and language difficulties. She put a proposal forward to the Mortdale-Oatley Baptist Church and they agreed to provide a new service to the community, named "English for Living." The program began in 1997 and it is still going strong with 10 tutors involved in six classes covering several levels of competency. It is for these reasons that Melodie was awarded with an Individual Achievement Award as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. This is the tenth anniversary of these awards and they honour some of the many individuals, businesses and organisations who go above and beyond to make our community even stronger. I wish Melodie all the best in retirement and I thank her for all of her service to our community.

LOCAL HSC RESULTS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I commend some outstanding results from local high school students across the St George region in 2020. Despite the difficult circumstances given the global uncertainty and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, our students have still managed to boast some very impressive results. In the St George and Sutherland Shire, we had three schools listed among the top 50 schools in New South Wales and a further eight listed among the top 200. I make a special mention of the following schools: Danebank Anglican School, Georges River College Oatley Senior Campus, Blakehurst High School, Marist Catholic College Penshurst, Marist Catholic College Kogarah, St Ursula's College Kingsgrove, Bethany College, St George Christian School, Sydney Technology High School. These schools are home to so many talented individuals from

across my electorate and I am so proud of everything that these students have achieved. I have complete confidence that these students will go on to achieve so many wonderful things in the future.

SAMANTHA KING

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Samantha King was recently recognised in this year's Family Day Care Australia Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. The Southern Highlands resident has built rapport with children and their families for over 10 years. For the past two years, she has been at Little Seedlings Family Day Care, Renwick in my electorate of Wollondilly. Mrs King discovered her love for educating young children as a teenager when she commenced work in a childcare centre. Since then, she has developed that passion by giving children in her care a solid foundation of learning to set them up for a bright future. She achieves this by encouraging children to learn through play in a safe and fun environment. Like all parents, mums and dads in Wollondilly want to be confident that their children are being cared for in an environment that nurtures and encourages their creativity. This award reinforces Samantha's success in achieving these vitally essential outcomes. I congratulate Samantha King on this richly-deserved award and wish her well with the National Educator Finalists, which she is in the running for and announced later in the month.

SARAH HILLSLEY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Sarah Hillsley has brightened and beautified Mittagong Preschool in my electorate of Wollondilly by painting a large and colourful mural depicting nearby Lake Alexandra. The first brush strokes were commenced by the talented Hill Top resident and artist back in 2019. The project has navigated floods, drought, and more recently lockdowns which have slowed completion. Despite these interruptions, the mural was unveiled last month by Ms Hillsley who volunteered her time throughout the project. Having seen the photos, it looks amazing and was certainly worth the wait. The scene depicted in the mural is picturesque. In addition to its obvious artistic merits, it serves an underlying educational purpose. The preschoolers can interact with the mural by discovering insects, reptiles, birds, mammals and native plants that reside near the lake. Therefore, it fosters a sense of curiosity about the natural sciences as well as beautifying the space on which it is painted. It is my understanding that Sarah is interested in working with other schools to create murals that engage their students. I encourage her with that noble pursuit. I thank Sarah Hillsley for her dedication to art and sharing her talents for the whole community to enjoy.

NGUNUNGULA GALLERY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Ngununggula is the Southern Highland's newest art gallery located at Retford Park, Bowral in my electorate of Wollondilly. This week it officially opened its doors taking visitors on a cultural journey with contributing artists from across the nation. In the language of the Gundungurra First Nation people, the gallery's name means "belonging". It is the brainchild of celebrated Australian artist and Southern Highlands local Ben Quilty. The gallery's mission is to provide a space that exposes and engages the community and our youth to art and different ideas. To commence that engagement process, the gallery has already announced plans to work closely with 42 schools in the Southern Highlands. In future sittings weeks, I will have more to say about what is happening at the gallery. In addition to its founder's desire to engage with our local youth, the gallery will also serve as a drawcard delivering significant economic benefits to the region through employment and tourism. I thank Ben Quilty for his inspiration and perseverance in making this gallery a reality. I also wish Ngununggula director Megan Monte and her two staff, six casual gallery assistants and 20 volunteers well for the future.

RESILIENT AUSTRALIA AWARDS 2021

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Wollondilly Shire Council were recently named a finalist in the Resilient Australia Awards for their Activate Wollondilly 2020 plan. The Resilient Australia Awards celebrate and promote initiatives that build whole of community resilience to disasters and emergencies around Australia, as well as images capturing resilience in action. When the Green Wattle Creek fire started in November 2019, the Council wasted no time responding. Within 24 hours, Activate Wollondilly had been triggered. It provided information, counselling services, referrals, crisis payments, food hampers, gift cards, toiletries and Christmas gifts to residents impacted by the emerging bushfire disaster. The Green Wattle Creek fire continued to burn for two and a half months, destroying more than 270,000 hectares of pristine wilderness, national parks and 17 residential properties. Activate Wollondilly 2020 was vital to the immediate and ongoing way the community dealt with this crisis and the recovery from it. Congratulations to General Manager Ben Taylor and his dedicated team at Wollondilly Shire Council.

HMRI, PROF TALLEY & BRITTANY FERN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Last night I was thrilled to be able to attend the Hunter Research Medical Institute's online Researcher Showcase. HMRI and its researchers continue to be a source of

immense pride for Hunter locals, and many of its researchers have been at the forefront of research into COVID treatment and prevention. However it was not just the researchers who piqued my interest—it was the recognition of this year's HMRI Artist in Residence, Brittany Ferns, and her artwork "Conversation", inspired by HMRI's Professor Nick Talley and his research on gut health. Professor Talley recently discovered the bowel disease, Duodenal Eosinophilia, found in 40 per cent of people suffering from functional dyspepsia—a previously unexplained and severe form of indigestion that displays burning symptoms. In Brittany's words, "Conversation", like the human body, is best viewed as a holistic entity. On first glance, two figures sit opposite each other, as if they are in conversation, which symbolises Professor Talley's research on the continuous exchange of information between the gut wall, bacteria and the nerves. The face of Professor Talley can also be seen in the artwork. Congratulations Brittany and I cannot wait to see "Conversation" at HMRI!

HORNSBY SOROPTIMISTS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Lockdown has not stopped the Hornsby Soroptimists from continuing their work supporting local charities and celebrating an important milestone. The Hornsby Soroptimists are part of an international organisation which focuses on building a better world for women and girls. This year the organisation celebrate their 100th birthday. While the Hornsby team were unable to celebrate in person, they were able to switch to an online celebration at the end of last month. The group have supported the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter since it opened in 2014 and while they have had to cancel their major fundraisers this year, they are going ahead with a raffle to raise funds. Each month volunteers also serve two-course meals at The Dish, a community initiative serving food for the homeless. I congratulate the Hornsby Soroptimists on their 100th celebration and on their work ensuring the voice of women is heard in our local community.

VALE LINA CABAERO

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Earlier this year, we lost a true hero of the union movement, Lina Cabaero. Lina's life work was to support the marginalised and most vulnerable. Whether it was in her early days in the Philippines opposing the Marcos regime, or in her later work supporting migrant women in Australia, Lina saw collectivism and the labour movement as the best vehicle for transformative change. She was also an ardent supporter of the arts and music. From 2001, Lina was the coordinator of Asian Women at Work, where she worked to empower migrant women workers in low-paid and precarious employment. In this role, she helped countless women to improve conditions and wages, recognise their own capacity for organising and leadership, and to find community and support. In fitting tribute, Lina's family are establishing the Lina Cabaero Women Scholarship and I would urge anyone who was touched by Lina's work or friendship to support the fundraising campaign to ensure Lina's legacy continues to be felt by generations to come. Lina was a proud member of the Australian Services Union for over 20 years and is sorely missed by everyone in the trade union movement. Vale Lina Cabaero.

SOUTH MARRICKVILLE ART TRAIL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The South Marrickville Art Trail ran from October 2 to 4, inspired by the recent art trail in St Peters. The trail encourages local residents, organisations and to create and install local artworks in their front yards and windows. Visitors to the trail are encouraged to walk our local streets, using the special online google map, and experience the wonderful sculptures, paintings, installations and artworks sprinkled throughout our South Marrickville community. The event was especially welcome following the long COVID-19 lockdown and helped build important community connections and showcase the creativity of the community, all in a COVID-19 safe way. Two special little people in my home were thrilled to participate through their day care, and as a parent, I can report that the Art Trail was lots of fun and a great way to get kids engaged with both creativity and community. I warmly thank and congratulate Beth Taylor and Mel Dominguez for coordinating the event, especially given the challenges of organising events during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The Art Trail was a highlight of the past few months and a sign of very good days to come as we lift out of lockdown.

RAISE FOUNDATION - YOUTH MENTORING

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Raise Foundation offers mentoring and support programs for young people across Australia, including at Marrickville High School and Dulwich High School of Visual Art and Design in my electorate. One in 10 young people say that they are unhappy with their lives, and it is clear that the COVID-19 outbreak, lockdown and home schooling has had a significant impact on the mental health of our young people. During the lockdown, the Raise Foundation has moved much of its mentoring and support online, ensuring young people can still access support. Still, a lack of access to digital devices or to data, or a lack of access to private spaces for learning and mentoring to occur, have been barriers for some students and families. Nonetheless, the extraordinary volunteers working with the program have continued to provide leadership, support

and care and I warmly thank Vicki Condon AM, Executive Director, Founder and CEO, and all the staff and volunteers working with the Raise Foundation on this important program. The Raise Foundation is eager to recruit volunteers and I urge anyone in the community looking to work with young people and provide mentoring support to contact the foundation.

ALEXANDER TUCKFIELD

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate outstanding athlete Alexander Tuckfield of Bonnet Bay on his success at the 2021 Tokyo Paralympic Games. Born with congenital cerebral palsy, Alexander grew up cross-country running before switching to competitive swimming in 2015. A mere five years later, Alexander competed at the 2020 Hancock Propsecting Australian Virtual Short Course and set a world record in the S9 class when he placed second in the Men's 200m Freestyle Multi Class event. The 2021 Tokyo Paralympic Games were Alexander's debut in the world of international swimming. At only 16 years of age, Alexander impressively won eight medals at the Tokyo Aquatic Centre being four gold, one silver and three bronze. Alexander is now the third fastest S9 freestyle swimmer in the world, and is one of the youngest members of the Australian Paralympic Team. It is undeniable that Alexander's dedication and commitment to his sport is inspiring. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge Alexander's wonderful parents, David and Agnes, who have supported Alexander on his journey and have been instrumental to his success both in and out of the pool. I congratulate Alexander on his phenomenal achievements and look forward to following his career.

USMAN KHAWAJA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I congratulate Pakistan-born Usman Khawaja, who grew up in Erskine Park, on his latest achievement being named the tenth ever captain of the Sydney Thunder ahead of the Big Bash League season. The three-format Australian International has been with Thunder from the onset and is the club's highest ever run scorer and longest serving player. The former James Erskine Public School student's passion for the Thunder and the western Sydney region is palpable and the strong emotional connection he has with the club and region is very close to his heart. Congratulations on this amazing achievement and I look forward to hearing of your future success!

THOMAS BLANCH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I acknowledge Thomas Blanch, from Nepean Christian School, on his recent achievement in the New South Wales Education Standards Authority [NESA] Twentieth Young Writers Showcase. Only 18 students were selected who studied HSC English Extension 2 in 2020 to have their work published in this year's anthology, which is a major achievement. Thomas was highlighted for his piece titled "Begging Your Pardoner". Congratulations on this amazing achievement and I wish you all the best for your future!

WALLY AND MARGARET COX

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I acknowledge local Mulgoa residents, Wally and Margaret Cox in celebrating their Golden Fiftieth wedding anniversary. Wally and Margaret were married in the Methodist Church in Parramatta in 1971 and moved to their current home in Mulgoa in 1972. Although they had big plans with family and friends, they were unable to go ahead because of the lockdown. However, they are looking at copying the Olympics and have their big celebration the following year! It will be a party to celebrate 50 years of marriage, held after 51 years, which will also be 50 years since moving to Mulgoa. Congratulations on this momentous occasion and I wish you all the best!

JESSICA MCKENZIE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I thank Wallacia personal trainer, Jessica McKenzie, for her encouraging words and tips on how to stay moving and active during lockdown. As one of the biggest challenges while in lockdown during the pandemic has been exercise, she has been more than eager to share some easy tips and exercises that can be done from the comfort of your home that assist in people's fitness. I thank Jessica for her enthusiastic approach in these trying times as she has continued to spread positivity. She loves meeting all the wonderful people and sharing her love of exercise. Congratulations and good luck in the future!

MALLANGANEE SERVICE STATION – BACK OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I place on the parliamentary record my admiration for the hard work and determination of the owner and staff at the Mallanganee Service Station. Lee Jarrett reopened the servo and garage back in August much to the delight of Mallanganee locals. The servo had been closed for three years and I am just so excited to see it back in action. The servo is open for business seven days a week and is ready to service both locals and visitors including me. I also acknowledge Rhiannon Lewin and Vanessa Navmouska who work in the shop of the Mallanganee servo. Vanessa says the shop is back by popular demand from locals with

many commenting how they wanted the convenience of fuel and food. The servo does all the essentials such as bread, milk, pet food and toilet paper. Lee also operates A1 Metal Recycling out of the garage and says he makes most of his money from scrap metal. He also says taking over the garage was beneficial for this part of his business because he gets to work under shelter. I wish Lee, Rhiannon and Vanessa well.

PREMIER MEATS TENTERFIELD – HAPPY 35 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I offer the greatest of congratulations to Tim and Carmel Rose of Tenterfield on the thirty-fifth anniversary of Premier Meats Tenterfield. Loved and respected by locals Premier Meats celebrated 35 years as a Tenterfield institution on 1 September this year. Premier Meats has served their community well and has also put Tenterfield on the map. Winning many awards for their quality meat products including winning the title of New England Sausage King since 2002, High Street Smokehouse—award winning bacon and smallgoods and taking out the boneless category of the 2019 Australian PorkMark Ham Awards NSW. Tim and Carmel are wonderful business people but they are also community people, giving many young local apprentices their start in the trade including young Dracy who began the second year of his apprenticeship yesterday with a big tick from his TAFE assessor. A big thank you as well to Ralph Watson and Wade Goldthorpe who have worked tirelessly for Premier Meats especially during the hard times of the pandemic including the impacts of the border closure with Queensland. I wish the entire Premier Meats team well for the future.

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY - RECIRCULATOR INITIATIVE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I acknowledge on the parliamentary record the incredible work Southern Cross University [SCU] has done on their ReCirculator initiative—a partnership between SCU and local industry to reduce waste through innovation. ReCirculator is a broker between industry and SCU to provide information, research and technology developments to partnering businesses. I have had the privilege to visit the team at SCU's East Lismore campus. It is a wonderful project for Lismore. Led by Mr Ben Roache—President (Engagement) at SCU alongside Associate Professor Dirk Erler, Professor Mary Spongberg—Deputy Vice President (Research) and Dr Shane McIntosh the project has received a \$2 million grant from the Federal Government's Strategic University Reform Fund and is one of only two projects in regional Australia to do so. I also acknowledge the local businesses who have jumped on board the project including NORCO, Northern Co-operative Meat Company, North East Waste, Richmond Dairies and The Casino Food Co-Op. Lismore City Council has also partnered with ReCirculator. Associate Professor Erler said that ReCirculator bridges the divide between industry and research and has a focus on creating jobs locally. Congratulations to all involved on this initiative.

THE COURTHOUSE HOTEL MURWILLUMBAH – MICHAEL DIXON

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I place on the parliamentary record my congratulations to Michael Dixon, the new owner of the Courthouse Hotel Murwillumbah. Mr Dixon has invested greatly in Murwillumbah and his significant investment shows the wonderful town has a bright future as a destination well on the map. The Courthouse Hotel is the oldest pub in Murwillumbah, a town with many great pubs. It was inspiring to read about Michael's vision for the pub in the *Tweed Valley Weekly* last month. He says he wants to do some minor renovations but nothing major. Just some new furnishings and a bit of a freshen up which I am sure locals will welcome. I commend his focus and determination to support local suppliers, local producers and community organisations, supporting the broader Murwillumbah economy and community. I am delighted to hear that all the old staff have stayed on working at the Courthouse Hotel. The friendly team at the Courthouse Hotel are well known and loved by Murwillumbah locals meaning the pub will keep its familiar feel. I wish Michael and all the staff well for the future and I look forward to dropping in and saying hello.

LYN WILLETT, COROWA HIGH SCHOOL - LYN MARKS 50-YEAR MILESTONE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Congratulations to Lyn Willett who has been recognised as the longest serving staff member at Corowa High School. Lyn started in 1971 and has seen many gradual changes in her role during her 50 year milestone. She works at the school as a Science Laboratory Assistant. She has become an asset in her faculty, always professional, hardworking and well organised. She has communicated that she is still enjoying her role working with the staff and students and has no plans to move on. Well done Lyn! Corowa High School is very lucky to have such a knowledgeable staff member watching over the school laboratories.

COROWA SCHOOL STUDENT - MAXIM HONoured WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I extend my congratulations to Corowa High School student Maxim Blockley, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to community service. Maxim has received a Youth Community Service award which was presented to him by the Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. Margaret Beasley. The award included a trophy and certificate of commendation. These awards were initiated by the late Dr John Lincoln, AM, in 1992 and are a way our community can acknowledge local volunteers for their efforts.

Maxim, who is a year 12 student, committed his time to multiple youth drives, events and activities. He is one of 25 students recognised by these awards for their work. Maxim, you are an inspiration to your fellow students. Your acts of kindness make a difference in the community, and in return we offer our thanks to you.

TUMBARUMBA PUBLIC SCHOOL RAISES FUNDS FOR HEART FOUNDATION

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—There is nothing stronger than the hearts of our community volunteers, and so today I congratulate the students and staff of Tumbarumba Public School for their contribution and participation in raising funds for the Heart Foundation. Tumbarumba Public School introduced a range of activities for this great cause, utilising the students' skipping skills and enhancing their fitness with a "Jump Rope for Heart" activity. They also put on a sausage sizzle and mufti day during a four-week lockdown period, turning a challenging time into a series of positive events. The school raised \$4,208 for the Heart Foundation which will assist in life-saving research and other important programs helping save lives. Well done to Mr Lilly, the students, families and organisers of Tumbarumba Public School.

DANNY CALLS IT A DAY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Danny Reid who after 35 years in business is stepping down and handing the reins of Corowa Windscreen Centre to son Damien. It all started in 1985 in a shed at the back of Sanger Street, Corowa, where Danny spent nine years hard at work. Later he moved the business to Honour Avenue and Corowa Windscreens became an iconic business and well known site for the next 25 years. Danny built a successful business by networking, by helping his customers and by keeping up with changing technology. I wish Danny all the best for the future and trust that son Damien will continue to build upon decades of success in the service of the people and businesses of Corowa.

DR ELLY WARREN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I congratulate Dr Elly Warren of Yerin Aboriginal Health Services on her participation and efforts in the Alpine Everest Challenge with efforts to help cure cancer donating funds to Tour de Cure. This would be her third Alpine Everesting. Dr Warren said the project has five aims one of which is raising awareness about the cancer gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The next ride is in January 2022. Dr Warren and the cycling team aim to raise \$50,000 for Tour de Cure. The team has already raised \$2,000 towards the \$50,000 goal and last year Dr Warren raised \$34,000. Well done Dr Warren and good luck for 2022.

ALEXANDER BAILEY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I congratulate Alexander Bailey on her achievement on earning the 2021 awards program for Lawyers Weekly 30 Under 30 status in the category of criminal law. The Lawyers Weekly 30 Under 30 award offers the foundation for career progression, as well as gaining industry-wide recognition for professional competency while highlighting a passion for the law and dedication for personal advancement. Alexander's range of work encompasses complex and sensitive criminal matters to traffic offences. Her previous exposure to miscellaneous matters for community legal centres complements her core qualities of empathy and attention to detail. This award is a recognition of Alexander's great work. Well done on all of your achievements Alexander.

PETER MARCHANT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—Warrarah resident Peter Marchant recently competed in the 2021 Paralympics. I congratulate him on being one of the final 36 competitors in the Men's Individual Compound—Open Archery Event. Australia Day 2015 was the first time Peter picked up a bow and the following October, Peter shot his first archery tournament. Peter made his international debut competing in Para-archery international at the 2017 World Archery Para Championships in Beijing, China, and won a silver medal at the 2018 Para-archery European Circuit in Olbia, Italy. In 2019, Peter joined forces with Paralympic bronze medallist Jonathon Milne and newcomer Craig McMurdo to reach the World Championships quarter-finals in the men's team compound Open. Congratulations again on this huge achievement.

KYAH SIMON & ELLIE CARPENTER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I congratulate Tacoma residents Kyah Simon and Ellie Carpenter of Wamberal for their sportsmanship in the Tokyo Olympics. Additionally I congratulate Kyah and Ellie for being selected to play in a 25 player Matildas Squad for a friendly match against Ireland on 22 September 2021. Multiple games will be played in New South Wales with a three-year cycle with three top tier trophies to be won, including the AFC Women's Asian Cup in India 2022, the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand 2023 as well as the Paris Olympic Games. This will be Ellie's and Kyah's fifty-first and 102nd international caps. Congratulations on all you have achieved.

JESMOND PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The news that the Taliban were recapturing Kabul in Afghanistan was devastating to many, including the many families whose students attend Jesmond Public School. Jesmond Public School's 203 students are from more than 30 countries and 67 per cent have English as a second language. Of those 203 students, 55 are from more than 30 Afghani families. Although safe in Australia, these families still have family and friends in Afghanistan who they are very concerned about. Staff felt helpless at the news coming out of Kabul and wanted to spread some kindness and let families know that they were thinking of them, so they and the community rallied together and provided them with care packages. The packages included remote learning essentials such as notebooks, cards, pencils, chalk, playdough and textas, as well as crocheted hearts, handmade bookmarks, chocolates and tea. The school is the hub of the community and families are very trusting of the staff and discuss things that are happening in the community, not just based around education. Thank you to the staff and community of Jesmond Public School for acknowledging the distress of these families and providing them with such kindness.

JOSS WOODYARD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Joss Woodyard, of Waratah, has been building Lego since he was five. His experience with the blocks certainly shows. Joss has been invited by Lego House, in Denmark, to exhibit his "My Own Creations" in the centre's Masterpiece Gallery. Although Joss' adventure to Lego House has been put on hold for the moment due to COVID, he is scheduled to be able to finally travel in March. Joss will exhibit his series of dragon-like creatures that he has created himself. Joss has been utilising his time in lockdown creatively. The current restrictions have allowed him more time to build and create. Joss has a rather large following of almost 28000 on Instagram, which has grown by about 4,000 since this current lockdown. Through working at Lego at Charlestown Square, Joss has seen an increase in people interested in Lego. Lego builders around the world have purchased Joss' instructions and plans for his creations to make his creations for themselves. Joss hopes to further his career and continue to build/earn a living with Lego by securing a job as a designer for Lego. Congratulations on your outstanding achievements, Joss, and I wish you all the best.

MALTNHOPS BREWHAUS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—There are few industries more competitive than the craft beer market. You only have to look at the number of small independent brewers in your local bottle shop. Although it opened only a couple of years ago, the Maltnhops Brewhaus has made a name for itself within the local area and has become a well-known part of the community for their high-quality selection of brews. This quality has now been certified, recognised, and awarded. At the recent Australian International Beer Awards, the Maltnhops Brewhaus distinguished themselves further by winning a gold medal for their modern New England IPA, a bronze medal for their collaboration brew, Peaberrys Coffee Stout, and five additional bronze medals for their core range of brews, the Lemon Myrtle Sour, the Red Ale, the Pilsner, the XPA and the IPA. These latest accolades further cement the Maltnhops Brewhaus as a local attraction. Congratulations to Dan Lindon, Phil Lyne, Ebonie Reeves and the rest of the Maltnhops team on their achievement.

MARGARET WALKER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Running a small business is often a difficult task, and the core of one's success often lies with the community that surrounds it. For over 20 years, Margaret Walker has gone above and beyond in supporting the Wallsend community. Using her small business, Second Edition, she gives what she can to local schools, groups, and charities every year. Her contribution was recently recognised by the Rotary Club of Wallsend-Maryland, which awarded her the Audrey Mathews Business Award for Community Contribution in 2021. Margaret has been an inspiration to others in the local business community, who have followed her lead by donating time, prizes, and money to help fundraise for locals and local organisations. Her innovation, her leadership, and her community service have contributed greatly to making Wallsend a better place. That she has done so while also dealing with all the challenges of running a small business speaks greatly of her. I congratulate Margaret on her award and on her contributions to the Wallsend community.

CUMBERLAND MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Cumberland Multicultural Community Services [CMCS] have always offered a variety of community, educational and social activities and services to families and residents in the local area while working as a not-for-profit incorporated association. They were previously known as Granville Multicultural Community Centre and were established in 1977. Throughout the pandemic, CMCS have continued assisting the community. This has included food hampers/vouchers, family support services, adolescent counselling and support, financial counselling, emergency relief (provided to residents of Cumberland and Parramatta LGAs in the form of Woolworths and Big W e-Gift Cards for some essentials) and EAPA (Energy

Accounts Payment Assistance for electricity/gas bills) vouchers. With the two LGAs in my electorate having been two LGAs of concern these services have been a great support to our local community during this difficult time. Congratulations and thank you to Cumberland Multicultural Community Services for caring for the wellbeing of those who live, work, learn and play in our community.

DR IAN TAIT

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)—I acknowledge the outstanding service of Dr Ian Tait, who is retiring this year after an impressive 63-year career as a general practitioner. Having trained in Brisbane and undertaking his residency in Townsville, Dr Tait has been a practising GP in Penrith for over 50 years. I have no doubt he will be sorely missed by his patients and fellow health workers. Dr Tait, thank you for your service to our community and I wish you all the best for your retirement.

PIPPA RICHARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I extend my sincere congratulations to Ms Pippa Richards, a dedicated health worker at Fairfield Hospital who celebrates over 50 years in the profession. I commend Pippa for her longstanding dedication to the health and wellbeing of our community. Pippa has truly made a difference to the lives of her patients and their families for many years and has cared for thousands of patients from sick children, critically ill patients, elderly patients as well as those who are nearing the end of their lives. Being an end-of-life care nurse, Pippa supports and cares for not only patients but for the families and friends of those being treated. I thank Pippa for her tireless efforts and I wish her the very best in all her future endeavours.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Recently my parliamentary colleague Nathaniel Smith MP and I hosted The Australian Man Cave Parliamentary Breakfast via Zoom. The meeting was well attended by supporters and stakeholders in the suicide awareness and prevention space. I offer my thanks to TAMC founding fathers Mr Lou Greco and Mr Agostino Gattelari for their continued advocacy for men's mental health. Also in attendance was New South Wales Minister and member for Ryde Victor Dominello, MP, sharing his own personal insights. I also thank participants Head of Department for Kari, Mr Caine Slater for giving the official Acknowledgement of Country; Director of Membership, Suicide Prevention Australia, Mr Eddie Ripard outlining the 65,000 reasons Images of Hope Campaign; Mancave Board of Directors Charlie Tees and Peter Zangari for their insights; Everester and fellow Ryde Mancaver, Mr Mike Nicolaou for outlining his recent journey and plans for the future Everesting campaign; Westbourne College Scholarship recipient Mr Peter Dywer; and Fr Martin Maunsell for the closing reflection. I thank all who participated in the successful meeting to discuss such an important topic on a significant day, "World Suicide Prevention Day".

CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I commend the team at CORE Community Services for their work in the community during the June 2021 lockdown period. CORE has been at the forefront reaching out to vulnerable people feeling the full impact of the current lockdown restrictions. From the distribution of food hampers and essentials packages they continued to ensure no one was left behind. In addition to providing relief, they have also been a strong support to our community during this most challenging time, with online activities for children; as well as support for domestic violence and mental health issues for the most vulnerable members of the community. It is an honour to have worked alongside CORE in the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program in conjunction with donor provider Good360 Australia. I extend my thanks to CEO Ms Juana Reinoso, Mr Jose Brosas and the rest of the team for their continued efforts in helping those in the community needing assistance the most.

CO.AS.IT. COMMUNITY FORUM

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the privilege to be an online panellist for Co.As.It.'s community forum, answering community members' questions about COVID-19. I thank General Manager Mr Thomas Camporeale and staff for the kind invitation to address the Italian community regarding the current lockdown restrictions and the vaccination program. I joined in with panellists: Dr Marianne Gale, NSW Deputy Chief Health Officer; the Hon. Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Customer Service and member for Ryde, and Acting Assistant Commissioner NSW Police, Mr Brett McFadden, to discuss issues impacting the wider community. I take this opportunity to thank the community members who participated in the forum and submitted questions via the portal. I commend all participants and panellists for making the online forum informative and worthwhile.

AFGHAN WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—The humanitarian crisis enveloping Afghanistan following the rapid Taliban takeover is well known. Less known are some of the individual stories of perseverance and heroism behind the Kabul evacuations in August. One such story involves Davidson resident and human rights lawyer Alison Battisson and a handful of dedicated women from across the globe, described as a "ragtag group" by CNN. The group came together to engineer the evacuation from Afghanistan of their National Women's Football team, as well as the only two Afghans to compete at the Tokyo Paralympics. Alison's expertise was integral to the escape plan, which involved the women burning their team uniforms, deleting social media accounts and then wading through sewage under frequent gunfire to reach the airport. Despite Alison and her colleagues, assisted by former Soccerroo Craig Foster working day and night to get the evacuees out, nothing was certain until they were sent photographs confirming that all were on a flight out of Kabul bound for Australia. I commend the efforts of Alison Battisson and her ragtag group, whose actions have saved at least 86 lives from potential incarceration or death.

VOCATIONAL STUDENT OF THE YEAR GABRIELLA ADELIN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge pastry chef Gabriella Adeline, a student from Lindfield in my electorate of Davidson, who recently won the Vocational Student of the Year Award at the 2021 Annual NSW Training Awards. Gabriella started training as a pastry chef at TAFE, where she was taught by industry experts, and has now completed her apprenticeship, Certificate IV in Patisserie at TAFE, and works at a two-hatted restaurant. She was also selected for the Australian Pastry World Cup Team to represent Australia at a global competition in Milan. Gabriella will be a great ambassador for vocational education and training in the hospitality industry. So I congratulate her on being named NSW Vocational Student of the Year, and wish her well for the future.

PROJECT DISPLACED

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge Anthony Cohen, founder and chair of Project Displaced, from Lindfield in my electorate of Davidson. Project Displaced is a not-for-profit charity that connects job seekers to over 70 career coaches, mental health first aid specialists, and recruiters. Anthony launched the charity in March 2020 after losing his job of 16 years with Qantas due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Project Displaced has since benefitted between 2,500 to 3,000 unemployed people in Australia with their free services. More than half have found employment, injecting \$150 million into the economy via salaries, wages and on-costs. The charity is run entirely by volunteers, who in total have contributed more than \$2 million value in pro bono hours to help the unemployed. Loss of employment and income takes both a financial and emotional toll on many community members. Illustrating a desire to help such people, Project Displaced encourages all clients to understand that they are worthy of the free service, and that they are not alone. I commend Anthony Cohen, Project Displaced, and all the volunteers who have helped thousands of people during this crisis. I look forward to seeing the initiative continue to flourish and help many more people in the future.

NOAH HUNT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I am pleased to acknowledge Noah Hunt, a student from East Lindfield in my electorate of Davidson. When Sydney went into lockdown earlier this year, Noah created an online education platform called "Stuvise", to address the study challenges faced by students learning remotely. The program includes note taking, flash cards, multiple choice revision and note sharing. It took 13 weeks to create and is now being used by more than 300 students within the UNSW School of Medicine. Noah's goal was to create an education program built by students for students, and he has plans to grow the platform in the future. I commend Noah for his innovative program which has helped hundreds of students in NSW.

CHESTER HILL FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales has been coping with the challenging outbreak of coronavirus. Over the last few months, my electorate of Bankstown has particularly been impacted by the devastating effects of this pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the health personnel for their tremendous efforts during this period and in working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Chester Hill Family Medical Practice in Chester Hill for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Faraid Hanna, Dr Sarah Hanna, Dr Christopher Zaki and Ms Shanze Ali for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that the electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Chester Hill Family Medical Practice for this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

CHESTER HILL RESPIRATORY CLINIC

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales has been coping with the challenging outbreak of coronavirus. Over the last few months, my electorate of Bankstown has particularly been impacted by the devastating effects this pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the health personnel for their tremendous efforts during this period and in working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Chester Hill Respiratory Clinic in Chester Hill for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Jamal Rifi, and Ms Lana Rifi, Ms Shaza Rifi and Mr Faisal Rifi for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that the electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Chester Hill Respiratory Clinic for this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

DR EDWARD HOWE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales has been coping with the challenging outbreak of coronavirus. Over the last few months, my electorate of Bankstown has particularly been impacted by the devastating effects this pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the health personnel for their tremendous efforts during this period and in working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Dr Edward Howe's solo practice in Yagoona for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Howe for his tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that the electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend Dr Edward Howe's practice for this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for his hard work and commitment.

DR PETER QUANG PHAM

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales has been coping with the challenging outbreak of coronavirus. Over the last few months, my electorate of Bankstown has particularly been impacted by the devastating effects this pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the health personnel for their tremendous efforts during this period and in working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Dr Peter Quang Pham in Bankstown for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Pham for his tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that the electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend Dr Peter Quang Pham's practice for this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

KU-RING-GAI CONSTITUENTS LEAD IN VACCINATION RATES

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—I recognise the outstanding efforts of the constituents of Ku-ring-gai in coming forward to get their COVID-19 vaccinations with our community having one of highest vaccination rates in the State. Recent data shows over 95 per cent of residents in the local government areas of Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai, parts of which make up my electorate, have had the first dose of their vaccine and over 84.4 per cent in Ku-ring-gai LGA and 81.6 per cent in Hornsby LGA have now had their second dose. These vaccination rates are also amongst the highest in the world. It is a testament to the community spirit in my electorate that constituents are coming forward to have a needle in their arm not only to benefit their own health but to keep their community safe. This effort has contributed to easing of restrictions that we are now enjoying where we can catch up with family and friends, go out for a meal, head off to the beach or to play sport and before too long we will be able to travel to regional areas for a holiday. I am very grateful to my constituents for their contribution.

RAVENSWOOD SENIOR LEARNING CENTRE OPENING

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—In June I had the honour of officially opening the new Senior Learning Centre at Ravenswood School for Girls. I thank the students who guided me and the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning through the centre. For the students in years 11 and 12, this state-of-the-art educational facility has transformed the school experience, especially as they navigate through their final years. In my capacity as the local member, I have met many students who have accomplished extraordinary things not only for the school but the broader Ku-ring-gai community, including Miss Emma Woodcock, the first female Senior Cadet Under Officer and Parade Commander of the Knox Cadet Unit. Ravenswood also participated in the Civilian Army, a local initiative helping the most vulnerable in our community during the height of the pandemic last year. I congratulate principal, Mrs

Anne Johnstone and everyone who made the Senior Learning Centre a reality. The young women of Ravenswood are truly fortunate to have this dedicated learning space.

GOODSTART WEST PYMBLE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—Last year, Goodstart Early Learning in West Pymble were successful in receiving a New South Wales Government Quality Learning Environment [QLE] Grant. They were awarded more than \$12,000 to purchase new play equipment. With the children now enjoying the new addition to their play area, prior to lockdown, Centre Director Yifan (Evan) Hu invited me to tour the centre. With an intake capacity of just 34 children, Goodstart West Pymble feels more like a home than a centre. With an open plan design and dedicated learning spaces, including a craft corner and music corner, West Pymble's educational program focuses on the transition from preschool to kindergarten. During my visit I spoke with the staff who all expressed how rewarding their job is, including long-term employee Moui, who has been with Goodstart for 11 years and I even watched the children make a volcano—there were a few budding scientists. Before leaving, I was presented with a magnificent piece of art, created by the children themselves with the guidance of the centre's Aboriginal educator, Charlie. Thank you for having me and I look forward to visiting again.

VALE CEC MORGAN

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—I acknowledge the passing of Cec Morgan, Killara resident and the former president of the 416 Group. Much like the 416 logo, the Powerful Owl, Cec watched over his community and was keen to ensure that the lovely bushland setting, on the edge of the Lane Cove National Park, where he had chosen to raise his family, would be preserved for future generations. Cec was involved in the West Lindfield / West Killara Progress Association and in 2001 he helped form the 416 Group in response to concerns about the environmental impacts of projects around the Lane Cove National Park. Cec was also involved in Neighbourhood Watch, the local bushfire unit, advocated for road safety improvements on Lady Game Drive and for improved commuter parking in Lindfield. There is no doubt about Cec's invaluable contribution to our community and I pass my condolences on to his wife, Jenny, daughters Catherine and Michelle and his five grandchildren. Vale Cec Morgan

JAN MOTBEY - 2021 SUTHERLAND SHIRE LITERARY COMPETITION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Kurnell resident Jan Motbey who recently competed in the 2021 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition. Jan won the Shire Resident's first prize award in the highly-contested "Traditional Verse" category, a testament to her scintillating skills in penning picturesque poetry. Her work, titled "My Cathedral", was lauded by the judge as "conveying the immanence of the natural world", speaking to the "awe and peace that immersion in nature can provide". Jan is also known for her 2003 publication *Somewhere Inside*, a full-colour poetry book which explores meditation, spirituality and personal growth. To win first prize signals true linguistic dexterity. I wish Jan all the best for her future literary endeavours.

ALEXANDER TUCKFIELD – 2020 TOKYO PARALYMPICS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Sutherland shire resident Alexander Tuckfield who recently competed at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics in the men's 400m freestyle—S9. Alexander competed against some very strong opponents and returned home to the shire with a bronze medal. Before finishing third in the final, Alexander also finished first in his heat. At age 16, Alexander is one the youngest members of the Australian Paralympic team. Alexander was born with cerebral palsy and began swimming competitively in 2015 as a form of rehab from a running injury. Prior to the Paralympics, Alexander competed at the 2020 Hancock Prospecting Australian Virtual Short Course and set a world record in the S9 class when he placed second in the Men's 200m Freestyle Multi Class event with a time of 2:01.41. Competing at the Paralympics requires strong discipline and Alexander has clearly demonstrated that he has this quality.

AMANDA REID - 2020 TOKYO PARALYMPICS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Sutherland shire resident Amanda Reid who recently competed at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics in the women's para-cycling. Amanda, the reigning world champion, won a gold medal in Tokyo breaking her world record for the C2 classification with a time of 38.487 seconds. Amanda is a proud Guring-gai and Wemba-Wemba woman born with cerebral palsy who has also competed at the 2012 London Paralympics and the 2016 Rio Paralympics where she won a silver medal. Outside of sport, Amanda mentors disabled people, disadvantaged children and young Indigenous children too. She is also an avid snowboarder as well as a qualified Level 1 snowboard instructor. Amanda hopes she can inspire more Aboriginal disabled athletes

to get into sport. Competing at the Paralympics requires strong discipline and Amanda has clearly demonstrated that she has this quality.

DANIEL MICHEL - 2020 TOKYO PARALYMPICS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Cronulla resident Daniel Michel who recently competed at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics in the men's individual Boccia. Daniel competed against some fierce competition from nine different nations and returned back to the Sutherland shire with a bronze medal. Daniel was born with spinal muscular atrophy which means he has minimal movement and strength throughout his body. Daniel has been playing Boccia since the age of 15 and also competed at the 2016 Rio Paralympics where he was the first Australian to be selected to compete in 16 years. No stranger to success, Daniel has also won medals at the 2017 BISFed World Open in Kansas, USA, and the 2018 BISFed World Boccia Championships in Liverpool, England. Competing at the Paralympics requires strong discipline and Daniel has clearly demonstrated that he has this quality.

LAKES SLSC RESCUE OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I congratulate David Solman, John Walker, Ben McCulkin, Brayden Hawkins, Daniel Leahy and Cooper Sweeney of Lakes SLSC on being awarded the Rescue of the Year award at the 2021 SLSNSW Awards of Excellence. The members received the award for their involvement in rescuing 18 people, who were caught in a fast moving rip off Soldiers Beach, during the evening of 27 November last year. This rescue is a testament to the surf lifesaving program that is offered to students at St Brigid's Catholic College at Lake Munmorah during term 4 each year. Ben, Brayden, Daniel and Cooper all participated in the school program. Without the surf lifesaving skills they have gained through this vital training initiative, it is highly possible that the outcome could have been tragic. I congratulate David, John, Ben, Brayden, Daniel and Cooper on their achievement and thank them for their efforts in saving the lives of members from the local community.

RHIANNAN IFFLAND

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I congratulate Rhiannan Iffland on winning the 2021 Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series in Italy. Rhiannan is an exceptional athlete with her rise to cliff diving success commencing in 2016, when she won her first ever competition as a wildcard entry into the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series. Rhiannan was the youngest female cliff diver to ever win the event, and continues to make waves in the sport to this day. Taking out the 2021 World Series Championship title is the fifth consecutive title Rhiannan has achieved. This is an outstanding result and a testament to the commitment and dedication Rhiannan pays to the sport. I congratulate Rhiannan on her achievement and wish her all the best in future competitions.

JUDE GUERIN

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I congratulate Belmont nurse Jude Guerin on being awarded the "Excellence" award at the 2021 Caring for You Core Values Awards. Jude is a devoted member of the Swansea electorate, who goes above and beyond to ensure that local residents are provided with quality health care. The virtual Caring for You Core Values Awards ceremony was held on 3 September to recognise the hard work healthcare workers do to look after the health and wellbeing of their local communities. Jude was honoured as the recipient of the "Excellence" award, recognising her accountability and consistent commitment to providing quality care. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers such as Jude have been on the frontline supporting our most vulnerable in their time of need. I congratulate Jude on her achievement. I also thank her and all local healthcare workers for continuously providing quality health care and assistance to the people of Swansea.

GATEWAY CHURCH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the work of Gateway Church in supporting those in need across the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle regions. On 28 September, I had the pleasure of visiting Gateway Church when they received 20 pallets of non-perishable food items, and delivered them to not-for-profit community organisations within the local area. Community organisations like Soul Café, Swansea Community Cottage, and the Salvation Army were then able to provide these goods to Lake Macquarie and Newcastle residents that required support. This assistance supplied by Gateway Church has played a critical role in helping Lake Macquarie and Newcastle residents get back on their feet, as many of them have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent lockdown period. Gateway Church have been contributing assistance such as this throughout the pandemic. I thank Gateway Church for all the work they have done to assist Lake Macquarie and Newcastle residents during this challenging time, especially Wayne Williamson and Craig Sparrow in their role as pastors.

MOLLYMOOK VIEW CLUB

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Before the South Coast went into lockdown, I was fortunate to be able to attend the fortieth birthday event for the Mollymook VIEW Club. Established in 1981, Mollymook VIEW Club is part of the VIEW Clubs of Australia—a leading women's organisation and support network that empowers women to have their voices heard on issues of importance in Australian society. The day was a lovely opportunity to catch-up and spend time with so many wonderful members of the club. It also was a chance to recognise the important work the club has done over the past 40 years to support those who are disadvantaged in our community. In particular I would like to acknowledge and thank the current President, Mary Campey, who has been a member of the club since it first began and played an integral role in making the club what it is today. The club are always welcoming visitors and new members and I encourage anyone who may be thinking of joining to reach out to Mary.

VALE KATE COOPER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Today I am honoured to speak on the incredible life of Kate Cooper and the many lives she touched and inspired as a teacher and principal of Mosman Public School. Kate had an extensive career in education and was the Principal of Mosman Public School from 1994 until her retirement in 2013, one of the longest-serving principals in the North Shore. Teachers like Kate play such a unique role in children's lives, and Kate was no exception to this. She was a fantastic role model and confidant to so many of her students, and her way of teaching and demeanour still impacts past students to this day. She was a teacher who was passionate about her job and loved to teach, and she worked tirelessly to give it her all and help those around her. Sadly Kate passed away in August after a long battle with cancer. I extended my sincerest condolences to Kate's husband of 53 years, Robert Cooper, and their two children and two grandchildren.

INSPIRING LOCAL RUNNING COACH BEL FONG

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I recognise Kirribilli running coach Bel Fong for her contributions to the local community by sharing her love of running with others. Bel has created an incredible running program with marathon runner, Turia Pitt called the Run with Turia Program and has previously competed in Ironwoman events. Childbirth can have long-lasting effects on a woman's body, which is one thing that makes the Run with Turia program special. It is a program specifically designed for mums that also provides specialist physiotherapists, nutritionists, and community support. The program is targeted towards mums that are 12 months post-partum and includes Q&As with pelvic floor physios, and allows access to a community of women who are experiencing a similar situation. It is an incredible community of warm, supportive, and encouraging women who have each other's backs. I congratulate Bel on her commitment and passion for running and on providing support to local women to get back exercising in an encouraging and supportive environment.

TARONGA ZOO 105TH BIRTHDAY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Congratulations to Taronga Zoo on the recent milestone of their 105th birthday, marking more than a century of bringing people and wildlife together. Taronga Zoo is a memorable and iconic part of the North Shore that brings happiness and joy to everyone who visits. Over the past century, Taronga has transformed itself from a place of entertainment to a mature conservation hub that works well beyond traditional zoo boundaries to prevent the poaching and trafficking of wildlife, protect and regenerate critical habitat, and increase understanding of wildlife across the globe. I know that many in my local community cannot wait to get back and visit Taronga Zoo. The Zoo is planned to reopen on 18 October, and I cannot wait to visit the five new African Lion cubs who were born to experienced mum Maya and first time dad Ato. This is the first time in 18 years that Taronga Zoo has welcomed lion cubs. Thank you to CEO Cameron Kerr, and all the staff and keepers who work so hard to look after our incredible native and exotic species that we are so lucky to have in our own backyard.

LUNA PARK SAYS GET READY TO SCREAM

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge that Sydney's iconic Luna Park in the North Shore electorate has recently undergone one of the most ambitious upgrade projects in its 85 year history. This upgrade will allow thrill seekers the ultimate experience and meet the high expectations of today's customers. Luna Park has so far completed eight totally new state-of-the-art adult rides, with the return of the "Big Dipper" expected to return in December. There has also been significant upgrades to existing attractions, with a particular focus on the child and heritage rides. The wait for the reopening has been long anticipated with Luna Park now being shut for nine months this year due to the upgrades and lockdown. Luna Park is now getting ready for the big reopening on 23 October where they can finally welcome the public back through their doors. The park will be reopening in time for Halloween with "Halloscream" events planned for the end of October. I wish every success to Luna Park in their reopening and I know that many in our community cannot wait to visit again.

WATTLE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I recently met with the stage 3 students and staff at Wattle Grove Public School over Zoom. I joined one of their lessons to discuss the State Government's responsibilities and how we organise and manage different places and environments in the community. It was great to talk with the students and get a feel for what is important to them in our local area. Caring for the environment was a focus, with lots of students interested in how the State Government is committed to enhancing sustainability in our day-to-day lives. We discussed the New South Wales Government's Return and Earn Scheme and lots of students informed me that their families actively collect their bottles and cans and take them to deposits. We also talked about the local environment and our special koala population. The students were interested to hear that we had the only disease free koala population in Australia! Once again, I thank the staff and students at Wattle Grove Public School for inviting me to talk with them virtually.

SANDY POINT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEW TEAM

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I acknowledge the newly elected Sandy Point Residents Association Executive Team. Congratulations to Mr Andrew Joyce, President, Mr Geoff Booth, Vice President, Ms Jasmine Guthrie, Secretary, Ms Julie Maddock, Treasurer and Mr Neil Maddock, Public Officer. The Sandy Point Residents Association has a fantastic track record at advocating for the Sandy Point community and their surrounding environment. At their recent AGM, the new executive team discussed issues with the surrounding environment, plans for a street library in front of the community centre, maintenance issues and the possibility of upcoming social events for the community to get back to connecting and interacting. I wish the new Sandy Point Residents Association Executive Team the best of luck in their new roles and look forward to the ideas they come up with.

ST JOHN'S ASQUITH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I acknowledge St John's Asquith who this year celebrate 100 years in our community. St John's began from a growing need for a place to worship for the community of Asquith, Mount Colah and Mount Kuring-gai. They had been travelling to Hornsby to attend church so with 90 pounds raised and the help of the Home Mission Society they purchased two blocks of land to build a church. The foundation stone for St John's Anglican Church was laid on 23 July 1921 by Mrs George Emily Pile. In an amazing show of community spirit the entire first building was constructed by volunteers. All the money needed for materials was raised by local parishioners while sourcing a second hand seating and an organ. By May 1923 they were able to hold their first Sunday School which had 40 to 50 students attend. A second generation church was built in 1969 and a third in 2004. I congratulate current Senior Minister Reverend Brian Heath, Associate Minister Reverend Tim Thambyrajah, Children's Minister Laura Bardell and Office Administrator Jenny Clarke and everyone who has contributed to St John's over the last 100 years.

BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL RETIRING MIDWIVES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge the extraordinary work and careers of four midwives from Blacktown Hospital as they transition into retirement. Izolda Vaiciurgis, Susela Govindasamy, Robin Corkin and Zareena Atkinson have a combined 180 years of nursing and midwifery experience, with many getting their starts in Western Sydney Local Health District facilities. Zareena Atkinson retired in March 2021 after a 50-year career beginning in Parramatta Hospital. Izolda, Susela and Robin are following Zareena's move this July in ending their decades long careers working as healthcare professionals across the world. All of these midwives have said they will miss the helpful and friendly environment fostered at Blacktown Hospital who do an amazing job in assisting mothers from the Seven Hills electorate from Blacktown, Lalor Park, Kings Langley, Seven Hills and Toongabbie. Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital's nursing and midwifery director, Marie Baxter, personally thanked the group for their commitment to the broader community as the nursing profession evolved over the last 40 years. These midwives are a testament to the fantastic staff we have working in the Western Sydney Local Health District and across the Seven Hills electorate that work at the four local hospitals.

THE MEADOWS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge the work being done at The Meadows Public School in Seven Hills during the recent Sydney lockdown. As the members of the House understand, it has been a tough year for school students of all ages, but The Meadows Public School pupils from Seven Hills and Toongabbie are doing great work to ensure their students do not fall behind with their school work. I was delighted to receive an update recently on their efforts to deliver "Home learning booklets" to their students by driving a bus around the school neighbourhood and dropping booklets off at the houses of families. This allows students to continue learning in a way that is similar to how they would usually learn at school. I acknowledge Michelle Harisson and

Thomas Haynes who organised this great initiative by the school. I thank The Meadows Public School for their ongoing service and commitment to the community of Seven Hills and Toongabbie.

PARKLEA SOCCER FOOTBALL CLUB AT OLYMPICS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—It gives me great pleasure to recognise former soccer players from the Parklea Soccer Football Club who are representing Australia in the Olyroos and the Matildas squads. It is fantastic to see the hard work of local constituents pay off when they represent our nation on the world stage. I acknowledge and congratulate Keanu Baccus and Courtney Nevin on this remarkable achievement. The Parklea Soccer Football Club has a great reputation in the local area for fostering young talent and providing local soccer players with opportunities to flourish. The club is based at Morgan Power Reserve at Kings Langley in the Seven Hills electorate. I always find it a great honour to hear from community leaders about constituents who are representing our State and nation in their respective sports. I thank club President Maurice Krenich and Secretary David Quitto for leading and serving the local soccer community. Once again, congratulations to Keanu Baccus and Courtney Nevin, and I wish them the best of luck in Tokyo.

JOCK ELLIOTT AND WINONA GRAY LEVETT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I acknowledge Winona Gray Levett and Jock Elliott. Skillset trainees Winona and Jock have each been named as finalists in the 2021 NSW Training Awards for Western Region. Winona was recognised as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year. Jock received the School-based Trainee of the Year nomination. Winona completed her Community Services Traineeship in February 2021, was employed by Skillset and hosted by Housing Plus in Orange. Jock is currently completing a Certificate III in Information and Digital Media Technology one day a week while also completing his HSC with Orange High School. Winona Gray Levett is recognised by Skillset as a resilient, kind and proud Wiradjuri woman who has displayed exemplary personal and professional attributes cementing her as a community-focused and successful trainee in her field. Jock Elliott is recognised by Skillset for his diligent and meticulous work-ethic and his passion for technology and learning. I applaud Jock and Winona on their committed efforts and accomplishments in their education and training. Well done.

BASIL AND JEAN BALDWIN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I acknowledge Basil and Jean Baldwin, of Orange. After arriving in Australia from England in 1964, the Baldwins became actively involved in orienteering with involvements at clubs in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. When they moved to Orange in 1994, they established the Goldseekers orienteering club, and have been actively involved ever since. Since the mid-90s, Basil and Jean have competed in many orienteering events, including the orienteering world championships in Latvia and Denmark. Aged 81 and 78 respectively, Basil and Jean were recently recognised for their decades of service to the sport, having each been awarded a New South Wales sports award for distinguished long service. Orienteering is a sport which started in Scandinavia in the 1930s and it was used for military training. In an increasingly electronic-dependant age, skills such as map reading and traditional orienteering would risk loss if it were not for passionate sportspersons and ambassadors such as Basil and Jean, who have helped this sport and activity to thrive. I congratulate Basil and Jean on their commitment and contributions to the sport and the Orange community. Thank you and well done.

JUDY HAINES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Judy Haines, of Orange. Judy Haines has been recently recognised for her decades of volunteer work, and has recently been nominated for the Central West Senior Volunteer award in the Centre for Volunteering—NSW Volunteer Awards. Judy has been volunteering with Orange City Council's Choices at Home team, and has also been delivering Meals on Wheels for 40 years with her church group. She started volunteering with Meals on Wheels in 1981 when the youngest of her four children started high school, and nowadays her daughter Cathie Slattery joins her to help out with the meal deliveries. Volunteers are the backbone of community, and Judy's significant service has benefited our community enormously. Judy, congratulations on a deserved nomination, and on behalf of the Orange community I thank you for your 40 years of volunteer service.

JOCK HOUGH AND BEN WARK

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Jock Hough and Ben Wark, of Cudal. Jock Hough sadly lost his mother, Belinda Hough, in March 2021 after a long battle with cancer. I extend my most sincere condolences to Jock and his family on their loss. Jock's lifelong friend Ben Wark suggested they both do something special in Belinda's memory. They decided to participate in Cancer Council's Ride500 and to raise \$1,000 for life-saving cancer research, prevention programs and support services. In September they set off on their month-long riding challenge. By the end of the four week challenge, they had well surpassed their funding target,

raising over \$12,500, which made them the highest fundraising team for the challenge in the whole of New South Wales. The funding achieved is a testament to Jock and Ben's commitment to this noble cause and to the tight-knit community who rallied in support of them. Congratulations to Jock and Ben on your charitable fundraising endeavour, and many thanks to the Cudal community who supported them in this great cause.

VALE LIONEL POTTER

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I acknowledge and pay tribute to Lionel Henry Potter, an icon of the South Sydney Rabbitohs and the Coogee SLSC, who passed away on 18 September. He was born in 1936 and was the Rabbitohs Club Conditioner from 1979 to 1992 and sat on the Coaching Panel from 1998 to 1999. Lionel became part of the club's legend and inspired many iconic victories in the 1980s. In these days, a bit of biff was part of the game and Souths would sometimes start a biff to rattle their opponents, with the cry of "Henry" used to start things off. The tactic was named after Lionel "Henry" Potter, as despite being the quiet type he was known to never back down when things got tough. Lionel was also a famous member of the Coogee SLSC. Members at the club tell me that Lionel was still in the club gym every morning right up until the pandemic closed the gym's doors. I am told Lionel's dedication was a great motivating factor for members, and his presence will be sorely missed. I offer my most sincere condolences to the family and friends that Lionel leaves behind.

BALI BOMBINGS MEMORIAL 19TH ANNIVERSARY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—October 12, 2021 marked the nineteenth anniversary of the Bali Bombings and it was an honour to attend and lay a flower on the Bali Bombings memorial at Dolphin Point in Coogee. Nineteen years ago our local community in Coogee was shaken by a tragic loss. Every year since, without fail, we have gathered together to remember those whose lives were cut short. The Bali Memorial at Dolphin Point was erected in 2003 to remember the 88 Australians who lost their lives in Kuta. Included amongst the 88 were 20 local people, from across the eastern suburbs, all of whom have their names engraved on the memorial. Dolphin Point was renamed in 2003 to remember each of the six members of the Coogee Dolphins Rugby League Club who lost their lives in this tragedy. I thank Randwick City Council for their tremendous work in hosting this important event during a pandemic, your continuing advocacy to ensure our community can continue to gather on this important day. We will never forget those that we lost and we will always support those that they left behind.

FORMWORKERS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Well done to the local workers of Canberra based-company I.C. Formwork who have been successful in obtaining a deserved pay rise. The company recently granted its ACT employees 2.5 per cent pay rises every six months for three years, but its Newcastle-based workers were seeking the same. With the support of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union and Mark Cross, Brendan Holl and their team at the CFMEU in particular, workers have been able to bring management to the table and negotiate a fair and reasonable outcome. This would not have been possible without the strong resolve of the workers who stood firm, undertook industrial action and conducted a picket to be treated the same as their in-state colleagues. All workers deserve a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and I congratulate all the picketers on this excellent result.

JULIE JOY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—The COVID-19 pandemic has had myriad impacts over the past two years affecting the lives of people regardless of age, geography or socio-economic status. I acknowledge the challenges which have confronted our aged care residents and their families especially as they endured separation during these trying times. I also thank the aged care workforce of the Upper Hunter electorate for their resilience in supporting the residents, their families and friends. People like Julie Joy, who has done an amazing job of caring for the residents at the Calvary Muswellbrook Retirement Community. Julie has coordinated a weekly service of worship and prayer and she also coordinates the sharing of messages of encouragement to the residents from members of their families and the broader community. Thank you Julie and to all of your colleagues employed in aged care across the Upper Hunter for the care, support and assistance provided during this once in a century event.

SCONE GROUP 21 RUGBY LEAGUE 2021 MINOR PREMIERS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—Congratulations to Scone on securing the Hunter Valley Group 21 Rugby League minor premiership for 2021. The emergence of the Delta strain of COVID-19 and the subsequent need for lockdowns in New South Wales forced the Group 21 board to abandon the remainder of the local season in September. The Thoroughbreds were on course for a tenth semi-final appearance since 2011 and potentially a fourth major premiership in a decade. Even though the pandemic may have denied them a first grade grand final victory, the Scone Thoroughbreds have much to celebrate this year with all four of the club's senior teams finishing on top of the ladder in their respective competitions. I hope players and officials of Group 21 can

now regroup over summer to prepare for the 2022 season and we look forward to cheering our local teams back onto the park next year.

PORT STEPHENS FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)—I take this moment to recognise a critical organisation doing wonderful work in Port Stephens—the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, or PSFANS. For many years, PSFANS has been the backbone of our community, supporting families facing homelessness including women and children escaping domestic violence. They have done this day in, day out with inadequate resources to address the deep and desperate needs of our community. When COVID came to town, they sprang into action wherever they were needed assisting families with hampers, financial help, connecting them with services, ensuring no one was left behind. When families found themselves locked down by NSW Health in motel rooms at Motto Farm, they provided support in coordination with Hume Housing, police, NSW Health, local businesses and community. I especially acknowledge the big hearts and hard work of Sue Pollock and Ann Fletcher who lead the team at PSFANS. I also thank the team behind Sue and Ann who care deeply and have done all they can to support communities where COVID lockdown hit the hardest. Because of quiet, careful and life-changing work PSFANS does, the community of Port Stephens is much stronger.

RAYMOND TERRACE LIONS AND ROTARY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)—The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Port Stephens hard. Our significant tourism, retail and hospitality industries have been put on hold due to the lockdown, and thousands of local families have struggled to make ends meet. However, many people in our community have responded to these challenging times by rolling up their sleeves and offering helping hands to those in need. In particular, I am grateful to local Rotary and Lions clubs for their ongoing efforts to assist our community. I pay tribute to Tracey Janovski, John Chambers, Paul Bulbert and Adam Nicolas from Rotary for their "Club Furniture" program, relocating essential household items from deceased estates to households in need of assistance. They helped to establish a community hub, linked in with Survivors R US, and helped stock the newly established Aboriginal men's workshed "Guppaar". Raymond Terrace Lions have generously assisted St Johns Anglican Church Parish Pantry by providing food hampers for local families. I acknowledge President Bob Findley, District Governor Glenys Francis, Peter Francis, Eileen Findley, Jude Bee, Kate Moore, Neil Goldthorpe, Tanya Roy, Ruby Porter, Dave and Margaret Davies, and Barry and Janelle Stoneham. I thank these community organisations for their hard work and generosity.

FIBONACCI CAFÉ RAYMOND TERRACE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)—The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Port Stephens have been severe. But so many local residents and businesses have shown an incredible amount of community spirit and generosity amongst the chaos. In particular, I want to acknowledge Fibonacci Café in Raymond Terrace. When the Fibonacci staff heard stories of local residents and families doing it tough, they stepped up. Many local residents lost their jobs and, for the first time in their lives, struggled to put food on the table. To make matters worse, local supermarkets had been overwhelmed with food delivery orders, and many local families in isolation could not get access to the food they needed to survive. I am extremely grateful to café manager Pauline Daniel and her wonderful team, including Bec White, Hannah West and Sallie Hawes, who came together to make hundreds of fresh and healthy meals for members of our community in their time of need, free of charge. Amongst the turmoil of a global pandemic, these women put our community first and made a real difference to people's lives. On behalf of our community, and on behalf of the Parliament, I thank them for their generosity and kindness.

SUE MALLAM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the late Sue Mallam, a true local, and much-admired business woman in Mullumbimby. I offer my sincere condolences to her family and friends on her passing. As the granddaughter of the late George Septimus Mallam, who opened a general store in Mullumbimby in 1904, Sue and her family have been synonymous with the local business community for more than 100 years. Sue was born and bred in Mullumbimby and her early education years were spent at St John's Primary School before attending boarding school in Brisbane for her senior education. After a successful legal career, Sue moved into the fashion industry when she became manager for her mother's clothing store, Fashion Corner, in Mullumbimby, which she took over and enjoyed running for many years. Sue was a popular business owner and an active member of the Chamber of Commerce. She proudly sponsored Mullumbimby ladies golf and several charities, donated to local schools and hosted fashion parades. Sue was a true fighter, with a positive spirit. She will be missed, and remembered for her smile and hearty laugh, and the contributions she made to the community through her business and her charitable work.

SERGEANT DAVID LONGFIELD

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the exceptional record of public service of Sergeant David Longfield, who is retiring after 24 years and eight months in the NSW Police Service, having supported the local community working at Ballina Police Station for the last 12 years. Sergeant Longfield is recognised for his work compassionately navigating the coal seam gas explorations and logging protests throughout the northern rivers region, where he was proud to allow residents the freedom to protest and have their voice heard, living in a free and democratic society. He also helped supervise MardiGrass, working with festival organisers to support the festival and ensure public safety. Sergeant Longfield was chairman of the Lismore and Ballina branches of the Police Association of New South Wales, and was a Police Union Welfare Officer, in which role he lobbied for and won increases in the authorised strength of the Ballina Police Station and supported countless people. He will be dearly missed for his experience and guidance within the policing community, but it is the impact he had on those less fortunate than himself for which he will be best remembered.

RIZEUP

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the efforts of RizeUp in supporting local services that work at the frontline with families impacted by domestic and family violence. For nearly six years, RizeUp has supported local organisations in setting up homes, covering school costs and raising donations for women and families recovering from violence in the northern rivers region. RizeUp has been working with Momentum Collective to see the establishment of a new women's refuge in Ballina. They successfully helped furnish the refuge and made the site more accessible for women and children who live with disabilities. The volunteers in RizeUp also drive awareness campaigns on domestic and family violence within society, and deliver life-changing, practical support for families affected, giving them the hope and empowerment to move on to a life free from violence. As a community, it is our duty to ensure that the women and children in our community are safe, and I applaud RizeUp for all of their important work.

MICHAEL LOCKREY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the tireless work of the late Michael Lockrey, a dedicated advocate for the deaf community and people with disabilities. I offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends on his passing. Profoundly deaf from childhood, Michael refused to be limited by his disability. Indeed, it was the driving force behind his life's work and accomplishments. Michael's determination was seen in his personal achievements, including playing soccer for Australia in the 2005 Deaflympics, and in his advocacy roles. Michael lobbied for improvements to captioning on videos and for six years chaired the Australian Communication Exchange ensuring phone access for deaf people. He also played a key role in the development of a free App for correcting Google's auto-captions. Michael won a case against the Minister for Communications at the Human Rights Commission calling for correct captioning on parliamentary videos, and won again at the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities after he was refused jury duty because of his deafness. I honour Michael's memory for shining a light on the need for equal opportunity and for the advances he achieved in his personal quest for equality.

BERT EVANS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I congratulate seven young people in my electorate who were recently awarded a Bert Evans Scholarship. These grants support apprentices who may be experiencing financial or personal hardship, but who more importantly show a commitment to their training, and are great at what they do. Narromine's Alex Williams works for Jacob Murray Plumbing and Gasfitting in Dubbo. He said the scholarship will not only help him buy the tools he needs—it will also help him relocate to be closer to work. Over in Gulgong, Caitlin Cottle is doing a Certificate 3 in engineering and boilermaking, working with a family-owned business. They join Caine Deaves, Clayton Carr, Jack Horan, Tess Crossley and Wes Toomey in receiving one of this year's Bert Evans Scholarships. These grants are our way of recognising that doing an apprenticeship can be tough, but they are super important to make sure we have a pipeline of skilled workers coming through. Congratulations to all the recipients and I wish you all the best in the future!

DUBBO CROQUET CLUB CENTENARY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I congratulate the Dubbo Croquet Club on their recent centenary celebration. Croquet has been played in Dubbo continuously since 1921—for the first 98 years at the same address, and now at their new location at Muller Park. COVID tried hard to disrupt the day, but with some innovation, the club still managed to celebrate their centenary, though very different to the original plan. The members started the day dressing-up, hitting the ball around their own backyards, eating some cake, then tuning in to a Zoom chat with the club. They enjoyed the Zoom interaction, and anyone who was not able to join onto the online meeting phoned a croquet friend for a chat. A new date will be assigned for the 100-year celebration, when restrictions permit.

Well done to the Dubbo Croquet Club on your centenary. I am looking forward to getting back out and running hoops with you very soon.

RICHARD EADE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I acknowledge Stuart Town local Richard Eade, who has retired from the Rural Fire Service after 60 years of dedicated service. Richard has been a rural firefighter since the age of 14, and an Orana Group Captain for the past 20 years. In 2019 Richard was a recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal, announced in the Queen's Birthday awards. As a young volunteer in December 1965, he attended a major fire which burned over 6,000 acres, destroying stock and much grazing country. In January 1975, he combatted a fire burning 22,000 acres and 11 rural properties, including his own, in the Stuart Town and Euchareena districts. Over the years, and the many incidents he has been involved in, Richard has shown strong leadership, dedication, commitment and support for the training and development of the volunteers, producing results well above what is expected on and off the fire ground. Thank you for your many years of service Richard. I wish you the best in your retirement.

REGIONAL MEDIA

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Regional media is incredibly important. Now maybe I am biased—I did do decades in local radio before getting into Parliament—but the COVID pandemic has shown us people are still hungry for local information they can trust. Unfortunately COVID also hurt advertising budgets, and last year we sadly lost two mastheads in my electorate—the *Wellington Times* and the *Narromine News*. So I want to congratulate Wellington's Mark Griggs and Sharon Wilson for launching the new Wellington and District Leader—to give communities like Wellington, Ballimore, Geurie, Goolma, Gollan, Mumbil, Stuart Town, Wongarbon and Yeoval a voice again! The paper is printed by Gilgandra Newspapers, another independent, whose owner Lucie Peart is a bit of a champion in our part of the world. Last year Lucie launched the *Nyngan Weekly* to replace the *Nyngan Observer*—which closed after 137 years—and now she is planning to launch the *Narromine Star* next month—although I know they are yet to hire a journo or sales rep, if anyone is interested! Mark, Sharon and Lucie: I commend you for your passion for regional communities. Thanks for what you do and all the best for the future.

MENAI STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT STADIUM STOMP

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Menai State Emergency Service Unit ("Menai Unit") who are "stepping up" to fundraise for mental health with the Blackdog Institute's Stadium Stomp. On 14 November 2021, the incredible members of the Menai Unit will run up and down 6,700 steps at the Sydney Cricket Ground as part of the national fundraiser for mental health. The selfless volunteers will be joining other emergency service members to put their legs to the test for this fantastic cause. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of caring for our mental health, so it is fantastic that by participating in this event, Menai Unit members will help provide resources for those in need. I commend the volunteers from the Menai Unit who are doing their bit to break down the stigma surrounding mental health. The incredible participants in this fundraiser are Teddy Haryjianto, Anne Davies, Andrew Wong, Julius Maniago, Lauren Goodridge, Mike Holliday and Gilberto Pardo-Cortes. I thank the wonderful Menai State Emergency Service Unit for their ongoing dedication to our community and wish them well in the Stadium Stomp.

MIRANDA MAGPIES FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the Miranda Magpies Football Club's new executive committee for the 2021-2022 season who were elected at the annual general meeting on 4 June 2021. The Magpies have a rich footballing history in the Sutherland shire that extends as early as the 1920s. By the late 1960s, the club was officially established and was home to 44 teams and 537 registered players. In 2021, the Magpies remain a cornerstone of our local football community with a proud 89 registered teams and over 1000 registered players. Despite the premature end to the season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Magpies remained strong and saw three premiership teams finish top of the table. Behind this outstanding club is a strong team of leaders who are passionate about both our community and football. I commend the Magpies' executive committee including President Gary O'Riordan, Senior Vice President Darren Smith, Junior Vice President Luke Richardson, Secretary Craig Smith, Treasurer Tracey Lentell and Assistant Secretary Joe Milburn. I look forward to working with the Miranda Magpies Football Club's new executive team and seeing the club return to kicking goals on the field as soon as possible.

SUTHERLAND RAINBOW CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful team at the Sutherland Rainbow Club who bring joy to many children at the Sutherland Leisure Centre. The Rainbow Club offers personalised swimming lessons for children with disabilities in a fun and safe community. Learning to swim can be daunting,

but through the amazing teachers and volunteers the Rainbow Club ensures that children feel supported and nurtured as they enter the pool. The passionate team help children learn at their own pace with their unique "Swim the Rainbow" program, which uses specially designed visual aids including the colours of the rainbow to help children reach certain swimming goals. I was pleased to attend the Rainbow Club's Open Day on 19 June and meet the incredible staff, volunteers and families. I recognise the exceptional team behind the Sutherland Rainbow Club who make these events and weekly lessons possible, especially Membership Manager Min Strauss. I acknowledge the wonderful managing staff including Catriona Barry, Jackie Cole, Heather Nadilo and Michelle Tonge along with outstanding teachers Ashleigh Gibson, Jorja Gibson, Bronte Penhall and Caitlin Barnes. I commend the team at the Sutherland Rainbow Club for supporting local children with disabilities and their families.

AFGHANI REFUGEES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The recent events in Afghanistan have caused distress and heartbreak across our communities. The contribution that Afghan refugees make to our local communities cannot be understated and I express my solidarity with and support for refugees from Afghanistan who live in the Summer Hill electorate. I was pleased to join 57 other MPs from across the New South Wales Parliament in calling for Australia to increase our refugee intake, to provide a future to those fleeing Taliban control, and to honour the ADF personnel and Afghan allies who fought in the Afghan War. Australia has a long history of welcoming and supporting refugees escaping conflict—including those from Vietnam, Syria and Iraq. We must follow the lead of other nations including Canada and the United Kingdom and dramatically increase our uptake of refugees fleeing Afghanistan, particularly those women, girls and other marginalised people who face exclusion from education, employment or persecution, violence and death. I acknowledge the important work of the member for Auburn and the Hon. Trevor Khan on coordinating this petition. I also acknowledge all Afghan refugees and people living in the Summer Hill electorate and the extraordinary organisations that support them.

CAMBEWARRA SCHOOL OF ARTS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I acknowledge the Cambewarra School of Arts Association Inc. who have submitted a detailed application for funding under the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnerships program. The School of Arts are seeking funds to refurbish tennis court fencing, lighting, wastewater drains and child safety fencing to comply with health and safety requirements as this premises is also used by a local mobile preschool. I have previously secured funding towards a partial refurbishment of this heritage listed building in Cambewarra Village which included the replacement of deteriorated internal wall cladding and painting in accordance with heritage requirements. I acknowledge Mr Christopher Thaler, Trustee and Public Officer. I recently visited the School of Arts to meet with locals to discuss their request. I will be working very hard to secure this grant.

JAMBEROO ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I acknowledge Mr Jacob Mierendorff, the Operations Minister at Jamberoo Anglican Church who submitted a very detailed application for funding under the Community Building Partnerships program. The church is seeking funds to resurface and restore its existing carpark and access with asphalt and accompanied with the necessary line marking. Jamberoo Anglican Church is part of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. I also acknowledge Senior Minister Jodie McNeill, Senior Associate Minister Graham Errington, Mothers Minister Gemma Bartlett and Youth Minister Brad Vidilini. I also acknowledge Parish Councillors Luke Warner, Adam Rosten, Paula Vidilini and Greg Cleall. I pray that Jamberoo Anglican Church is successful and that the funds will be a great investment for our local Jamberoo community.

ALBION PARK ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I acknowledge the Albion Park Anglican Church who have submitted a funding request under the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnerships program. The church is seeking funds to refurbish its bathroom amenities including the male, female and disabled access toilet. I would like to acknowledge Senior Minister Rev Robin Vonk, Mrs Beryl Nash (Project Manager on this application for funding) and also the Pastoral Care Assistant Natasha Hansen and Youth and Children's Lay Minister Steve Inman. Albion Park Anglican Church plays a vital and active role in our local community. I have enjoyed working with the church in the past to secure many grants for its programs such as its Men's Shed and preschool; both of which are outstanding examples of the church's outreach and commitment to the Albion Park community. I pray that this funding will be successful and will provide a great improvement for the church and the local Albion Park community. These are not costs to government; they are investments that will make a difference.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 17:54 until
Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 12:00.**