



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 19 October 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 19 October 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

ELECTRONIC NOTICES OF MOTION

The SPEAKER: I remind members that general business notices of motion must not exceed 100 words in length and must be submitted electronically to AssemblyNotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au as per the resolution of the House. The 100-word limit will be enforced strictly.

WRITTEN COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

The SPEAKER: Written community recognition statements [CRSs] should also be submitted electronically to AssemblyCRS@parliament.nsw.gov.au. I note that a record number of more than 440 written community recognition statements were presented last week, the vast majority of which were in order. I remind members that community recognition statements are intended to highlight the achievements of people within our local communities. They must not contain matters of policy; requests for the Government, the House or another body to take or not take action; or criticisms or negative reflections on any person, including members, office holders, the Government, the Opposition or a third party. I ask that members please ensure they provide their written CRSs before 3.00 p.m. today, and before midday on Wednesday and Thursday. They must not exceed 200 words.

Business of the House

SITTING DAY PROGRAM: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave: I move:

That the routine of business for the House for the sitting week commencing 19 October 2021 be amended as follows:

- (1) Members may only give General Business Notices of Motions in writing; members may lodge General Business Notices of Motions not exceeding 100 words in length by emailing the Legislative Assembly Table Office by 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday sitting days and 12.00 noon on other sitting days, for inclusion in the *Business Paper* for the next sitting day. Thirty General Business Notices of Motion can be given each sitting day. The Whips, in consultation with the crossbench, shall advise the Clerk of the order the General Business Notices of Motions are to be entered in the *Business Paper*.
- (2) Members may only submit Community Recognition Statements in writing; members may submit up to four written Community Recognition Statements per sitting day, with the procedure for the submission of written Community Recognition Statements to be followed as provided in Sessional Order 108A, with four written Community Recognition Statements able to be submitted on 19 October 2021 before 3.00 p.m.
- (3) The House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements.
- (4) The following items and any consequential actions required of the Speaker may not be orally reported to the House but will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*:
 - (a) receipt of messages from Her Excellency the Governor and His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor;
 - (b) reports, including reports of the Auditor-General, received by the Speaker, and Clerk out of session and tabled since the last sitting of the House;
 - (c) tabling of Statutory Rules and Instruments and government responses to petitions;
 - (d) committee reports and government responses received since the last sitting of the House;
 - (e) receipt of petitions with less than 10,000 signatures; and
 - (f) lapsing of business.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

BROADCAST OF PROCEEDINGS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave: I move:

That:

- (1) The House authorises the broadcast and rebroadcast of the proceedings and excerpts of proceedings of the House and its committees in accordance with this resolution.
- (2) The House authorises the sound and vision broadcast of the proceedings of the House and its committees through:
 - (a) the internal broadcast system within Parliament House;
 - (b) the direct signal to accredited media within Parliament House;
 - (c) the New South Wales Parliament website; and
 - (d) the New South Wales Parliament's social media channels.
- (3) The House authorises the provision of excerpts of sound and vision coverage of the proceedings of the House, including records of past proceedings, through direct access to the Parliament-on-Demand service to persons and organisations as determined by the Speaker.
- (4) Individual requests for excerpts of sound and vision coverage of the proceedings of the House by persons or organisations other than those identified in paragraph (3) (or without direct access to the Parliament-on-Demand service) require approval from the Clerk.
- (5) Individual requests for excerpts of sound and vision coverage of the proceedings of a committee through the Parliament-on-Demand service require approval from the Clerk-Assistant, Scrutiny and Engagement.

Conditions for broadcast and rebroadcast of Assembly proceedings

- (6) The live broadcast or rebroadcast of Legislative Assembly proceedings is authorised on the following conditions, and any other terms and conditions, not inconsistent with this paragraph, determined by the Speaker from time to time:
 - (a) only the following broadcast material shall be used:
 - (i) the sound and vision coverage provided by the Parliament that is produced for broadcast, re-broadcast and archiving;
 - (ii) official broadcast material supplied by parliamentary staff; and
 - (iii) filming or photography on request by persons or organisations that is approved by the Speaker.
 - (b) broadcast material shall be used only for the purposes of fair and accurate reports of proceedings, and shall not be digitally manipulated nor used for:
 - (i) political party advertising or election campaigns; and
 - (ii) commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising.
 - (c) reports of proceedings shall be such as to provide a balanced presentation of differing views.
 - (d) excerpts of proceedings which are subsequently withdrawn may be broadcast only if the withdrawal is also broadcast.
 - (e) the instructions of the Speaker, or his or her delegates, on the use of recorded excerpts of proceedings must be observed at all times.

Conditions for broadcast and rebroadcast of committee proceedings

- (7) The following conditions apply to the broadcasting of committee proceedings:
 - (a) the broadcasting, filming or photography of any public proceedings of a committee is subject to the authorisation of the committee in each instance.
 - (b) a committee may determine conditions, not inconsistent with this resolution, for the recording and broadcasting of its proceedings, may order that any part of its proceedings not be recorded or broadcast, and may give instructions for the observance of conditions so determined and orders so made. A committee shall report to the House any wilful breach of such conditions orders or instructions.
 - (c) recording and broadcasting of proceedings of a committee shall not interfere with the conduct of those proceedings, shall not encroach into the committee's work area, or capture documents (either in hard copy or electronic form) in the possession of committee members, witnesses or committee staff.
 - (d) broadcast of committee proceedings shall be used only for the purposes of fair and accurate reports of those proceedings, and shall not be digitally manipulated nor used for:
 - (i) political party advertising or election campaigns; and
 - (ii) commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising.
- (8) Where a committee intends to authorise the broadcasting of its proceedings, a witness who is to appear in those proceedings shall be given reasonable opportunity, before appearing in the proceedings, to object to the broadcasting on the proceedings and to state the ground of the objection. The committee shall consider any such objection, having regard to the proper protection of the witness and the public interest in proceedings, and if the committee decides to permit broadcasting of the proceedings notwithstanding the witness' objection, the witness shall be so informed before appearing in the proceedings.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave: I move:

That during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 368 shall be suspended.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2021

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 14 October 2021

No. 1 **OPP No. 1 [c2021-070]**

Page 6, Schedule 1.3. Insert after line 19—

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

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

, and

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

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

Insert after section 58—

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

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

58AB Exchange of information

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

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

relevant agency includes the following—

- (a) a long service agency,

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

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

Omit section 59(1). Insert instead—

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

No. 2 **GOVT No. 1 [c2021-097B]**

Page 17, insert after line 6—

1.15A Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996 No 37

Section 6 Membership

Omit "10" from section 6(4). Insert instead "12".

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:05):

I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

I am pleased to welcome the passage of the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021 in its current form. An important role of government is to ensure that legislation remains up to date and that provisions are fit for purpose and in line with the original policy intent. The bill achieves this by modernising policy regulations, provisions and administrative processes, ensuring the laws remain relevant and fit for purpose; strengthening consumer protections; clarifying legal requirements; and improving customer outcomes. The amendments contained in the bill are mainly administrative and non-contentious, but will implement real, positive changes to the way the people of New South Wales interact with laws and government processes. I note a number of amendments, which the Government supported, were made to the bill in the other place. I thank my team and my department for their efforts in finalising this legislation, which further delivers on this Government's commitment to the people and businesses of New South Wales. I note the presence of the member for Swansea in the House. I commend the bill, as amended, to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:06): I speak in support of the bill and of the amendments moved in the Legislative Council on behalf of the Opposition and, ultimately, the Government and others in that place. I acknowledge my colleague the Hon. Courtney Houssos, shadow Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, for her hard work in this space along with that of her predecessor and member for Granville, Julia Finn. The Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021 sought to amend 15 Acts. The Opposition moved amendments that I note were agreed to by the Government. I thank the Government for that.

Labor amended the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement) Act 2020 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020. Labor's amendments to the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement) Act 2020 were accepted by the Government and will empower the secretary—in this case, the NSW Building Commissioner—to enforce rectification bonds to address serious defects in apartment buildings. The amendments have substantially improved the bill. This is an important reform because over many years we have seen serious structural damage emerge in apartment buildings right across the State, including the Opal Tower, Mascot Towers, Landmark buildings and only recently the Vicinity Apartments in Canterbury. The Vicinity Apartments building is a damning case that shows the urgent need for reform in this space. The owners corporation commissioned an engineering report, which showed serious structural defects that may risk building collapse. That has become an all too familiar story, with apartment owners left to pick up the pieces while being tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket.

In July this year the builder responsible for the Vicinity Apartments committed to a rectification bond to cover defects for the next 20 years on another of its developments, the Skyview in Castle Hill. This cannot continue to happen. I acknowledge the work of the Minister, who genuinely has worked extremely hard in this

space. I know that we are taking steps towards addressing the issue, and this is further recognition of that. On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I thank the Minister for his hard work and for his genuine concern for people who buy a house with no idea that terrible things are going to happen against which they have no recourse.

The Government also made amendments to the Retail Trading Act 2008, about which Labor expressed concern. The bill is working quite well now. However, as to the amendment that will remove the current exemption applications form from the regulation and vest that power to the secretary, whilst there may be some upsides to such a change, the removal of any constraints in undertaking consultation is always concerning. We on this side believe that consultation with stakeholders always delivers better outcomes. We will keep a watching brief on this Minister, but Labor supports the amendment.

Labor has moved important amendments, which the Government has agreed not to oppose, to both the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010 and the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986. I thank our friends in the trade union movement for bringing those very important changes to Labor, which were consequently successful amendments in this place. Those amendments seek to safeguard the power of entry and inspection as well as provide the power to take possession of records to improve compliance. That is another great improvement.

The Government has put forward an amendment to the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996. I acknowledge Racing NSW Chairman Russell Balding for the fantastic job that he is doing. The racing industry provides a significant amount of jobs in our State and strong leadership is important for the longevity of that industry. Again I thank the Minister for supporting the industry, particularly in the regions. No-one knows better than the Minister that in Tamworth and throughout New South Wales the racing industry provides many jobs and opportunities for people in our communities. I applaud the Minister and I thank him.

I reiterate that Labor supports the bill and I thank the Minister for supporting Labor's amendments. I hope that he supports further amendments we put forward. I am always pleased to speak in this place about amendments on which we have reached common agreement. I believe that consensus delivers better outcomes for the people of New South Wales. It is important that this place remembers that when we work together we work best. I thank the Minister for doing that and I look forward to working with him again.

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

Motion agreed to.

WATER INDUSTRY COMPETITION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 13 October 2021.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (12:12): I lead for the Opposition in the second reading debate on the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill 2021. I will begin with some humour. This is a bill about water, and it is very dry. It is an important bill and therefore the Opposition supports it. By way of background, the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill establishes a private regime for the provision of drinking water and sewerage services. The private provision of these utility services is not by any means a new concept. The concept that underpins this legislation was introduced by Labor in 2006. Despite the mechanisms inherent in the private provision of water in New South Wales having been in operation for 15 years, it is fair to say that the private water industry is still a fledgling industry.

The technological capability is certainly there but the market conditions have not been such that it has taken off in the same way as has the private provision of electricity. It is not readily apparent that much genuine competition has been introduced into the market, primarily because water easily lends itself to being a natural monopoly and Sydney Water has dominated the market. I have to say that with some exceptions Sydney Water does an excellent job providing water services, particularly to the people of Sydney, as do its related organisations throughout New South Wales. Having said that, some good localised schemes exist in new developments, such as Barangaroo and Central Park near the University of Technology Sydney, which introduce innovative circular water recycling schemes on site.

Those systems are relatively expensive and still quite limited because of economies of scale, but they provide well-intended developers with the opportunity to maximise environmental benefits in new developments while having extremely comprehensive water efficiency and re-use infrastructure on site. Those changes have been in the works for many years and build on yet-to-be-introduced amendments passed by the Parliament in 2014. It is fair to say that that has been slowed down because of a drawn-out internal bureaucratic struggle between the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] and the Department of Planning, Industry and

Environment—Water about the amendments of the regulatory regime, which this Government has struggled to resolve over the past six or so years.

If there is a lesson to learn from the Government embarking on privatising electricity on a massive scale in the past six or seven years, it is that it is important to keep an eye on the activities of the private sector providers of utilities and to keep costs to a minimum whilst at the same time ensuring that they are robust enough to guarantee water and sewerage services are of the highest quality. We have seen that when those schemes go wrong the customers bear the costs, so we must keep a strict eye on that. We can no longer have a debate about the merits of any scheme of private water utilities, particularly after 15 years in operation, because it is very difficult to introduce any real competition to this industry, even if we wanted to, and some people do not. However, none of that is relevant to the narrow amendments relating to the bill.

In brief, the bill amends the regulatory regime for private water utilities by moving from a scheme-based to licensee-based system and strengthens the test for suitability of corporations to obtain a licence. That is always a good thing because there will always be large and small corporations wanting to make a quick buck at the expense of the consumer. It is important to keep an eye on them to make sure that only corporations that are fit and proper persons—to borrow a phrase from other regulatory regimes—can operate in these types of licence regimes. The bill also introduces a requirement for schemes to have registered operators—and retailers, if necessary—and for this information to be publicly available and managed by IPART. The bill introduces a new requirement that a property that is serviced by a private water utility must be included in a contract of sale so that purchasers are aware of that prior to settlement. It is important that no hidden costs are inherent in those contract negotiations or settlements. The bill strengthens IPART's investigative powers, introduces new offences and increases penalties for breaches of the Act. The Opposition welcomes those provisions.

It includes some abrogation of rights against self-incrimination in the form of requirements to produce documents and answer questions, but in the context of investigating serious water contamination incidents that is arguably reasonable and proportionate. The bill strengthens the system for avoiding the financial failure of a private water scheme. Firstly, it gives IPART more power to investigate to ensure that the scheme is financially viable before approval. It is important that IPART retains that power and has its hand strengthened. Secondly, it establishes a robust last-resort scheme in the case of failure.

The bill introduces a comprehensive last-resort framework to deal with retailer or operator failure, including the appointment of an operator or retailer of last resort before a scheme commences. It includes a system with an industry contribution fund to recover costs associated with the last-resort provisions. Importantly, customers will not be required under any circumstances to contribute to cost recovery associated with private operator or retailer failure, so the provider bears the risk. Finally, the bill clarifies and strengthens the prohibitions on private water utilities on-selling drinking water obtained from public utilities. The amendments are welcome. They are largely uncontroversial and build on the schemes that have gone before them. The Opposition supports the bill.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:19): I support the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill 2021, known as the WIC Amendment Bill. The bill significantly streamlines the licensing system for private water utilities in order to reduce the costs imposed on both industry and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART]. The 2014 reforms have been reworked to make the licensing framework simpler, while still protecting the interests of consumers and the wider community. The reality is that if you load up private utilities with lots of requirements that are not also imposed on public water utilities, then private utilities will struggle to compete. Regulatory requirements therefore need to be well targeted and risk-based so they do not deter new entrants who could deliver innovation and efficiency improvements.

I am pleased to see that the bill will provide more efficient and targeted regulation, remove barrier to entry, put private utilities on a level footing with public utilities and cut unnecessary red tape. The bill narrows the scope of the Water Industry Competition Act so that it focuses on high-risk utility-like spends. Under the current Act, a licence is required to construct, operate or maintain any water industry infrastructure unless an exemption applies. The result is a system that is too far reaching and imposes costly requirements on small, low-risk water recycling schemes. The costs imposed by the one-size-fits-all approach can act as an unwarranted barrier to the development of lower-risk schemes. The Government has adopted a risk-based approach to refocus the Act on those schemes that involve the greatest risk to public health and safety. Lower risk schemes can continue to be regulated under more appropriate frameworks, such as the Local Government Act or the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

The bill narrows the licensing regime by clearly articulating the kinds of schemes that are to be regulated under the Act, rather than casting a wide net and relying on exemptions to narrow its reach. Another reform that will reduce the costs for private water utilities is separating licences from the approval of individual schemes. Private utilities will no longer need to apply for a new licence and go through the same test of competence and capacity every time they want to undertake a new scheme. They will be able to offer their services in competition

with other utilities, confident that their licence to undertake specified activities is already in place. This will save time and money for licensees. IPART will now approve individual schemes, rather than making a recommendation that the Minister may implement. It should reduce processing times and costs for applicants. The bill also introduces requirements on IPART and the Minister to determine applications for approvals and licences within time frames to be prescribed in the regulations.

The new system of registered operators and retailers will also reduce costs for industry by simplifying the regulatory framework enacted in 2014. Under the revised framework IPART can focus on regulating scheme operators and retailers, without having to regulate infrastructure owners. Given the complexities of property and infrastructure ownership arrangements today, seeking to regulate infrastructure owners as well as operators can be problematic. For example, a large mixed-use development will often comprise multiple strata schemes. A WIC scheme servicing such a development may have multiple strata corporations as owners and then there may be different owners of different parts of the scheme's infrastructure—I am getting dizzy thinking about it. In those circumstances, trying to regulate the infrastructure owner would be difficult and costly. The registered operator and the retailer approach achieve the same objectives, but in a much simpler way.

The introduction of a deemed customer contract for schemes servicing 30 or more small retail premises should also reduce costs for private utilities. That is because they will no longer need to arrange for each customer to sign an individual contract, which can be onerous and time consuming for both the customer and the licensee. Instead, like many public water utilities, they will automatically be deemed to have entered into a contractual relationship with the owners of the properties they service, on the terms and conditions set out in the regulations under the WIC Act. The bill also gives private water utilities the flexibility to tailor their deemed customer contract for particular users, such as a hairdresser who might use more water at certain times of the day than other customers. The regulations will allow IPART to modify or exclude applications of the deemed customer contract in certain circumstances.

Finally, provisions have also been included in the bill to allow private utilities to obtain regular updates from the NSW Land Registry Services on changes in property ownership within their scheme's area of operations. As private utilities will be deemed to have entered into a contract with property owners serviced by their schemes, they need to know who these customers are and when they change. Public water utilities can already obtain this information from Land Registry Services, so this will provide a more level playing field for private water utilities. I think that is a well-deserved change. The bill has been developed in consultation with industry to ensure that its provisions are practical and workable and do not impose unnecessary costs and red tape. The Government is confident the reforms will reduce unnecessary costs for industry and the regulator while also ensuring that public health, customers and the environment remain protected. I trust members will join me in supporting the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:26): I support the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill 2021, which makes important changes to strengthen the protection of customers of private water and sewerage schemes. Indeed, it could be argued that the entire bill is about protecting customers, whether it be ensuring schemes are fit for purpose to protect public health or setting up last resort arrangements to ensure the continuity of essential services. This is reflected in one of the new objects to be included in the Water Industry Competition [WIC] Act, which is to protect the interests of consumers, particularly small retail customers, in the quality, reliability and price of water and sewerage services, including in the longer term.

The WIC Act focuses especially on protecting small retail customers. These are residential and small business customers who may not be well placed to protect their own interests in dealing with a private water utility. Customers' interests are protected right from the start of the approval process for a private water and sewerage scheme. Before the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] can approve any proposed scheme, it must be satisfied that the infrastructure is capable of operating safely and reliably, and is consistent with water quality guidelines for the control of risks to public health. Then there are a whole series of ongoing checks and audits over a scheme's life to protect public health and the health of customers. Before IPART can approve a proposed scheme, it must also assess the financial viability of the scheme and whether it could have significant adverse financial implications for small retail customers. If it is reasonably foreseeable that the scheme will have significant adverse financial implications, then IPART cannot approve it.

Schemes servicing 30 or more small retail customers must have additional protections in place for customers. These schemes must have a registered retailer as well as a registered operator. Registered retailers must hold a retailer licence under the WIC Act and must meet licence conditions designed to protect consumers. As required under the current WIC Act, licensed retailers must belong to an approved ombudsman scheme—the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW—to handle complaints and disputes involving small retail customers. Licensed retailers must comply with any decision of the ombudsman. Both licensed retailers and licensed

operators will need to meet new suitable corporation tests in order to obtain a licence. This will ensure that they have the necessary technical, financial and organisational capacity and are of good repute.

Licensed retailers must comply with a range of other standard conditions to be set out in the WIC regulations, including having codes of practice for customer complaints and debt recovery. The Government wants to ensure that buyers of properties serviced by private water utilities are aware of this before they buy. The bill amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation to require that information to be included in the planning certificates that must be provided to buyers with a contract of sale for land. That will allow the purchaser to find out who services a property and the applicable water and sewerage charges.

Customers will also be protected by a new standard customer contract that will apply to customers of schemes servicing 30 or more small retail customer premises. Major public water utilities will have a similar standard customer contract. The terms and conditions of the contract will be set out in the regulations and a draft will be released for public consultation next year. Registered retailers will be required to publish four years of current and future prices on their website and notify customers at least three months in advance of any increase in charges above inflation. Higher charges cannot legally be recovered if that requirement is not met. Licensees must also give IPART written notice of any changes to their contract charges and the reasons for the changes.

The Minister retains the ability to issue a monopoly supply declaration under section 51 of the current Act and to ask IPART to determine a pricing methodology if, for example, a retailer were considered to be overcharging. Finally, customers will be further protected by the increased powers that will be given to inspectors to investigate breaches of the Act as well as new offences and penalties for actions that pose risks to public health and safety. It is clear that the bill provides comprehensive protections for customers, especially small retail customers. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:31): Via video link: I support the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill 2021. The Government wishes to avoid regulatory duplication. With that in mind, I am pleased to note that the bill before the House amends the Water Industry Competition Act—or the WIC Act, as it is known—to focus on schemes and issues that are not already governed by other frameworks. The bill introduces the following objects to the Water Industry Competition Act: to protect public health and safety and the environment in connection with the water industry, including in the longer term; to protect the interests of consumers in the quality, reliability and price of water and sewerage services, including in the longer term; to facilitate the efficient, reliable and sustainable provision of water and sewerage services, having regard to financial, environmental and social considerations; to promote the sustainable use of resources in connection with the water industry; and to facilitate competition in the water industry with a view to encouraging innovation and improving efficiency. I note that the objects refer explicitly to longer-term considerations.

Experiences in other markets have shown the importance of having regard to short- and long-term implications in a balanced way. Outcomes that may appear attractive in the short term can impose inefficient costs in the longer term. Such an approach is inefficient and needs to be avoided. Taking a long-term view is therefore important to avoid adverse impacts on consumers, the broader community and the environment. The first of the objects complements the protections afforded by other legislation such as the Protection of the Environment Operations Act, or the POEO Act. The POEO Act has a number of objects, which are broadly expressed. One of those objects is to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment in New South Wales. While the environmental objective is cast in very wide terms, the objects included in the bill before the House are expressed in a more limited way, referring to environmental protection only in connection with the water industry. The third object refers to financial, environmental and social considerations. Given the nature of the water industry, this triple bottom line approach is important because failure to take an integrated approach from the outset can impose significant costs on many parties.

The bill also includes provisions designed to facilitate coordination across agencies and legislative frameworks. For example, where a proposed scheme will require an environmental protection licence, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] must invite submissions on the scheme as applications on the Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. Similarly, the Natural Resource Access Regulator must be invited to make submissions if the scheme will require an authorisation under the Water Management Act. This approach ensures consultation happens at an early stage in the scheme development, facilitating a more streamlined approach. Likewise the Water Industry Competition Act complements rather than duplicates provisions related to drinking water under the Public Health Act. For example, under section 25 (3) of the Public Health Act, the Chief Health Officer can exempt a person from the Public Health Act requirement to adhere to a quality assurance program if they are adequately regulated under other legislation such as the Water Industry Competition Act.

Importantly, refocusing the Water Industry Competition Act in line with a risk-based approach avoids duplication with other frameworks. For example, the bill focuses on schemes posing risks to public health and safety. Schemes involving only occupational risk, for example, will be excluded from the Water Industry

Competition Act under the regulation, as these schemes are more appropriately regulated under the Work Health and Safety Act. Another important reform is to narrow the scope of the current licensing regime and refocus the Act on utility-like schemes providing water and sewerage services for homes and small businesses and on large drinking water, water recycling and sewerage treatment facilities. Along with the other reforms proposed, streamlining the regulatory framework in the way that I have described will reduce unnecessary red tape and costs for licensees and regulators and minimise longer-term costs and impacts to the community. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I call the Minister to respond to this very exciting bill.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (12:36): In reply: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. I agree for a water bill, it is quite dry. I thank all honourable members for their contributions to debate on the Water Industry Competition Amendment Bill 2021. As honourable members have heard, the bill will strengthen and streamline the Water Industry Competition Act 2006. It will narrow the scope of the current licensing regime to cut unnecessary red tape and focus on regulating those schemes that pose the greatest risk to public health and consumers. Lower risk schemes will continue to be regulated under other, more appropriate frameworks. This will reduce unwarranted costs and remove barriers to the development of new low-risk schemes.

The bill also imposes stronger tests at the scheme approval stage to help ensure proposed schemes are financially viable and will not have adverse financial implications for small retail customers—by which we mean residential and small commercial customers. These reforms to licensing and scheme approvals will facilitate competition while providing a more robust process for ensuring that from the outset schemes comply with applicable national standards. The reforms have been welcomed by stakeholders, who support a streamlined approach to licensing while recognising the fundamentally important objectives of protecting public health and consumers. The bill also strengthens customer protection frameworks. Most importantly, it introduces more robust last-resort arrangements to ensure essential services continue to be provided should a private utility fail financially.

The bill before us will encourage competition in the supply of water and sewerage services to drive innovation and water recycling; protect public health by reducing regulatory gaps and increasing penalties; protect consumers with comprehensive last-resort provisions to ensure the continuity of essential services; boost climate-independent water supplies and urban greening by enabling private sector provision of recycled water schemes to service new homes and irrigate trees and green spaces; and help accelerate housing supply by providing alternative options for the provision of water and sewerage infrastructure to new developments. The bill makes important and long-overdue changes to streamline and strengthen the Water Industry Competition Act and to ensure that it effectively protects public health, consumers and the environment while removing unnecessary red tape. Again, I thank all members for their contributions to the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 13 October 2021.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:39): I lead for the Opposition on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. However, I will comment on the existing coastal management legislative framework. The object of the bill is to defer the date on which certain savings provisions cease to have effect from 1 December 2021 to 1 December 2023. The savings provisions provide that a coastal zone management plan in force under the Coastal Protection Act 1979 will continue to have effect until replaced by a coastal management program prepared and adopted under the Coastal Management Act 2016, and that certain coastal zone management plans prepared before the repeal of the former Act and certified after the repeal are taken to be coastal management programs prepared and adopted under the Coastal Management Act 2016.

Under the provisions of the current Act, existing coastal zone management plans will cease to have effect on 31 December 2021. Due to the current circumstances in this State, the majority of councils have not been able to update their coastal zone management plans to coastal management programs. Given that fact, it is appropriate

that the Government's response is to give councils more time. That is well and good, but there has also been a lack of support from this Government for councils to implement their coastal management programs. It started off well in 2016 when the member for Pittwater and then planning Minister said in this House that the Coastal Management Bill 2016, which we are amending today, was "one of the most innovative pieces of coastal planning legislation in the world". My goodness! I am sure that excited a bunch of people along the coast of New South Wales. Five years down the track, most of those councils have not been able to upgrade their existing coastal zone management plans to coastal management programs, which shows the lack of support from this Government for councils up and down the coast of New South Wales to protect coastal zones.

Members will remember the 2020 storms that hit the New South Wales coast that caused severe coastal erosion along the Manly shoreline. Tremendous erosion also occurred at The Entrance North on the Central Coast in my electorate. The erosion came very close to homes along Hutton Road, causing considerable distress to my constituents who, for better or worse, were granted approval to build houses on the barrier dune that separates the ocean from Tuggerah Lake. Having been granted that approval, they are under the not unreasonable impression that the State will do all it can to protect them. The member for Terrigal had severe coastal erosion in his electorate at Wamberal, which caused the homes to be undermined. We saw dramatic images of the exposed foundations of those homes, which left them teetering on the brink of collapse and causing a significant rescue and protection operation that was overseen by the emergency operations commander on the Central Coast. That program was undertaken with a high degree of professionalism, and it was very effective.

Before I get onto the downside of the protection works, it was done professionally and quickly. It certainly protected the residents along North Entrance Beach from further erosion and did the same thing along the Wamberal shoreline. The erosion protection works fundamentally consisted of a rock wall constructed at the toe of the erosion scarp along the beach. It effectively prevented further erosion taking place, protecting those homes. It does not look pretty, at the end of the day. I appreciate and acknowledge the concerns of my constituents and those of the member for Terrigal. The residents who live in those locations have an expectation that more will be done to effectively give back the beach that has been lost and to do more works as necessary.

I commend Central Coast Council for doing all they could, with the powers they have, to design some additional works at North Entrance to address the erosion that is currently occurring at the southern end of the erosion protection works constructed last year. Storm waves continue to lap around the edges of those erosion protection works and continue to erode the barrier dune, thus coming closer to houses at the end of Hutton Road and causing further distress to my constituents. The council have designed some additional protection works, which they have advised me they will be putting into place within the next month. That is good news, but there is much more to be done.

The council were fundamentally ordered to do those protection works by the local emergency operations controller, which involved the expenditure of moneys. We can point the finger at the Government for not properly supporting the councils to implement the programs and plans they are required to put in place to protect our coastal environment. The works that were done on the Central Coast cost a total of \$2,886,640 at two locations, Wamberal and North Entrance. People who live on the coast would be familiar with their history: Wamberal used to be in the old Gosford local government area; North Entrance used to be in the old Wyong local government area. They are now under one council, for better or for worse—but that is a whole other speech.

I am advised by the Minister that the old coastal zone management plan in place for Wamberal had been certified. Even though people who live in North Entrance are required to comply with the coastal zone management plan when they build a home, I am advised by the Minister that the plan had never been properly certified to allow council to apply for funding under the Coastal and Estuary Grant Program to undertake any works whatsoever. If someone wants to build a house in the coastal zone in North Entrance, in the old Wyong local government area, they have to follow council's coastal zone management plan. That is because it was never certified properly, so council is not eligible for any funding under the State Government's grant programs to do works. That meant the State Government funded half the works at Wamberal but zero works at The Entrance North, leaving council out of pocket for works that it had no say over at the end of the day. The local emergency operations controller is a State Government appointed functionary, who fulfils a statutory obligation under a separate Act of Parliament to direct protective works in response to emergencies in the area. That is the circumstance our local council found itself in, and it is not alone.

The shadow Minister for Local Government has revealed before that of the \$72 million funding pool under the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program between 2016-21, only \$38 million was expended. Councils up and down the coast made dozens of applications for funding, but a quarter of those were rejected, including a bunch of them made by Central Coast Council, for one reason or another. It is well and good to set up legislation and say it is the most innovative piece of coastal planning legislation in the world, but the Government has to fund it. As the superior level of government to local government authorities, which the Government expects to implement its

legislation, the Government should provide support and funding to protect the coastal zone. The Government has not done that.

Whilst Labor is not opposed to the extension of time to allow councils to get their act together, they need a bit of support from the Government to do that. The coastal zone is a tricky planning environment. A whole bunch of people like to live on the coast, and a whole bunch of people with deep pockets have been allowed to build their houses on the coast. The community needs planning certainty, support and funding from the State Government to do the work the community expects to protect the coastal environment and to give certainty to people who live within that coastal environment as well.

It is all well and good for the Government to pass fine legislation and make fine speeches, but the proof is in the pudding. The eating of this pudding has not been possible because the State Government has not provided the funding and support needed to do the grand things it has said is possible under the legislation. I encourage the Minister—who is not here—and the Government to do more to support coastal councils. It has been five years under this fantastic piece of legislation, and most councils have still not upgraded their plans. The Government is responsible for that. Most councils have applied for funding, and a whole bunch were knocked back. The Government is responsible for making sure that councils get their act together to provide the protection and certainty the coastal zone needs, both now and for future generations. Labor supports—does not oppose the bill. But we underline with a big red pen, because we are Labor, that the Government has failed to support its own legislation. We will talk more about that between now and March 2023.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:53): I am pleased to speak in support of the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. What we have heard so far from the Opposition is a bit disappointing. It is a bill they say they support, as the member for The Entrance espoused—

Mr David Mehan: We are not opposed.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: We can check the *Hansard*, but the member for The Entrance literally just said Labor supports the bill. It was very clear that was the terminology used by the member for The Entrance. What is most disappointing about his contribution is the way he has chosen to attack councils. On the one hand, he tells us that councils need support, they need funding, they need us as a government to get on board and back them. Then on the other hand he lists a litany of areas where he says councils have failed. I am not here to stick the boot into councils today and neither is the Minister. We want to work to protect and preserve our coastlines and make sure that people across our community have safe, accessible, healthy waterways and coasts, and protected zones in that area.

The member for The Entrance may choose to say that Labor supports the bill, but then he used his speech to attack a piece of legislation that is giving everything it can to our local councils and our local communities to ensure coastal management protection. In particular, the transition between the coastal zone management plans to the coastal management programs has had over \$8 million in funding from this Government alone. So, whatever we have heard from those opposite today, we can agree with one thing—they should support the legislation, and we are grateful. But the warm lettuce attacks that they say are coming or that have been thrown this morning are very weak. I will go through them and tell members why.

As we have already heard from the Minister, the bill will make important amendments to the Coastal Management Act 2016 that will ensure that our councils have sufficient time to complete their transition to the new coastal management framework. That is time that this Government is giving to councils. The new framework was a reform of this Government resulting from extensive consultation and collaboration between the State Government and local councils along the coast as well as coastal experts and coastal communities.

The Government recognises the importance and social value of our State's littoral economy and lifestyle. We are committed to supporting resilient communities living on our coast, now and into the future. The Government designed the new coastal management framework to create a system that is simpler and more effective. It replaces and improves what was an outdated and complex web of laws that previously governed coastal management. Moreover, these reforms have created a more strategic framework to enable us to resolve a number of issues that arose in historical decisions and to anticipate and prepare for future challenges and decisions in a planned, coordinated and strategic way.

Unlike the member for The Entrance, I think that our local councils are the custodians of our coast, in partnership with the communities that they represent. They are central to the coastal management framework that we have in place. This Government is committed to ensuring better management of our coastal environments for the wellbeing and benefit of all people of New South Wales. The reforms that the Government introduced in 2016 were comprehensive and had a significant scale. They necessitated provisions to enable this timely transition. That is why the Coastal Management Act 2016 was designed—in order to provide the time for councils to transition

from coastal zone management plans under the former arrangements to the new coastal management programs under the new framework.

Councils have faced unprecedented challenges in recent times. I should not have to remind people in this place about this once-in-100-year pandemic and the once-in-a-generation or once-in-50-year natural disasters that have peppered our coastlines with droughts, with floods and with bushfires. Those events have significantly impacted the ability of many councils to complete this transition. Many coastal councils have made considerable progress in spite of the challenges. This amending bill provides a welcome and necessary extension in completing the transition process. In my own community, Mosman Municipal Council and North Sydney Council have been contributing partners to the development of the coastal management program for the Greater Sydney Harbour.

Many people probably do not realise that the catchments for Sydney Harbour are not just in my own backyard but extend broadly across Sydney. They can go all the way to Bankstown, for instance. Any pesticides or particulate matter on our roads or in our soils actually goes through our waterways to Sydney Harbour, the jewel of Sydney. We all need to work together to preserve and protect it, but that is why it is so complex. So many players are involved in ensuring preservation and protection, so we need to give them the capacity and the opportunity to work together to deliver the outcomes.

The Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program is a promising example of progress. For the first time, over 20 local councils and State agencies are working together to prepare a program to manage what is a complex coastal and estuarine environment, with many interested stakeholders. This is crucial, forward-thinking planning, which will ensure the best outcome for our iconic Sydney Harbour. However, it is going to take considerable time to prepare a program of this nature. The program is currently at the second stage of the five-stage coastal management program development and implementation framework. I am pleased to note that the New South Wales Government has provided its support with a planning grant of about \$250,000 to assist the group in improving and strengthening the Sydney Harbour coastal environment.

In other local government areas around the harbour, circumstances largely beyond the control of councils have led those councils to a position where they are now unlikely to be ready to replace their existing coastal zone management plans with a certified coastal management program by 31 December 2021. The implications of that present significant risks to many of our councils. For example, some councils will be limited in their ability to seek grant funding or to implement the actions and works in their existing certified coastal zone management plans—something the member for The Entrance said would be a terrible shame to see happen—and their pathways for planning assessments of certain coastal protection and emergency works under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 may also be impacted. So it is obvious why we need the proposed legislation.

While the work to develop the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program progresses, the amendment will allow the continued implementation of plans in neighbouring electorates, such as the Lane Cove River Coastal Zone Management Plan. This plan includes objectives and actions to improve water quality within the Lane Cove River and by extension Sydney Harbour as well as strategies to plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change in the estuary. That also applies to the Parramatta River Coastal Zone Management Plan, which was prepared by eight councils along the Parramatta River foreshore. COVID showed us the importance to communities of access to open space, foreshores and high-quality healthy estuarial environments. Would it not be great to see more recreation, more people swim and fish and play along Parramatta River? The Parramatta River Coastal Zone Management Plan provides for that with coordinated planning and management of the estuary. It is vital that this work continues until such time that the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program is ready for certification implementation.

These plans recognise and value the previous and ongoing contributions from stakeholders, including the Parramatta River Catchment Group and the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, through the continued implementation of coastal zone management plans while coastal management programs remain under development through the new coastal management framework. By continuing these plans and ensuring their eligibility to apply for funding support, we can continue the good work of these communities and stakeholder groups and help manage the physical and environmental assets of our coastal zones.

As I have previously mentioned, councils are the local managers of our coastal environments, but they are also at the heart of local responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, to natural disasters such as bushfires, coastal erosions and floods. They play an important role in contributing local perspectives to our broader statewide strategic issues. For those reasons, it is important that we continue to support councils through this important transitional process by supporting the bill. The bill recognises that a two-year extension of the transition time frame under the Act is not a failing of the participants through the original policy intent—particularly councils, as the member for The Entrance inferred—but rather a practical and pragmatic response to unprecedented events and ensures that improvements in coastal management arrangements that were implemented by this Government in 2016 are properly and fully delivered with the support of councils along the New South Wales coast.

Providing our councils with additional time to transition to the new framework will not only encourage and support coastal councils to maintain the good progress to date but also ensure that those councils will continue to have access to critical sources of grant funding that can help them better manage the coast for the benefit of the local community. The bill recognises and responds to the enormous pressure that our local councils have faced during recent times and who continue to maintain the local economy and our natural environment alongside the challenges of the pandemic and natural disasters. The bill also ensures that the benefits of this Government's nation-leading environmental reforms are being realised for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:03): I contribute to debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021 and endorse the words spoken by the member for The Entrance. The member was seriously misrepresented by the member for North Shore. The Opposition supports local councils having the resources they need to get the job done. To provide a bit of history, I was first elected to Parliament in 2007, just before the *Pasha Bulker* storm disaster. At that time, in my community, at a place called Cabbage Tree Harbour, a number of houses—I think it was five or six—were in danger of falling into the ocean. Perhaps the member for North Shore does not have to put up with that all the time. In the electorates of Terrigal and The Entrance and my own electorate of Wyong, every time there is an east coast low people's houses are at risk of tumbling into the ocean. For us this is not a theoretical problem about recreation, swimming and nice things. It is about actually protecting people's property and ensuring we are able to maintain a proper coastal environment. We are acutely aware of all the issues contained here.

Labor supports the extension of the time limit for these new plans to be completed. I note the coastal zone management plan for Gosford on the Central Coast had been approved, but it is being reviewed again and will need that extra time. In my part of the world, the Wyong plan has, for some reason, never been approved. It was first written in 2011, so this is not a new thing for us in the northern part of the Central Coast. I have in my hand a copy of the *Coastal Zone Management Plan for the Wyong Coastline*. It was written by consultants in 2011. They used very similar language and so on to the Gosford plan but, for reasons I will go into, this plan has been submitted four times for certification and that certification has not happened. On 3 February 2021 the then administrator, Mr Dick Persson, announced he would write to the Premier and seek her assistance to obtain more funding. In his contribution the member for The Entrance alluded to the fact that the works at Wamberal were able to be funded but the works at The Entrance North were not eligible, as the plan had not been certified. Mr Persson stated:

It's important to note, that while the Coastal Zone Management Plan that covers The Entrance North was never certified, it was in fact submitted to the NSW Government for certification four times between 2011 and 2018.

It was not that council had not done the work; it was that, for some reason, it could not get approval. I am thinking that each time it came back council did the work it was asked to do and resubmitted the plan, only for it not to be approved. We got to the storm event in 2021 and it still had not been approved. When council went to apply for the funding to assist it with that money, it was told it was not eligible. It is a serious concern that the original plan still has not been approved, let alone worrying about the new iteration of the plan under the new name. I, for one, would like to know why.

Between my electorate and that of the member for The Entrance we have got five hot-spot precincts. The member for The Entrance has the abatements of Blue Bay, Toowoan Bay and The Entrance North Beach in his electorate. I have the abatements of Hargraves Beach and Cabbage Tree Harbour in my electorate. We have known about those for a very long time; this problem is not new. With every storm event things get worse. With Cabbage Tree Harbour, for example, the New South Wales Labor Government at the time funded a rock wall that was put in and has done the job. However, the rock wall, which was completed after we lost government, does not go the full length of Cabbage Tree Harbour. We now have a situation where the building on Crown land is owned by a fishing club but used by Marine Rescue Norah Head, which is one of only two ocean-located marine rescue units on the coast, the other being at Terrigal. In the time since that 2007 storm the erosion of the bank is now within one metre of the concrete pad. Every time there is a major storm, the building has to be evacuated and structurally examined because it is literally about to fall into the ocean.

I have written to the Crown lands Minister, the emergency services Minister and the council. They all point the finger at each other. They say that the building is owned privately or that it is on Crown land or that the council does not manage it. Everyone has a reason not to help. Meanwhile, Marine Rescue NSW is perched precariously on the edge of the embankment. There are photographs of each section as it has collapsed. Each time it happens letters are written and Scott Levi, on the local radio station, goes in to bat for the Marine Rescue people. Each time we get the answer, "It's not our problem."

It is fine to have great plans and platitudes but it is almost impossible to get anything done, even when a Marine Rescue unit is at risk of losing its building. This is an important issue. It should not simply be about

renaming a plan. We have gone from the coastal zone management plan to the coastal management plan. Things are changed around and tweaked around the edges but we are not addressing the problems. Councils do not have the resources to do the work that needs to be done. I agree that the Government provides grant programs and that the council should apply for them to make sure the work gets done. I am not uncritical of council's responsibility in that regard.

However, the plan submitted by council—not once, not twice, not three times but four times—has not been certified. I have undertaken research and cannot find out why. Council shrugs its shoulders; it does not know why the plan is not being certified. Its plan is written in almost the same terms as the Gosford plan, so the issue is not the language or the consultants. Nine supporting documents accompany the plan to underpin the science that has been used. However, the plan has not been certified, so the council cannot apply for funding. There is an issue at The Entrance North and if an issue arises at Cabbage Tree Harbour the council cannot get any money to rectify because its plan is not certified. I ask the Minister to look at what is wrong with the plan. Why does it keep getting knocked back? What is the council missing? What does it need to do to get the plan over the line? In 2018 the new Central Coast Council resubmitted the plan and it went out to public consultation. But here we are in 2021 and still it has not been certified. So there is an issue that we must address.

The Opposition supports extending the period for councils to complete their plan. But we call on the Government to take meaningful action to address coastal erosion. It is not good enough that every time there is a storm we have a big media blow-up, the community holds meetings and committees are set up, only for the issue to dissipate slowly until the next storm. We had storms in 2007 and 2015 and again in 2021, but the problem is not getting fixed. It seems to roll on and on and gets put in the too-hard basket. That is not good enough. We are not doing our communities justice by changing the names of the plans and requiring plans to be recertified when the crux of the issue, the management of the coastline, is not being addressed.

Debate interrupted.

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

Announcements

DEATH OF SIR DAVID AMESS, MP

The SPEAKER: It is with great sadness that I draw to the attention of the House the death on 15 October of Sir David Amess. Sir David was the member for Southend West in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom and had served as a member of the House of Commons from 1983 until his untimely death. I know all members will join with me in expressing to his wife, Julia, and his five children our sympathies on Sir David's tragic passing. The President and I will send a letter of condolence to the United Kingdom Parliament on behalf of our Houses. Given the close association between our parliaments I ask members to stand for a moment as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

Question Time

NORTHERN BEACHES TUNNEL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:17): My question is directed to the Premier. Over the next two decades Parramatta's population is set to increase by 204,000, Camden's by 227,000, Liverpool's by 229,000 and Blacktown's by 264,000 people. Meanwhile the population of the northern beaches will grow by just 31,000 people. Given almost none of Sydney's population growth is in the northern beaches, why will the Premier not abandon the \$10 billion northern beaches tunnel?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:18): Because on this side of the House we do not discriminate against communities for political purposes. The Leader of the Opposition is correct: Western Sydney, north-western Sydney and south-western Sydney are growing at rapid rates. That is a great thing. On this side of the House we believe in investing in the infrastructure that makes a difference to people's lives. We all remember former Premier Bob Carr saying, "Sydney is full." What was that an excuse for?

Mr Stuart Ayres: Nothing in western Sydney; that is what it was an excuse for.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Nothing in western Sydney, nothing in north-western Sydney, nothing in south-western Sydney and no infrastructure investment in the bush. When we came to office we inherited a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog across the State. We turned that around. The old Labor budgets had vanity surpluses, which did not make the most of what they had. There were deficits at certain points in time, but when there were surpluses there was not any infrastructure investment. They said to the people of north-west Sydney that they would not invest there because, as Kevin Rudd said, "There are no votes in it for us there." When this

Government was elected, it built the Sydney Metro Northwest, which should have been built when the Treasurer and I were at school out that way. I remember the day that Labor announced—probably for the eighteenth time—that it would make that investment.

I remember the excitement in the schoolyard, and the disappointment that came later. The joy those children now feel is because we have built the Sydney Metro Northwest. We have built the infrastructure that should have been built as the north-west grew. If you look right across the board at the investment in schools, health and public transport across the State, it is the infrastructure capital of the world. We are leading the world. Not just other States but delegations from all around the world are looking to us for leadership when it comes to infrastructure investment.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Recycling assets.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As the Minister says, they look at the asset recycling regime that was condemned by those opposite. We know that it has unlocked opportunity and prosperity for the people of our State. That means more schools. We know that Labor closed 90 schools. The Opposition has asked questions about infrastructure, and I say past performance is the best indicator of future performance. They closed 90 schools across the State when they were in office, while we have upgraded and built 170 schools and have 200 new and upgraded schools in the pipeline. The Government has built hospitals from the east to the west and the north to the south. Everywhere you go around our great State, you will see construction. Whilst that is inconvenient and politically challenging, we do it because it is right.

We do it because it provides opportunities for our kids to have the best education system and it ensures that when people are sick they have the best access to health services across the State. Whilst the Opposition was a stopgap—stopping projects every single day while they were in office—we completed projects in the past and have a pipeline of projects planned into the future. We will not discriminate based on where you live. We will not play class warfare. We will not discriminate based on whether you vote for the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, The Nationals, or even The Greens. We will invest record amounts right across the board. We have done that since coming to office and will continue to do that during our time in government. At this rate we will be here until the 2050s and Minister Hazzard will be here dealing with the next pandemic.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Can I have a Zimmer frame?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You can have whatever you want, Brad. He probably needs one now.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I need one now.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes, he needs one now. Right across the board—south-west, north-west, everywhere you go—you will continue to see construction under this Government. That will occur because the Liberals and The Nationals manage money well. Last year during the pandemic we saw other jurisdictions pull back on their infrastructure investment, but we accelerated our infrastructure investment. You will continue to see that infrastructure investment in social housing, affordable housing, road, rail and public transport whether you are in the bush, western Sydney, southern Sydney or northern Sydney, because we are able to do it. I do not believe that when Labor was in government it did not want to do it, but it could not do it because it did not make the sacrifices and hard decisions that the Government has made to unlock capital to invest in better infrastructure.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:23): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government is working to protect women and children who are escaping domestic and family violence?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): I thank the member for her question. I commend her specifically in relation to her advocacy on this very important issue. Every day a hidden and sickening tragedy is playing out in homes across our nation: the tragedy of domestic and family violence. In homes that should be havens of safety and shelter, too many women and children encounter violence, terror and despair. On average across Australia, one woman is killed by her current or former partner every nine days. Across our State police respond to more than 140,000 domestic and family violence incidents every year. Those are the cases that we know of; there is no doubt that many more across our State go unreported each day.

The people of New South Wales are caring and compassionate. In so many cases of domestic and family violence, survivors find solace and support from families, friends and amazing community organisations. But there are voices crying out with no-one to hear; too many voices and so much pain. That is why the Government has announced the largest ever investment in the history of the State to address domestic and family violence. At our announcement this morning we were joined by Wendy, a domestic violence survivor whose bravery and advocacy is so powerful. Her story shows that the investment the Government has made today will really make a

difference. Wendy told us how she would wake up every day in a home environment that simply was not safe, but she had nowhere safe to go. In those circumstances, Wendy said, "You lose your independence. Emotionally and mentally, you become a battered human being."

The investment the Government announced today will help ensure survivors of domestic and family violence have somewhere to go, somewhere safe and somewhere secure, with the support they need to reclaim their lives. The \$484 million in additional funding will add hundreds more social and affordable housing places. It will almost double the number of domestic and family violence refuges. But the funding will not just provide shelter; it will also provide the social support that is critical to helping domestic and family violence survivors reclaim control of their lives. That means refuges will be centred around access to services, including counselling, legal assistance, education and employment support. As well as that, survivors need facilities like meeting rooms, audiovisual equipment for court appearances, communal kitchens and playgrounds.

The recent Women's Safety Summit made clear that children and young people need to be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right and that they should have special support to help them recover from the trauma of violence. The Government's announcement today responds directly to that need by providing targeted support to up to 3,200 children and young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. I thank the Attorney General, the Treasurer and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women for their dedication and advocacy in supporting survivors of domestic and family violence. I also thank Annabelle Daniel from Domestic Violence NSW and all of the community advocates, as well as the frontline workers whose efforts every day support those in dangerous and violent domestic situations. Above all, I acknowledge the many thousands of survivors. Today is a sad day, as we confront the harrowing reality of domestic and family violence. But it is a good day too because we know that the funding the Government announced today will make an important difference right across the State.

The Government will keep listening and, where it can do more, it will do more. As Wendy said this morning, "Surviving domestic and family violence is not just about getting out of a dangerous situation; it is what you are surrounded with afterwards." That is why members on this side of the House believe that the funding the Government announced today will change lives. By providing shelter and security, it will offer survivors a safe place to go and the independence to live or, as Wendy put it, "freedom". The announcement today was substantive; it was a significant investment from the State. I thank the Treasurer for finding close to half a billion dollars to make this investment. We do not measure success in the size of dollars; we measure success in the support that we can provide people right across the State. I know that today's announcement of close to half a billion dollars will make a real difference for women, children and survivors of domestic and family violence across New South Wales.

PLANNING AND WESTERN SYDNEY

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:28): I direct my question to the Premier. He just said, "The population of western Sydney is booming and that is a great thing." There will be more growth in Blacktown, Liverpool, Camden, Parramatta, Penrith, Canterbury, Cumberland and Campbelltown than the rest of New South Wales combined. Is that a fair planning policy?

Mr Stuart Ayres: That is why there are two metro rail lines, an airport, roads, five hospitals.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:29): Labor has not learnt. It is interesting that with the new regime, the old Labor has come back. I enjoyed the Jodi Labor. At least there was some action. At least there was some vision. There were some new policy ideas. What we see is that the old members of the Labor Party have come back to haunt the new regime. I expected more from the youthful talent that has arrived in the shadow Cabinet but, alas, we are back to the past, with a lack of understanding of how communities grow. Communities grow because governments invest in infrastructure. Communities grind to a halt when infrastructure is not built. I note the record investment on this side of the House in schools across the board, particularly in western Sydney, which has seen 200 new and upgraded schools across the State. I also note, as the jobs Minister has said, our public transport investment—Sydney Metro West, a new airport, a new rail line, visionary infrastructure ahead of its time. In Victoria, for example, only now are they putting in public transport connections to Melbourne Airport. What are we doing? We are building the infrastructure as the State develops. And by doing that, we build confidence.

People want to live where they have access to the best schools, the best public transport, the best health care. The people of New South Wales are speaking with their feet by moving to western Sydney because the people of western Sydney know that is where the infrastructure investment is going. One should not precede the other. What we are seeing is if you build it, they will come. That is exactly what is happening in western Sydney. People would not want to live in western Sydney if there were not the schools, the hospitals and the public transport. They have confidence in this Government to be able to build public transport and the essential services

that allow communities across the board to thrive. The aspirational people of western Sydney are backing in the Liberals and The Nationals because they know they do not want a government that is going back to the old Labor days. What we have seen from those opposite over the past 116 or 117 days is no policies—just extending some of our policies—and no plan to provide opportunity and prosperity to people across the board, particularly in western Sydney.

Members on this side of the House have seen sustained and continued investment to build public transport infrastructure so that people can get home to their families faster and the next generation of transformative infrastructure, a second airport—which has been talked about for decades and decades and decades. This Government is getting on with the job of providing that infrastructure investment. Labor members like to talk about social and affordable housing. They like to talk about all those things but they can never, ever deliver because they oppose the means of investing. They play politics with people. The people of western Sydney will see right through it and we will remind them of it every single day. We are going to run on our record, on our vision and on the energy of what we are going to deliver for this State, not just for the people of today but for generations to come. That is the difference between those who want to halt growth and investment and say that Sydney is full. Members on this side of the House will continue to invest in transformative infrastructure to change and improve people's lives across the State.

The Government is not going to discriminate. We do not care what your postcode is. Whether you live in the bush, western Sydney, south Sydney, North Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong, under this Government you will get the best investment we can make, across the board. Our track record demonstrates it. Labor's track record forced them to close schools and hospitals. Our track record has invested more in health, education and public transport across the board—\$108 billion over the next four years. That also drives economic growth and jobs growth and ensures greater opportunity and prosperity not just for us but for generations to come.

REGIONAL DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:34): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support victim-survivors of domestic and family violence in regional New South Wales?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (14:34): I thank the member for her question. I also thank the member for her advocacy on this very important issue. I begin by saying thank you to all those across New South Wales, especially those in regional New South Wales, who deal with individuals and their families in the very difficult situation of domestic and family violence, remembering that often children are involved. On behalf of all members in this place, I sincerely say thank you for the incredible work you do.

There is no doubt that domestic and family violence is an issue that goes beyond politics. It is a complex area that we continue to grapple with at all levels of government and society. The challenge presented by domestic and family violence in regional communities is significant. Isolation and geography make finding the appropriate support very challenging and, in some cases, even impossible. If a victim-survivor makes the difficult decision to come forward, the small social circles in remote towns where everyone knows everyone mean that it is highly likely that the police, health workers and other support workers will know both the offender and the victim. There are no easy answers and there are no simple solutions. Today's announcement will not fix the whole problem, but it is an enormous step forward for the thousands of women and children who escape domestic and family violence every year. Today's investment of \$483 million is the single biggest investment in tackling domestic and family violence in the State's history. I acknowledge the tireless work on this critical issue of my colleague in the other place the Deputy Leader of The Nationals and Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor.

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children. The funding will create an extra 75 women's refuges that will support women and children escaping domestic and family violence and offer real pathways to safety and stability for women and children in desperate situations. In addition, it will provide approximately 200 sustainable social and affordable housing dwellings for women experiencing domestic and family violence. Even if a woman receives support in an emergency context, often the lack of viable housing means that she has to go home to the perpetrator of that violence. Today's announcement will help to ensure that when a victim-survivor makes the decision to leave a violent home, there is a secure and supportive environment waiting for them. That is another way that this Government is investing to create a safer and stronger regional New South Wales.

On the weekend the Liberal-Nationals Government announced further funding to fast-track more than 1,400 new social homes, many of which will be in regional New South Wales. They will be in places like

Coffs Harbour and Wagga Wagga. While this is great news for the construction industry, it is even better news for those who are in vulnerable situations—those vulnerable individuals and families across the State. It does not stop there. Last week the Premier and I also announced a regional investment stimulus fund—\$200 million to go into the bush at a time when our regional communities are looking for hope and looking forward to Christmas once again shared with family and friends. The announcement will create infrastructure and support events like country shows in regional communities. It will create thousands of jobs across the State. Those events will also create opportunities for investors to invest in regional New South Wales.

The Government has also made an enormous boost to mental health services. The challenges of COVID, off the back of droughts, fires and floods, have been tough on people's physical and mental health in regional areas. It has put a strain on people's jobs and relationships. I acknowledge those who have been in this situation and the support that is being provided to them. The New South Wales Government will continue to provide that support. Today's announcement of record funding is another step forward in addressing these important issues.

WESTERN SYDNEY AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:39): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier explain why western Sydney residents are forced to wait 50 per cent longer to access an ambulance compared to those in the inner city and east?

Mr Brad Hazzard: That is actually not true.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:39): As the health Minister just said, that is not true. Once again, we are seeing a game from the Labor Party that will not work. It is a game that will fail because we will run on our track record. Look at what this Government has done. Who is going to believe a shadow health Minister who did not even know what the health budget was when he was running as shadow Treasurer at the last election?

Mr Ryan Park: How's icare going, Dom?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Track record, mate. Track record.

Mr Ryan Park: Past performance, future performance.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Here we go. It has taken a while; they are coming. They cannot resist. I have been waiting for this. Let us look at the investments, as the health Minister has pointed out. Bankstown superstation commenced operation on 12 April 2017. Blacktown superstation commenced operation on 28 June 2017 and Liverpool superstation on 16 August 2017. Those were all built under this Government. The majority of those are all based in western Sydney. Northmead superstation opened on 13 December 2017. Penrith superstation opened on 15 November 2017. Cecil Hills Paramedic Response Point—

Mr Ryan Park: There's a shortage of paramedics. That's the point.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The significant investment we have made—as Gerard Hayes from the Health Services Union [HSU] knows—when it comes to paramedics has been supported every step of the way by the union. He is now voting for the Liberals and The Nationals. The Holroyd Paramedic Response Point commenced on 11 November 2020. The Kellyville Paramedic Response Point, up in the north-west—completely neglected by Labor—opened on 26 June 2019. Leppington Paramedic Response Point commenced operations on 28 November 2018 and Quakers Hill Paramedic Response Point opened on 28 June 2017. Not only that, to meet that unprecedented demand NSW Ambulance increased its workforce to ensure the wellbeing of communities right across the State. That has included surging capacity in communities in south-western and western Sydney, who have been specifically impacted by the Delta outbreak.

The reality is we put the services and support where the demand is. We provided additional funding through Treasury to the health team to enhance resources and improve operational capacity. It was pleasing today to see the health Minister say that we are bringing elective surgery forward. We are able to do that while other jurisdictions are not because we are able to tailor our health response to where the need and demand is. It is a challenging time for us to do that because there will be health issues that come forward as we move through this pandemic, whether that is hospital waiting times or ambulance response times. The median response time for a priority 1A case for NSW Ambulance—the highest priority emergencies, such as cardiac arrest, not breathing et cetera—was 8.18 minutes. That is well within the target. That could only occur because of the substantial investment the Government has made in our health system, wherever you live. Labor wants to talk about western Sydney, but on this side of the House we will govern for everyone, whether it is western Sydney or anywhere else in the State.

Whilst there will be health challenges that arise as we move through the pandemic, open up our State and unlock the opportunity for businesses and workers to get back into jobs, we are already seeing dividends from the significant investments that we have made in our health system. I thank the health Minister, everybody at NSW Health and our fantastic ambulance teams, who are on the front line every day ensuring that we keep people safe. We can do that at a time when there has been more demand on our health system than at any time in the past 100 years. Success for us would be keeping everybody safe during this period and ensuring we get elective surgery and response times where they should be. I believe the investments we have made in the past in relation to the New South Wales health system will stand us in good stead to deal with other challenges that come our way.

I say to the other States as they also move through this difficult time that if there is any support we can provide here in New South Wales, we will provide it. We want to ensure that all of Australia comes through. We know there will be different challenges in different States at different times, and we are here to help. We want to make sure the health care of the people of New South Wales is front and centre, and we are doing that. But if our health system, which we have invested record amounts in since we have come to office, is able to support others in other States—particularly Labor States—we will do it.

COVID-19 AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:44): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House how the Perrottet-Toole Coalition Government's policies will help us recover and build the economy of the future?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:45): I thank the member for Oatley, who is the best member that Oatley has ever seen. In fact, he is probably one of the best community champions the Parliament has ever seen. I know the member for Oatley can hear the future calling, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who is hanging up on Jodi Mackay. Unlike those opposite, we have a plan to build a strong economic recovery and a better, more prosperous future for everyone in the State. We are doing that off the back of good policies that kept us safe and got us through the pandemic. No-one deserves more credit for that than the current Premier, whose JobSaver scheme saved over 100,000 jobs in New South Wales. That is the Premier's legacy: keeping us safe and getting us through to the other side.

But we need to build on that, and that is where our economic recovery plan comes in. We want to bounce back better after the pandemic and build a better and more prosperous future. That is exactly why the Government has recently announced things that will stimulate the economy. I note the member for Oxley and acknowledge her contribution in announcing a new package of 7,400 social housing dwellings that will be built. Millions of dollars are going to where it is most needed: helping the vulnerable, reducing our social housing waiting list and, at the same time, creating jobs and building our economy. It is exciting stuff.

It is about supporting our small businesses and standing behind them as they buy inventory so they can throw their doors open and start trading for Christmas and beyond. It is about supporting our small businesses by cutting payroll tax by 50 per cent and continuing that concession to get them back to business, get people back to work and grow our economy. It does not stop there. Today we announced a historic investment in domestic violence services. It is the biggest investment the State has seen to address the issue of domestic and family violence. It will almost double the number of women's refuges in New South Wales. That is exactly what governments should be doing: supporting everyone, making sure we leave no-one behind and, particularly, supporting the most vulnerable.

It is not just about what we are doing to build a stronger future and get us out of this pandemic; it is also about building for the future. The Government is building a record infrastructure pipeline, which is the envy of the country and is up there as the envy of the world. We are building the schools, roads and hospitals that will set the State up for a brighter, better future. We are tackling the issues of our time. We are tackling climate change in a way that will grow our economy, create jobs and drive investment into New South Wales. Our energy infrastructure road map will ensure that New South Wales families and businesses have access to the cheapest, cleanest and most reliable forms of energy. That will lead to the next industrial revolution. It will turbocharge our manufacturing sector and support energy-intensive industries to give them a competitive advantage in a fast-changing global economy. That is what Coalition governments do. The Liberals and The Nationals work together to build a more prosperous future for everyone.

It is not just our energy and infrastructure road map. We have recently announced a hydrogen strategy for the State to futureproof the regions and ensure that as old industries are diminished, new industries flourish and thrive. We take advantage of those opportunities. We want to support existing industries and workers, but we also want to prepare for new opportunities that are emerging in the Hunter and the Illawarra. We can grab those new opportunities with both hands, safeguarding those communities, future-proofing those jobs and setting us up for a brighter, cleaner and more prosperous future. That is what good government is about: safeguarding the people

in difficult times. By having a strong financial position, we were able to implement JobSaver, safeguard jobs and protect our communities. We were able to build on that so that the State can bounce back better by investing stimulus dollars where most needed: supporting the vulnerable people, supporting small business, supporting the growth of our economy. But it is also about planning for the future. It is about building a better future. [*Extension of time*]

It is not just plans; they are backed in by concrete policies. It is a stark contrast to the policy-free zone on the opposite side of the House. In fact, we are at day 120 since the Leader of the Opposition announced that he would have a 100-day plan to build a better State, and we have seen nothing. We have heard the talk about his haircut, we have seen the cancellation of speeding fines, and that is it. The Leader of the Opposition had a plan to get the top job, but he had no plan once he got there.

While the Government has been planning for the future, the Leader of the Opposition is still focused on settling yesterday's scores. That is right: When Jodi McKay called the Leader of the Opposition to tell him that she was leaving Parliament, he hung up on her. The member for Strathfield is a former Leader of the Opposition, a fearless corruption fighter, a local champion and the overwhelming members' choice to be the leader of the Labor Party. How was she treated by the Leader of the Opposition? He slammed down the phone on her. The people of Strathfield know that if the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to slam down the phone on their elected representative, he is prepared to slam down the phone on them. Last week we saw the Leader of the Opposition rushing to congratulate the new Premier. He was falling over the lectern to congratulate and throw bouquets at the new Premier, just like he did with the previous Premier. Then a few days later, he was slamming down the phone on the former Leader of the Opposition. If that is how he is prepared to treat his colleagues, that is exactly how he is prepared to treat the public. No policies, no plans, no idea—it is the same old Labor.

STATE LOTTERIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:52): My question is directed to the Premier. Since the Government promised no more privatisations before the last election, it has spent over \$1.4 million on a scoping study into privatising the State's lotteries tax revenue. Is the Premier still planning on privatising this revenue stream?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:52): We have not made any decisions, but I will tell the member for Summer Hill what we will do: We will keep making decisions that are in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. It took Labor members the fourth question of the day to get to the point I had raised at the start of question time, which is that they are a handbrake on the New South Wales Government actually delivering for the people of the State.

The member for Summer Hill opposed WestConnex. Now she loves it; she is the number one toll user in Summer Hill. Labor opposed the project at every step of the way. During construction, Labor members were out in the community with placards, telling everybody the world would come to an end when WestConnex was built. WestConnex is now opening up opportunity and prosperity for families in western Sydney. Parramatta Road, which the member for Summer Hill uses, is flowing faster and she is getting home faster. She loves the WestConnex. But it would not happen under Labor because they do not believe in recycling assets. We are not turning our back on our approach because where there is an opportunity that will drive dividends for the people of the State, we will take those decisions.

When Labor was in government, it decided to privatise all the prisons. Even the prisoners were not safe under Labor. Labor also privatised the generators. It is not an ideological battle; it is about doing what is right. Under Labor no infrastructure was built and the people of Summer Hill were worse off. Under this Government the State is in a stronger financial position and its net worth growing to a quarter of a trillion dollars. The asset base of the State has grown substantially under the Liberal-Nationals Government, swapping old assets for new assets, which will drive investment for the people of New South Wales. That is why wherever you look in New South Wales, there is record infrastructure. The State would not have the schools, hospitals, the public transport system but for the financial decisions that the Government has made. Those decisions were not made under Labor. The questions asked in question time today and over the course of this new arrangement—as long as it lasts—show that it is a return to the old Labor days.

The SPEAKER: Government members will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We know what the people of New South Wales think about the old Labor way of doing things: They resoundingly voted Labor out of office in 2011. The people of New South Wales will back a government that puts them first, stands up for them no matter where they live and make the tough financial decisions to get the economy moving and build infrastructure. We will not be the party of protest. We will be the government of progress that takes the State forward and the Labor Party should not stand in our way. I know it

will; the Labor Party will throw scare campaign after scare campaign. That is what Labor has done in the past. It has failed every single time, and it is not going to work again.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:56): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Will the Attorney General update the House on today's landmark investment of \$484.3 million to support women and children fleeing domestic violence?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (14:56): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. From my visit up there in recent times, I have seen what a fearless advocate she is for domestic and family violence survivors and frontline services in her electorate. Today's announcement is both sad and happy. It is sad because it has to be made because of the endemic problem of domestic and family violence in New South Wales and, indeed, across Australia. That is not unique to the pandemic, but it has certainly been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The message we have been giving to our citizens at times of lockdown has been stay home to stay safe, but home is often the most dangerous place for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. It is where they have been trapped with their perpetrators watching what they do on the internet, monitoring the telephone calls that they make, all while they have been unable to go out to work or to social activities with friends and family, cut off from loved ones and from essential services.

We know it is not just at times of pandemic that we have high levels of domestic and family violence here in New South Wales and Australia. As the Premier said, every year police respond to over 140,000 incidents of domestic and family violence. On average in Australia, once every nine days a woman is killed by a current or former intimate partner, who is meant to be protecting that woman. That is the sadness that tinges today's announcement. But the good part of the announcement is that there is also a beacon of hope: There is now a record landmark investment by the Government in domestic and family violence frontline services. It is an investment in not just bricks and mortar but also the wraparound services that are so essential for domestic and family violence victim-survivors.

Today's announcement, which totals around \$484 million, has three components. The biggest component is over \$426 million to almost double the number of women's refuges in New South Wales. Around 75 extra women's refuges will be built in New South Wales on a core-and-cluster model. Last year I was at the opening of the core-and-cluster model up in Orange that is run by Housing Plus, a community housing provider. In the model, a number of self-contained individual units are surrounded by a core where essential services such as on-site counsellors, case workers, legal advisers, educators are provided. There even is audiovisual equipment so that a complainant does not have to go to court and face her alleged perpetrator when giving evidence to seek an apprehended domestic violence order or in criminal proceedings. That can be done safely through audiovisual access. That is a very successful model in Orange and one that we want to replicate right across New South Wales.

A second component will be around \$52 million towards the Community Housing Innovation Fund, a partnership with the community housing sector, with around 200 additional social and affordable housing dwellings for women experiencing domestic and family violence. Often women who are subject to domestic and family violence are facing a number of other hurdles as well. There may be mental health issues, substance abuse issues, problems with the education of their kids or employment problems. Again, we are looking at having a wraparound service for those victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

There will be \$5 million over four years for a trial in two districts—one regional, one metro—to provide specialist trauma-informed support for accompanied children and young people who are experiencing or are at the risk of homelessness. Often young people are the forgotten victims of domestic and family violence. They may be the direct victims of violence themselves or common witnesses to violence inflicted upon female members of their family. This model represents the single greatest investment to address domestic violence in the State's history. In the last budget we announced an increase in our domestic violence recurrent funding of around 27 per cent. By my maths, it represents about an 80 per cent increase in our domestic violence funding in New South Wales. It will change lives and it will save lives. That is not an exaggeration; that is just the simple fact. [*Extension of time*]

It will help thousands of women and children at the time of their greatest need. A sign of the civility of a society is how it looks after its most vulnerable. Women and children who are fleeing domestic and family violence are certainly amongst the most vulnerable in our society and deserve every protection we can afford them. I thank the Treasurer and the Premier for stepping up and getting this investment across the line. As I say, it is a record investment. I am so grateful that in their first couple of weeks of government they have hit the road

running not just on economic matters, environmental matters and broader social matters, such as mental health, but also in this important area of domestic and family violence.

I thank the incredible frontline services who front up day in, day out to deal with the precarious trauma they suffer while dealing with domestic and family violence survivors. I thank the individual victim-survivors. The Premier, the Treasurer and I can all rattle off statistics but behind those statistics are real people with real stories. It is those stories and the tragedy that people face that captures our imagination and forces us to act on this important social problem. I thank all the advocates, the victim-survivors, the Treasurer and the Premier. I also thank the Deputy Premier, as most of this investment will go to regional New South Wales, where unmet demand is greatest. This is an investment that will support women and children in crisis, but it is just one part of the solution to domestic and family violence. We have to have primary prevention. We have to have early intervention. We have to have frontline services. We have to have changed perpetrator behaviour. Last month I listened very closely to the Women's Safety Council. Among the calls for action there, housing was top of the list. We have listened and we have acted.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:03): Via video link: My question is directed to the Premier. In September the Country Women's Association Riverina group hosted a webinar in Wagga Wagga entitled "A Roof Over Her Head", which highlighted the growing problem of homelessness in older women. Given the long waiting list for social housing and the rental crisis in regional New South Wales, what is the Government doing to improve the supply of social and affordable housing, especially for our most vulnerable?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:04): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question, his strong advocacy for his electorate, the support he has provided during the pandemic and the engagement he has had with all levels of government, particularly on the health side of things, as we move through this difficult time. In answer to the question, the Government recognises that the fastest-growing group of homeless people in New South Wales is older women. We know that this is becoming an additional problem due to the increased demand for housing in regional New South Wales. In the past 12 months housing prices have risen 26.7 per cent in regional areas, while rental prices are up 12 per cent. Rents in regional New South Wales areas are growing at a faster rate than in Sydney. Record low vacancy rates of 0.8 per cent in regional New South Wales are contributing to this problem. Housing affordability pressures are increasing the number of people who are homeless and in need of support right across our State.

We will continue to adapt our policies to respond to shifts in housing challenges and pressures by collaborating across government and across the sector. The Government is very committed to addressing this problem. We will continue to use Housing 2041 as a framework to reshape targeted and responsive solutions to help improve housing affordability. Additionally, the Regional Housing Taskforce will soon release recommendations on how to better use the planning system to address housing needs and stimulate housing supply in regional areas in New South Wales.

We know that domestic violence is one of the three major drivers of homelessness for women. As members heard in answers from the Deputy Premier, the Attorney General, the Treasurer and the women's Minister, today's record announcement of close to half a billion dollars for self-contained accommodation will support women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Some \$52.5 million over four years will be allocated to the Community Housing Innovation Fund to collaborate with the community housing sector on 100 new dwellings for women experiencing domestic violence. That is only part of the issue. We are also boosting the general social housing stock in New South Wales. That is important for women because we know they make up the overwhelming majority of social housing tenants. In the last five years the New South Wales Government has invested \$9 billion in this sector. To put it into context, that compares with \$4 billion in Victoria and \$5.25 billion in Queensland.

Last year I was pleased to announce a four-year, \$812 million investment in a social housing stimulus package in the budget. This weekend the Treasurer and the Minister announced a further \$183 million to accelerate the development of 1,400 more homes as part of the COVID economic recovery strategy. We did that not just because of the great social outcome but also the success of last year's investment in getting people into work quickly while providing the social good at the end. In total, we will fund the development of more than 8,000 new social housing homes and the upgrade of 16,500 properties, with projects in western Sydney, Coffs Harbour and also, for the benefit of the member's knowledge, Wagga Wagga. They will all be accelerated and local businesses will be used for those projects, which is particularly important in regional New South Wales.

I have had the opportunity to see with some of the programs we have run in regional New South Wales, whether it was the Farm Innovation Fund or other infrastructure investments, that it is local suppliers creating local jobs and opportunities for people in regional New South Wales. That will be a substantial benefit to those

areas. As at 30 September 2021, 24 regional projects are committed to deliver 312 new social dwellings. In addition to those projects, the medium-density pilot project will deliver a further 76 new social homes in 25 regional locations. The Government will continue to grow its property portfolio so it can meet the needs of vulnerable people across the State in homes that are well designed and safe and, importantly, meet the needs of current and future tenants. I know this is an issue that is very important to the member for Wagga Wagga. We will continue to work closely with him. Where the Government can do more, it will do more, particularly in areas such as Wagga Wagga where we know the demand will only grow over time.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:09): Via video link: My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve our social housing?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:09): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. It is great to see so much attention paid to social housing in New South Wales. As the Premier has highlighted, thanks to him and the Treasurer, \$183 million is going out the door to improve social housing across New South Wales. That is in addition to the \$900 million announced last year in the COVID-19 stimulus budget that was designed to deliver more houses and maintenance. We were in St Marys on Saturday to make that announcement. Seventy-three homes in one street in St Marys were under construction while we were there. They are beautiful, fit-for-purpose houses in a great location with views over the Blue Mountains. In one development 21 units will replace two fibro shacks. One of them had been burnt out. This is transforming lives and opportunities.

Andrew Zeaiter from Tom Zeaiter Constructions said that it is about taking great pride in delivering quality homes for people who need them but also knowing that when we are building it means the tradies, the labourers and the apprentices can employ and support their families. We are not only building the homes of tomorrow; we are building the tradies of tomorrow, the builders of the future. That was positive to hear. Community Housing Industry Association CEO Mark Degotardi said it was great to see our Government stepping up. I acknowledge the strongest endorsement that we received, and that was from the Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns, who said he was thrilled. I thank him for that, because what we announced is thrilling.

We have increased the social housing stock across New South Wales by 10 per cent since we have been in government by recycling assets and using the infrastructure and the land we have. Usually we would welcome that response from the Labor leader, who frankly has been left in awe of what we are doing in the housing space since we came to government by recycling assets and building fit-for-purpose homes for people. The Leader of the Opposition went on to say that we stole the decade of investment we put into social housing from a speech he gave last week. What speech? It must have been the speech that we have renamed the "cut-and-paste budget reply speech", where he took all our ideas and made them his own. I thought maybe I was missing something, so what did I do? I googled "Chris Minns housing" in case I had missed a policy.

What came up? The first article was from August entitled, "New State Labor Leader Chris Minns pays \$1.7 million for a Kogarah home." It was a very interesting read. It looks like a beautiful three-bedroom federation home—not enough bedrooms for you, Premier. That was good to see. I looked a little further—maybe it was further down the Google search engine. Then there was an article from July entitled, "Chris Minns will move into his electorate after selling family home." Well done, champ, go and live in your electorate. But neither of those facts was part of the origin of our announcement and that is what Google finds when his name is entered. In fact, the Labor Party tried to claim that the Government has stolen the idea to invest in social housing. It is actually the other way around.

Last week Labor said that we need to invest in social housing. Welcome to the party. As I said, we have increased our public housing stock by 10 per cent since we have been in government. We have been working on that for a decade, whether it is the Tolland estate in Wagga Wagga or the Argyll Estate in Coffs Harbour. We are building a record amount of housing in the regions and in western Sydney, building the homes of tomorrow with the builders of tomorrow. That said, to borrow a quote from the Leader of the Opposition, we too are thrilled that he is interested. We thought we should keep educating him and his shadow Minister in the other place about the facts. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned maintenance. The New South Wales Government has provided an additional \$200 million in funding to the NSW Land and Housing Corporation to bring forward maintenance upgrades for this year and the next financial year, thanks to the COVID stimulus package that the then Treasurer announced. We are getting out there and fast-tracking maintenance across New South Wales.

I am also glad that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the issue of air conditioning and improving the livability of our properties. It is important that we drive electricity prices down for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Over 1,600 brand-new air conditioners have been put in place across New South

Wales. We have installed 900 hydro panels in communities like Menindee, where we make our own water and cool our own houses in desert-like conditions. As well, in the past three years 5,000 properties received solar panels, enabling improved energy savings and reducing emissions.

The SPEAKER: I am not sure whether the member for Upper Hunter was trying to get my attention. He is nodding. On that basis, I grant an extension of time of two minutes.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: It is important to underline that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow spokesperson said that community housing should do more about social housing. We agree. That is our policy. That is what we are doing. When we came to office community housing providers [CHPs] had provided only 68 dwellings in the previous year, 2012. Last year we delivered 3,282 new homes through our CHPs. In fact, New South Wales is drawing down the most funds from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility, with 80 per cent of the funds allocated to Australia coming to New South Wales through our CHPs and the Land and Housing Corporation as we are building record housing across New South Wales. Finally, it is important that the shadow Minister thinks about her idea of wanting New South Wales to be as good as Victoria, because that is not very good. We have 150,000 social housing homes in New South Wales. Guess what Victoria has?

Mr Adam Crouch: How many?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Eighty thousand. We have nearly 100 per cent more than Victoria, yet the shadow Minister wants us to do what they are doing in Victoria. In the past five years the New South Wales Government has invested \$9 billion in the housing sector; Queensland, \$5 billion; and Victoria, only \$4 billion. I am proud of what our Government is delivering in terms of social housing. Do not try to rewrite history or trick the people of New South Wales. We are proud of our record. It is about recycling our assets and investing in the regions and in western Sydney so we can build the homes of tomorrow with the builders of tomorrow.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Special Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Investigation into the procurement of an acting executive director at the former NSW Department of Planning and Environment*, dated October 2021, received 19 October 2021.
- (2) Special Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Special report by the NSW Ombudsman on the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021*, dated 19 October 2021, received 19 October 2021.

I order that the reports be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I table the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into the sourcing of software systems for the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE*, dated 19 October 2021. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 242 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report under section 242 (6) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission on Criminal Organisation Search Warrants for the period 7 August 2019 to 6 August 2021, dated September 2021, received out of session on 15 October 2021 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

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

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 31FA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the report of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission entitled *2021 Review of the Annual Reports of oversight bodies*, Report 2/57, dated October 2021, received out of session on 18 October 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Rail freight and Greater Sydney*, dated 19 October 2021, received 19 October 2021.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 35/57*, dated 19 October 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 34/57*, dated 12 October 2021.

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

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 27 July 2021 the Hon. Peter Poulos, MLC, was elected Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission.

*Motions***VACCINATION OF MEMBERS**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave: I move:

That the resolution of Tuesday 12 October 2021 be amended by inserting "and does not have a valid medical exemption" after "who is not vaccinated against COVID-19" in paragraph (1).

Motion agreed to.*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Sydney Bus Network Privatisation

Petition requesting the Government to stop its privatisation of the Sydney local bus network, received from **Mr Ron Hoenig**.

*Bills***COASTAL MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:20:2): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. I thank the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock, for bringing the bill to the House. This bill may be compact in comparison to others we have debated in this Chamber, but it is critically important to my electorate of Port Macquarie. As many in this House know, my electorate extends along a beautiful stretch of the New South Wales coastline from the Hastings River in the north down to the Manning River in the south. As we have already heard, this bill will make amendments to the Coastal Management Act 2016, which I know will be welcomed by many coastal councils.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Coastal Management Act 2016 to enable certified coastal zone management plans to remain in force until 31 December 2023 and to ensure that coastal zone management plans certified and made in accordance with schedule 3 of the Act continue to be taken as coastal management programs prepared and adopted under the Act until 31 December 2023. This is a sensible and welcome approach by the Minister. It gives consideration to the nearly two-year delay in the commencement of the Coastal Management Act, which meant that councils had less than the originally intended 5½ years to prepare their coastal management programs.

The impact of coastal zone management plans ceasing on 31 December 2021 would have been significant for the two councils in my electorate, particularly in relation to the eligibility for grant funding to implement actions and works and to plan assessment pathways for certain coastal protection and emergency works under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Coastal Management Act and the coastal management State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. The councils and community in my electorate were hit particularly hard by the devastating bushfires and the subsequent floods in March this year. Over the past two years it had to contend with competing pressures to recover from natural disasters, while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the southern part of my electorate the proposed amendments have been welcomed. They will enable the MidCoast Council to continue to implement actions in the Manning Valley Coastal Zone Management Plan for the beaches from Diamond Head to Harrington. As a result of the amendments, the MidCoast Council will continue to be eligible to apply for funding from the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program to implement remaining actions in that plan. I commend the MidCoast Council, which has embraced the new framework for managing the coast. It has already prepared a draft coastal management program for the Manning River during these very difficult times. The Manning River is the lifeblood of the local community and the estuary is important for oyster growing, fishing, tourism and recreation. The 10-year action program aims to maintain a clean and healthy river to safeguard the social and economic benefits it provides for the community.

In the northern part of my electorate, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council will be able to continue to implement actions in its Lake Cathie Coastal Zone Management Plan. These actions include providing community opportunities to enjoy our natural environment through reserve improvements, continued public access, periodically dredging the Lake Cathie entrance and beach nourishment. In November 2020 I wrote to the Acting General Manager, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Jeffrey Sharp, asking that council give consideration to dredging the lagoon in the coming months for the purpose of beach nourishment on Illaroo Road. As well as replacing recent sand loss on the foreshore dunes, this action would also provide the benefit of increasing the water depth within the lagoon. I believe that would be advantageous during predicted heavy rainfall events expected during the summer months.

The enhanced water volume within the lagoon is also likely to have a positive impact on the next lake opening, which many residents will be hoping for prior to the upcoming Christmas holiday season. That was last year. Now there is a very similar scenario with the lagoon being closed, the depleted dunes adjacent to Illaroo Road and the approaching summer holiday period. I ask council again to give consideration to dredging the lagoon. It is worth noting that the Lake Cathie Coastal Zone Management Plan states:

It is proposed that Council will continue to undertake periodic dredging of Lake Cathie Lagoon and to place dredged/excavated sand from the Lake Cathie entrance on the beach adjacent to Illaroo Road. As an indication of the volume of sand that may be available in the Lake Cathie entrance, approximately 25,000 m³ was removed in 2005 and ongoing in 2014.

I am advised that council currently has a development consent to dredge the Lake Cathie Lagoon for beach nourishment and that a short-term licence could therefore be issued without delay by Crown lands to support this action. The coastline around Lake Cathie is particularly exposed to coastal hazards that threaten private and public assets. Significant coastal erosion has occurred south of the Lake Cathie entrance along Illaroo Road and the impacts have been clearly documented over the past decade.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of both the Lake Cathie Progress Association and Revive Lake Cathie for their strong focus on the health of the lake, which is in the best interest of the environment and the community. I acknowledge those in the community who were involved in the development of the Lake Cathie Community Plan. I acknowledge particularly those in the Community-Council Action Team, which was formed to assist with the development of the community plan and to prioritise and ensure delivery of the identified actions. The Community-Council Action Team was made up of members from a wide cross-section of the Lake Cathie community. It included members from the Lake Cathie Progress Association, Lake Cathie Landcare, Lake Cathie Public School P&C and the broader community. I acknowledge some well-known community advocates who were a part of the action team: Sue Warner, Danielle Maltman, David Curry, Dee Crisp, G Henshaw, Helen Hoban, Karen Knight, Lisa Willows, Lynn Small, Malcolm McDonald, Patricia Cooper, Kate Aston, Richard Faddy, Romaine Page, and Stewart Cooper.

I have highlighted the Lake Cathie Community Plan because in the process the community identified the proposed Illaroo Road revetment wall as a key priority. The identified objective is to lobby the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and other stakeholders for the construction of the wall. The Lake Cathie Coastal Zone Management Plan incorporates a revetment wall and beach nourishment as the management option for Illaroo Road. It will guide the management of the Lake Cathie foreshore into the future to ensure the most beneficial outcome for all stakeholders. I note that extensive community consultation during the development of the coastal zone management plan concluded with overwhelming support for a revetment wall with beach nourishment. I intend to make further comments in the House in the weeks ahead in relation to this particular issue. It is important that it is highlighted as we approach the local government elections on 4 December. It is important that council candidates in the upcoming election are aware of the projects that matter to our communities. They are projects that have already been planned for and that we know will make a difference.

The proposed amendments in the bill are important. They will enable the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to continue to respond appropriately to the impacts of major storms and coastal erosion, as outlined in the Lake Cathie Coastal Zone Management Plan Emergency Management Plan. I commend the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council for completing its scoping study and progressing to the next stage of development in the coastal management program for the area. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's coastal management program will play a key role in guiding the future management of the Lake Cathie and Lake Innis estuarine system. The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council will use the \$300,000 in funding provided by the New South Wales Government to investigate new opportunities to manage and protect the local coastal waterways of Lake Cathie, Cathie Creek and Lake Innis.

The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting the thriving, resilient communities living, working and playing on the New South Wales coast now and into the future. Many coastal councils have made substantial progress in preparing their coastal management programs, but due to a range of factors, largely beyond their control, many will not have one in place by December 2021. Therefore, I support the approval of the small, but nonetheless very significant, amendments to the Coastal Management Act 2016 and I join with other Government members to commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:30): Via video link: It is a pleasure to be participating in today's sitting after the blackout last week that prevented me from speaking on behalf of my community. I contribute to the debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. It is extremely important legislation. I am passionate about looking after our coasts and how government works to manage the coast from the impact of possible future storms in a future with a very uncertain climate. The Coastal Management Act 2016 is very important. The coastal lifestyles of the people of New South Wales are also important, and we need to protect the coast as best as we possibly can. The amending bill will enable existing plans to remain in place and also support councils up and down the coast to transition coastal management plans in an appropriate time.

It is lovely to see Madam Deputy Speaker in the chair. I love her concern for the coast and her community. I note that she has two councils in her electorate. Five members represent electorates on the Central Coast but the region has only one council. The Central Coast Council is not fairing very well financially, which puts the future of our coastline in an even more dire predicament as we head into a La Niña season. The Wamberal seawall on the Central Coast has been a very long-term concern. In the 1990s the council was planning to build a seawall at Terrigal. It has been a long time coming. I thank Gary Chestnut for the work he did back in the 1990s. I know it has been a hard job [audio malfunction] for a while.

I note that there is quite a disparity in approving the council's coastal management plan, as the member for Wyong pointed out. The Gosford plan has kicked off, but Wyong's plan has been submitted four times since 2018 and it has still not been approved. It is almost pork-barrelling in delivering funding support across the Central Coast. The Terrigal electorate received money following the last storm in 2020, although not as much as it was originally promised. The Entrance electorate was promised funding but that did not come because its plan has not been ticked off. Once again, the council foots the bill. The member for Wyong also raised concerns about the current erosion affecting Marine Rescue NSW and the investment that is needed for that project. The legislation is very important and [audio malfunction] a place and is [audio malfunction] councils. We are very concerned in moving ahead.

The State Government is working closely with the community at Terrigal to preserve the coastline and to do planning. The member for Terrigal was very quick to blame the Central Coast Council for the situation that arose where a house very precariously balanced on an edge, as was seen on televisions around Australia. As I said before, this problem has been around for a long time and we have not seen any significant investment from the State Government. It is good to see that the plans are developing. I encourage the community to get involved. I note that the Terrigal seawall action group is not truly representative of our community. I note that of the 71 houses on the peninsula, very few of those residents actually live in the Central Coast community. Whether

this supposed action group is a true representation is not overly clear. Other community groups have emerged that have not been asked for their opinion and have been shut outside the negotiations. I commend the work of Save Our Sands and Surfrider Central Coast for their alternative views on the future of Wamberal Beach.

This is a philosophical debate that reaches into the future. Is the question about spending thousands, millions or billions of dollars of taxpayer money up and down the coast protecting individual properties or is it about the community amenity of the State's beaches going forward? On the matter of Terrigal-Wamberal sand size and the cost of beach nourishment, whether we build the seawall or not, if we are choosing to get sand offshore, it has to come out of the Hawkesbury because that is the right colour of sand and the right sand size. That is going to be an incredibly expensive ongoing process that will hit taxpayers and rent payers into the future, whether the Government invests in the wall or not. Again, the Central Coast Council does not have the financials to contribute to shared costings.

Last year the State Government unfortunately knocked back applications for further funding for The Entrance North because The Entrance North plan was not mentioned in the Gosford area coastal management plan. While the amending bill is important, the timeliness of approval by the New South Wales Government of the coastal zone management plans by half the forcibly merged councils on the Central Coast is important to unlocking that funding. I wonder if the pork-barrelling that even occurs [audio malfunction]. Gosford was approved but Terrigal gets the funding. The Wyong plan was not approved. The Labor electorates, Marine Rescue and The Entrance North miss out on the opportunity for funding. At the same time, Nambucca gets \$3.6 million for its seawall while other communities miss out.

Many councils have applied for coastal zone management funding, but they have been knocked back. I do not know where the funding pool sits for the dredging at the mouth of Brisbane Water and the Ettalong Channel. The political games that were played around the funding for that dredging were a very poor reflection on the lead agency, which is the New South Wales Government, and its delivery of that funding. Funding that is shared and forced back onto councils creates a political football and is not a great solution for communities moving forward.

Clearly, Central Coast Council needs more time. It is very important that councils up and down the coast get their plans right. I urge the State Government to work with the Central Coast Council and genuinely engage with the Central Coast community on the issue, not just for Wamberal Beach but for solutions up and down the Central Coast. Patonga could possibly be the first area that goes under if the sea level rises [audio malfunction] so great in front of the pub at Patonga. [Audio malfunction] that we work proactively to plan new solutions. We need to work with other governments around the world to look at solutions. The people of the Netherlands live on land that is five metres below sea level, yet we have a storm and it knocks houses off our coast. We know there will be another storm and another storm and another storm. We need to ensure that our kids, our grandkids and our grandkids' grandkids will be able to enjoy their local beaches and work in local jobs in essential tourism in our coastal zones up and down the coast of New South Wales for many years to come.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:38): I acknowledge Madam Deputy Speaker's contribution most recently to the debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. It was accurate, truthful and factual, unlike some of the stuff I have just had to listen to from the other side. The Minister will provide a response to the statements that have been made in this Chamber, particularly on the issue of the unapproved coastal zone management plan for The Entrance North. The Minister has all the details, unlike the member who spoke earlier, and will update the House in her reply with regard to the failure of the local government body to submit a compliant application on more than one occasion. Interestingly, it is par for the course.

I will digress for a minute to respond to the statement by the member for Gosford about dredging funding. It is interesting that she brought it up because one of the Central Coast councillors who voted against dredging the channel at Ettalong had worked for her. The council also submitted a noncompliant application for that project and tried to blame the State Government for not providing funding. There has been very poor political game-playing up and down the Central Coast. The council was embarrassed to rescind the noncompliant application and accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of State Government emergency funding for The Entrance channel.

It then submitted a compliant application from which they received \$1.225 million to dredge the Ettalong Channel. Had the game-playing not been done at a council level by the former staffer of the member for Gosford and others, where they were publicly humiliated into backtracking on that appalling decision, the Ettalong Channel would never have closed and the 200,000 people who catch the ferry every day to Palm Beach would not have been inconvenienced. One Central Coast councillor even had the hide to say at a council meeting that the council should fight the issue all the way to the next State election rather than getting on and applying for the funding, which has been forthcoming for every application.

I will speak about the Coastal Management Amendment Bill. I congratulate the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Shelley Hancock. I am a member of the Wamberal Seawall Advisory Taskforce along with Dr Phil Watson, the pre-eminent expert in coastal management in New South Wales. He lives at Kariong on the Central Coast. I will talk in more detail about Dr Watson shortly. I raised with the Minister the concerns that Central Coast Council had raised with the task force, Dr Watson and me around the cessation of coastal zone management plan [CZMP] funding at the end of 2021. I did so knowing that funds were still left in the coastal zone management plan. To the credit of Minister Hancock and her team, she has extended coastal zone funding for another two years, which I wholeheartedly welcome. It is a fantastic decision. That is what happens when local members pick up the phone and talk to Ministers of the Crown.

The Minister was very receptive to the advice that Dr Watson—a pre-eminent expert in coastal management, who lives at Kariong on the Central Coast—and I gave her on funding concerns that we had. The Minister's decision will allow funding to continue to flow to councils up and down the coast, including Central Coast Council and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, that have managed to get their house in order and put a coastal zone management plan in place.

I remember distinctly when the coastal zone management plan for Central Coast Council was lodged; I think it was in 2016. The Hon. Gabrielle Upton was the Minister for Local Government at the time. I expressed how urgent the plan was. It was signed off within 24 hours of being received despite months of delays from the council arguing the toss over some land, ironically, at Patonga. It was sorted out and put into the coastal zone management plan. I will go through some of the funding that has been provided to Central Coast Council as part of its coastal zone management plan. I know the Minister will articulate the issue at North Entrance and why the application for funds was refused. I have spoken to Dr Watson, the pre-eminent expert who lives in Kariong. I suggest to the member for Wyong, the member for The Entrance and the member for Gosford that they could pick up the phone and call Dr Watson, who is always happy to give his time, and he can explain firsthand why those applications were unsuccessful.

I also suggest to the member for Gosford that she might want to speak to Dr Watson about getting some advice for the Wamberal terminal revetment project, which has been canvassed extensively in the community for not just years but decades. In fact, the project was even included in the council's coastal zone management plan as a plan of action that needed to be dealt with to protect not just the people of Wamberal but also the surrounding area. There is \$100 million worth of public infrastructure on Ocean Beach Road that needs to be protected. The last line of defence should not be Mr and Mrs Jones' living room; it should come from a proper protection process.

I congratulate the Minister on appointing the task force because it had a job to do. I will talk about the task force very quickly. It is interesting because in September 2018 Central Coast Council was provided with \$249,498, which I have confirmed, to progress the Wamberal Beach Terminal Protection and Sand Nourishment—Investigation and Concept Design. Fast forward to 2021, when there was a storm event. It is interesting because the Government through Minister Hancock provided almost quarter of a million dollars for Central Coast Council to progress with the Wamberal revetment study.

When the 2021 storm event hit, the council, under the mayor, had done the sum total of absolutely nothing—not a thing! It had not progressed with the quarter of a million dollars, it had not put out any detailed plans, it had carried out no community consultation because the mayor was philosophically opposed to a revetment wall. Her idea of dealing with the problem was to not deal with it. In her infinite wisdom, the Minister appointed a task force, which is chaired by Dr Phil Watson, who, as I have said already, is the State's pre-eminent expert in coastal management and who lives on the Central Coast. More has happened under the stewardship of Dr Watson than in the entire time the money had been provided to the council. It begs the question: What were the political motives to not deal with this issue? Was it to wait until the houses fell into the ocean so that the council could ask, "Who do we blame?" I suspect that might have been the case.

To say that Central Coast has missed out is disingenuous in the extreme. In September 2019 the council received \$35,000 for a scoping study for coastal management programs around coastal lagoons. In September 2018, as I just articulated, it received \$249,498 to progress the Wamberal Beach Terminal Protection and Sand Nourishment—Investigation and Concept Design, which the council, under the mayor, did absolutely nothing with until Minister Hancock appointed the task force. In October 2018 the council received another \$47,250 for the implementation of stage one of the Pearl Beach Lagoon Coastal Management Program. There is more.

In December 2017 the council received \$245,000 for the Umina-Ocean Beach Erosion Management Strategy. When it comes to pork-barrelling, it seems to me that almost every end of the Central Coast is getting funding. There is a lot more. In March 2021 the council received another \$320,700 for a Macmasters Beach revetment wall construction. In the same month it received another \$82,750 for the Central Coast dune stabilisation and restoration program. In November 2020 Central Coast Council received a \$992,501 for emergency work, co-funded by the Government, to protect Wamberal. In September 2021 the council received a

further \$644,560 for stage two and stage three of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan. In September 2021 it received an additional \$326,667 for stage two of the coastal management plan for open coast and coastal lagoons.

For Opposition members to talk about pork-barrelling is the biggest load of garbage I have ever heard mentioned in the Chamber. They are politicising an issue that they have no details of. None of those members have bothered to ask questions to the task force, the experts—

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Me.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: —or the Minister, as she has just said. It is disingenuous in the extreme and, quite frankly, embarrassing. I suggest that those members pick up the phone. They can talk to me any time they like. I have been well briefed on this issue because I meet very regularly with Central Coast Council and Dr Phil Watson, the pre-eminent expert who lives on the Central Coast. [*Extension of time*]

I will talk about Wamberal. I note that Minister Hancock, who appointed the task force, is in the Chamber. It is made up of multiple government department officials, including from Crown Lands, the Office of Local Government and the Environment Protection Authority. Everything that has been done by the task force has been made public. In addition, Dr Phil Watson has made himself available to speak one-on-one with any interested parties. That includes members of Parliament, none of whom I believe have taken up the offer, and public organisations such as Save Our Sand. I sat in on a meeting with representatives from Save Our Sand, where Dr Watson spent almost three hours with them. To say there has been a lack of consultation is completely disingenuous and, quite frankly, incorrect.

I also say to the member for Gosford—who basically accused all the people who live on the Wamberal beachfront of not living there—that if she would like to meet with those residents, I would be more than happy to accommodate her at any time. I have met with every one of them. I am more than happy to have her come and meet those residents and explain why she is supporting a petition that leaves them completely unprotected and, not just that, also leaves \$100 million worth of public assets and Ocean View Drive completely unprotected. It also leaves all the homes on the land side of Ocean View Drive completely unprotected.

We are talking about potentially billions of dollars worth of public and private assets left exposed, even though Manly Hydraulics—which is the expert, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker—has advised that the solution to Wamberal is an end-to-end revetment. Those models have been put out for public display. It must be made clear that this is a council project and council is the governing authority that has the rights over it. It has been out for public consultation, even during COVID. Online forums were set up. Dr Watson made himself available to speak to everybody who wished to have their questions answered. Again, to say there was no public consultation is disingenuous in the extreme and quite offensive to all the people who took part in it. I am more than happy for any member in this place to meet the affected residents absolutely any time.

I congratulate the Minister on her speedy action. It seems like only yesterday I picked up the phone and asked her to review the coastal zone management plan [CZMP] extension of the funding because this was an opportunity to provide additional protections not just to Central Coast Council but to councils up and down the eastern seaboard. I know there is funding still available and it is great that councils will have access to it. I also commend the Minister for providing all the additional resources at her fingertips to support Central Coast Council in the process. Central Coast Council is well advanced in its coastal management plan, which is the next phase. I congratulate the team on working with the State Government. It is interesting how willing and able the staff were to contribute with the State Government when we took the elected body out of the process.

It begs the question: What sort of political interference was happening at a council level with issues like this one, dredging and the list goes on? It is a pity I have only 15 minutes because I could literally stand here and talk all day about those issues, as the Minister rightly knows because she and I have had extensive conversations about them. Quite frankly, the people of the Central Coast have had a gutful of politicising those issues. They know exactly where it is coming from and why it is happening. It is disgraceful. We are putting people's lives, livelihoods and homes at risk by playing juvenile, pathetic games rather than looking at the science. With regard to Wamberal and other areas, the science is incredibly detailed. I suggest that some members in this place have not even read the reports. The best thing they can do is sit down and read them.

Members are more than welcome to get advice from Dr Phil Watson, the Government's pre-eminent expert, who lives at Kariong and is regularly down at Terrigal. I bump into Phil and his delightful wife, Linda, on a regular basis. He is an outstanding representative of how coastal management should be done in a structured, cohesive, informed and professional way. That gentleman has forgotten more about coastal management than I will ever know, like probably everybody else in the Chamber. I am pleased that the Minister appointed Dr Watson to head up the task and provide council with the additional resources the State Government has at hand to help it deal with

those complicated issues. Whether it be Wamberal, The Entrance North, Ettalong Channel or the foreshore down at Umina, there are ongoing issues and we must look at the science for how to deal with them.

I congratulate the Minister on making the amendment. Some people may think it is only small, but the impact is massive. The financial support it provides to councils in the transition period between CZMPs and coastal management plans is absolutely vital. I commend the Minister and thank her for the time she has put into issues on the Central Coast. She has never been more than a phone call away. With that, I absolutely commend the amendment to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:53): Via video link: I contribute to debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021 to highlight the impacts of coastal erosion on my community of Port Stephens, and the multiple failures of the O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian and Perrottet governments when it comes to the management of coastal issues. In Port Stephens our beautiful waterways are our lifeblood. Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard you refer to your waterways similarly. Our community has been built around them and, just like the marine life that relies on them, we are dependent on healthy waterways for our economy—be it our world-famous whale and dolphin tourism or our equally famous oyster, fishing and seafood industries. Our marine park, estuaries, rivers and stunning beaches are much loved by residents and visitors alike. Good coastal management is critical to my community.

All coastal management has very serious consequences. Like the member for Wyong said earlier today, coastal erosion is not a theoretical problem. In Port Stephens it is a lived experience, with people's homes at risk and entire peninsulas on the line. Getting anything done is complex and complicated, and solutions are expensive. To even work out what needs to be done is complex, complicated and expensive. The Government has placed all responsibility for that complex, complicated and expensive work on the councils. Under legislation passed by the Parliament in 2016, councils are required to design and have approved a coastal management plan, which would effectively replace their coastal zone management plan, or CZMP, which others have referred to today. Those CZMPs were established under legislation dating back to 1979. The problem is that 35 councils across the State have not yet finalised their new coastal plans, and their old plans will expire at the end of this year by virtue of the 2016 Act. That would leave councils without any ability to seek grant funding and would expose them to risks, especially in times of emergency.

Everyone in this place agrees that that is an unacceptable position to place councils and coastal communities in, which is why NSW Labor is supporting the bill today. What we struggle to support are all the excuses that Government members have mentioned to supposedly explain why councils have struggled to design and have approved their coastal management plans under the Act. According to the Minister for Local Government when she introduced the bill to Parliament last week, the Coastal Management Act established a "simpler, more contemporary legislative framework for the management of the coast". If that is the case and it is indeed simpler, why are we discussing the bill today? Why is the Government having to amend its own Act and extend its own deadline to give councils more time to have the new plans in place?

There are a few reasons. Coastal management is not simple. It is complex and expensive, and councils simply do not have the resources to do it and the Act does not offer simple processes or resources to do it. In its usual style, the Government has devolved responsibility and liability to anyone other than itself. It has failed to give adequate resources to deliver on those responsibilities. In the midst of all this, it has created mega coastal councils. Who can forget the Government's awesome policy of forced council amalgamations? In my area, forced council amalgamations saw small Great Lakes Council become part of a mega council stretching up the coast. It went from managing a relatively small stretch of complex coastline to an enormous swathe extending up past Tomaree, halfway to Port Macquarie.

Yet every Government MP has come into this place and talked about how hard councils have had it managing fires, floods, droughts and pandemics—and they are not wrong. But it is like they have all been told not to mention the war—a war of forced council amalgamations—which caused the largest disruption to the administration of councils ever seen. While councils were somehow trying to centralise and merge formerly discrete councils into one mega council, in the same year the Government introduced the Coastal Management Act, placing the responsibility on the same council to create a new coastal management plan for all the coastline, estuaries and waterways it now had responsibility for. I note that is exactly the same scenario that poor Central Coast Council faced. I will come to the member for Terrigal a bit later.

For councils, on top of amalgamating and creating mega councils, a new Act would require them to create these new coastal management plans. Then the Government said, "But we'll only give you until 2021 to have your new plans in place, otherwise you'll be left with no plan because we won't recognise the old plan." The new Act passed Parliament in 2016—the very same year this Government forced old Great Lakes Council, Gloucester Council and City of Greater Taree Council to amalgamate. But for the legislation to come into effect, it has to be gazetted. We heard the member for North Shore mention today the Government's 2016 coastal

management reforms, which is kind of almost funny because, after the legislation was passed by Parliament in 2016, it was not gazetted until 2018. The Government cared so little about its own reforms it introduced that it did not even come into effect until 2½ years later. I am not making this up; the Minister herself said in her second reading speech:

Originally, all councils believed they had five years to complete these programs but, as a result of the later gazettal of the legislation, they had only 2½ years in which to prepare them.

That is why the Government had to bring the bill before the House today. The Liberal-Nationals Government palmed off all coastal management planning responsibility to councils, failed to give them the financial resources and expertise needed to create the new plans, and pushed them over at the starting line with forced council amalgamations. Then when those councils finally got to stand up, the Government hobbled them with delays and more bureaucracy. This extension is just the latest symptom of a failed plan to shift all responsibility for coastal management away from the New South Wales Government and onto struggling coastal councils.

While this failed so-called reform continues to play out, residents are quite literally living on the edge. We have seen it play out locally in Port Stephens at Jimmys Beach, which is at Hawks Nest on the northern shore of Port Stephens. When east coast lows hit, residents watch the road that sits in between them and their houses to see if it is holding. On many occasions, it has not. Council has worked to put in place much-contested strategies for managing the beach, from tonnes and tonnes of sand to the creation of a sand transfer system. But solutions are hard to find and even harder to make work, and they need to take into account impacts across the entire bay, well outside the area the council has responsibility for.

We all know the issues the port community of Stockton has been facing for too many years now. Newcastle council could not get approval of its plan by this Government and instead was forced to undertake expensive but short-term solutions. Meanwhile, the peninsula is quite literally washing away. I think if the people of Stockton heard the member for Terrigal talk today in the House, where apparently the Minister gives everyone everything that they want any time they want it, I think that they might disagree, and I am pretty confident Newcastle council would have a very different submission to make as opposed to the member for Terrigal and his political hits on [inaudible].

Residents in Soldiers Point and Corlette are also seeing public and private waterfront land under threat. My community is tired of the red tape and delays. My councils are frustrated by the ever-increasing burden of responsibilities passed onto them without the resources to manage them. Our beautiful coastlines deserve care and attention. It is a situation that is not getting any better, with the challenges of climate change already playing havoc. Short-term fixes must be replaced with big-picture, long-term solutions informed by science and experts. For years now, my community has been calling for a single authority to manage coastal issues. Solutions lie in the timely, appropriate dredging that we need for healthy waterways and safe access, the maintenance of slipways and boat ramps, the management and prevention of erosion. Instead, when work needed to be done in my community, we have had to campaign for it. They have worked with council, lobbied different agencies, coordinated more than a dozen agencies and organisations. That is very different from what the member for Terrigal mentioned today. It seems if you are in the Government you get responses but if you are in the Opposition you do not. I seek a short extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

In my community, there has been significant advocacy for dredging over many numbers of years. The community has even formed a group called the Myall River Action Group. Today I pay tribute to members of that group and thank them for their strong advocacy, without which the dredging would not have happened. I make special mention of one gentleman up in Tea Gardens who has really led the charge for so many years, and that is Mr Gordon Grainger. He and other members of the Myall River Action Group have been staunch champions to protect the health of the waterways in that area. They have done so in the face of enormous constraints, frustrations and difficulties in getting the funding and getting the plans in place. This is working hand in hand with council—and this is no criticism of council—and they have tried to do that work within the rules set by this Government.

The frustrating thing for the members of the Myall River Action Group is that once they get a win, get the approvals lined up, attract the funding that is needed and the work is done, they have to do it all over again because the dredging will be needed again, and they know it will take years to line up all of the funding and the authorities again. There has to be a better way. The complexity of coastal management is beyond the current capacity and resources of councils. The solutions cross council borders and it is enormously complex. Whilst I support the breather the bill gives to councils, the inaction on erosion and coastal management is on this Government. For residents living on the edge waiting for the next storm to take more of their land away, it is on this Government. I urge the Government to do more than just extend a deadline and give the councils and coastal communities the support that they need to undertake this important work.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:05): I speak in debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. From the outset, while Labor does not oppose the bill, we do have significant concerns about the Government's administration of the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program. The bill amends the Coastal Management Act 2016 to enable certified coastal zone management plans, which are referred to as CZMPs, to remain in force to 31 December 2023, along with ensuring that the CZMPs are certified and made in accordance with schedule 3 of the Act, and continue to be taken to be a coastal management program prepared and adopted under the Act until 31 December 2023.

Despite the Coastal Management Act having been in place for five years, we have heard today that many council grants have not yet been funded, which imposes the problem. But despite many councils' coastal zone management plans having been prepared, they have not been approved by the Government, and that is why we are here today. As the member for The Entrance and the member for Wyong have outlined, the Central Coast Council management plan for the northern part of the coast has been submitted a staggering four times and is still not yet approved by the Government. Lake Macquarie council is yet to have its coastal zone management plan approved either.

Before I address the Government's administration of the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program, I thank the Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, Kay Fraser, and Lake Macquarie City Council for their work in tackling erosion in our region, because without them the problem would be much worse. In particular, I acknowledge the council's coastal zone management plan to address the health of the Swansea Channel and the surrounding shorelines. I also acknowledge the work of my colleague Tim Crankanthorp, the member for Newcastle, and former Deputy Premier John Barilaro in committing to establish the Stockton Beach Taskforce. I note that the former Deputy Premier promised that the Government would provide Newcastle council with "whatever resources they need" to have Stockton Beach returned.

Those in the Hunter know only too well the coastal erosion crisis that has emerged at Stockton Beach, which is, as we very well know, threatening property and commercial interests alike. I know that both mayor Nuatali Nelmes and City of Newcastle Council look forward to working with the new Deputy Premier. I urge the new Deputy Premier to keep the promise made by his predecessor to fund this solution. It is too important not to continue that good work. While our local representatives have no doubt done a good job in making sure tackling severe erosion is a key priority for their local governments, the Liberal Government has failed to adequately support these efforts—and it is showing. The incompetence of the Government in administering crucial funding to support local government efforts to tackle severe erosion has seen our coastal foreshore plagued with erosion issues—and that includes the electorate of Swansea. As the member for Port Stephens said, coastal erosion is a lived experience in the electorates we represent—as you would well know, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is also affecting major infrastructure in our electorates.

I turn to some examples of the infrastructure affected in the electorate of Swansea. One of the most glaring examples of the cost of inaction from the Government can be seen in the severe erosion damage that has impacted the foreshore at Lake Macquarie Airport. I have raised this issue with the Government in the past, but it has failed to step up to the plate to tackle this issue. Now we have a situation where an area that was once wide enough to drive a car along is barely wide enough to walk along and is rather dangerous. The erosion is now placing the airstrip at genuine risk. This is completely unacceptable. It is a major business opportunity in the electorate and it is unacceptable to think that it would not be usable because of the severe erosion issues occurring in Lake Macquarie. Local residents consistently raise the erosion at the airport with me. Let me make it clear to the House: The Government not addressing erosion has not gone unnoticed. People feel that they are being abandoned.

The Lake Macquarie Airport is not the only part of the Pelican Foreshore facing erosion issues. The foreshore is used to host local community events and the park is under threat. The area is just a few hundred metres from the Pelican Marina. Locals remember waking up to see the marina floating down the channel in 2016. Of course, that was due to severe erosion on the shores. I had asked the safe work Minister at the time to come up and view those premises because even to my inexperienced eye it was obvious how dangerous that whole environment was. The land was and is owned and managed by Crown Lands. It is important at this juncture to acknowledge that most of these lands and foreshores that members are referring to in their contributions are Crown land managed by councils. All of the responsibility is on our local councils, and we thank them for their efforts.

The erosion issues are impacting the shoreline right across Lake Macquarie, with seawalls degrading and some even at risk of collapsing. We see this issue at both the shoreline opposite Chapman Oval in Swansea and along the shoreline at Swansea Heads. Lake Macquarie is Australia's largest coastal saltwater lake. For it to at times not be navigable is rather embarrassing. I am very frustrated and have raised this issue many times in this place. If people cannot navigate the largest saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere, what are we doing? It is such an important lake to be navigated. Hundreds of thousands of people live around and rely on that lake. For us not to be able to access the lake is really quite shocking.

While this bill does not directly affect the dredging problem, as the member for Port Stephens said—and I agree with her—there has to be a holistic approach to the way that we address coastal erosion, our waterways and our estuaries in New South Wales. We live in such amazingly beautiful parts of the world on the east coast, and I feel very lucky to live where I live—as I know you would too, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that all members think that their electorates are amazing. But we are so lucky to have these incredible waterways and it is incumbent upon us to look after them. We must ensure that they are healthy environments so that we can leave a better environment for the future. No longer can we sit on our hands and allow the erosion that is occurring and the degradation of our waterways to continue.

As I stated out the outset, I will be supporting this bill. However, it is a little too late and we need to do more. I implore the Government to put serious money into coastal erosion so that we can address the issues in the electorates of all members one by one and ensure that we can give business confidence that infrastructure that is at risk at the moment—I have named only a few examples in the electorate of Swansea—will not end up in the drink. We have seen it firsthand in my electorate. We have seen it in the electorate of the member for Terrigal with those homes falling into the ocean. We have seen a preschool, restaurants and a caravan park having to close in Stockton. That is not the New South Wales we want to be. We want people to be proud of our coastal environments. We want people to be proud of where they live. But we need to make sure that we are funding them properly. The bill is a bandaid solution to help fix a problem that the Government created. That is all well and good and we welcome that. But we need a long-term solution so that we ensure our communities can live safely, be proud of their environment and know that their government is looking after them, funding them and making sure that we will leave it a better place than we find it today.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (16:15): In reply: I thank all members who have contributed to debate on the Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021. I did not expect so many members to speak on a fairly simple piece of legislation. I thank the members representing the electorates of The Entrance, North Shore, Wyong, Port Macquarie, Gosford, Terrigal, Port Stephens and Swansea for their mostly thoughtful contributions, their passion and their evident knowledge of their areas. In particular I note the contribution of the member for Terrigal and the contribution of Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Port Macquarie. The member for Terrigal is never off the phone to me and is always adamant about finding solutions and the funding for his community, as is the member for Port Macquarie. It is a little late for members opposite to come into the Chamber today and squawk about needing funding when they have not written to me, phoned me, or immersed themselves in their communities to find solutions. However, come the eleventh hour they complain and offer negativity in the face of a bill that is really not controversial.

Clearly there is a misunderstanding by some Labor members not only of the purpose of this bill but also the purpose of the Coastal Management Act 2016. Before that Act—and yes, it was not gazetted until 2018 because we had to do some work on the State environmental planning policy [SEPP] that went along with it—ad hoc decisions were being made all over the coastal communities of New South Wales. Not one definite piece of legislation gave true direction to councils. That is why it was so important that we had that piece of legislation. For the member for Wyong to come to this Chamber today and say that when Labor was in power it built a wall up there—it fell into the sea and is still falling into the sea—indicates that Labor had no knowledge of the correct solutions. I am really sorry about Marine Rescue—he has not spoken to me about that—but members need to understand that some of the solutions that were taken in the past were inappropriate. They were not scientific. They were not based on fact. They were not based on experts such as Dr Phil Watson, who we called in to chair the task force.

Labor members came into the Chamber today to make a couple of negative points. Firstly, they said that the Government is not supporting coastal councils enough. Well, they did not support coastal councils at all. We have supported coastal councils to the tune of \$43 million to either complete their coastal management plans [CMPs] or complete the works associated with the CMPs. Whatever it may be, if the applications have come in my coastal team has looked at those applications to make sure that they tick all the boxes. Today members opposite came into the Chamber to say that a bit of pork-barrelling has been going on here. That has been the accusation.

Mr Adam Crouch: Absolute rubbish.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: It is absolute rubbish for them to suggest that all the funding is going to Liberal electorates. They love that tired old story that they run. However, I will tell members this about so-called pork-barrelling: Members opposite have come into the Chamber to intentionally mislead the House. In the 2021 planning stream to date 17 grants totalling \$1,949,931 have been approved in Coalition-held seats. In non-Coalition electorates there were 21 grants worth \$3,850,629. Is that pork-barrelling? It might be reverse pork-barrelling. I am not quite sure what those opposite mean. If they are going to come into the House and accuse the Government of pork-barrelling, they had better know their facts. But it gets better. In the 2020-21

implementation stream there were 15 grants and \$2,546,099 approved for Coalition electorates, but 17 grants totalling \$12,713,077 were approved—

Mr Mark Coure: That's too many.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Some would say it is too many. Some 17 grants were approved for projects in non-Coalition electorates. Let us put that little system to bed—whoever raised it. I think it might have been the member for Gosford. Whoever it was, it is a lie and making that suggestion is misleading the House. Those opposite are treading on very dangerous ground if they go down that line. I do not know how many Labor members spoke about the North Entrance Coastal Zone Management Plan [CZMP] being knocked back four times. I think one member wrote to me recently to say it was only three times. They cannot get their story straight. Members opposite have their speaking notes and they have decided that the CZMP was refuted four times. I have some correspondence from the former Minister, who is at the table, about what happened—what the history was with North Entrance under the Wyong plan. These are the reasons and the truth about those plans:

In June 2018 OEH and the NSW Coastal Panel determined the draft Wyong Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) was unsuitable for certification as it lacked a coherent strategy to manage coastal erosion threats for the "hotspot" areas of North Entrance, Hargraves Beach and Cabbage Tree Harbour.

Central Coast resubmitted the plan on 13 September 2018. OEH subsequently determined that the revised plan is not appropriate for certification as it has not addressed the NSW Coastal Panel's concerns.

The Wyong CZMP contained no definitive actions ...

We did not knock back those CZMPs because we do not like the council or the member; we said that they need a strategy around what actions they are going to take to address coastal erosion. They have to take this seriously. We continue to work with councils on their CZMPs that are in place now and, if extended after this bill, their coastal management plans [CMPs]. There has to be a strategy because under those opposite there was no strategy, no plan, no piece of legislation that guided the coastal councils, and no funds except for building a seawall here or there that is already falling down.

The Government has already committed \$46 million. The member for Port Stephens talked about Jimmy's Beach. We have committed enormous amounts of money to Jimmy's Beach. What we need to do to Jimmy's Beach regarding sand nourishment is on my discussion list regularly, because we have ascertained that seawalls and groynes are not necessarily the right solution for that particular area. We have contributed approximately \$130,000 towards that sand nourishment project. Those opposite say we are doing nothing and by saying it today the member for Port Stephens was simply misleading the House—as she does. She has not even written me a letter or picked up the phone to talk to me about Jimmy's Beach, what we are doing, how much we have spent, whether we can spend more and what the problems are.

The member for Terrigal and Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Port Macquarie, take action in their local communities, immersing themselves with their councils to find solutions to problems. Those on the other side of the House—the Johnny-come-latelys—say we have a problem and we do not spend enough money. They do not know how much we are spending because they have not written me a letter, sent me a text or an email, or picked up the phone—nothing. They come to the Chamber today to talk gibberish. That is all it has been, gibberish—"Let's take the opportunity in the House to have a go at the Government". The new Leader of the Opposition said that he intended to work in a bipartisan way but not one Labor member has stepped up to come to talk to me about these issues—they never have and they never will, I suspect because they love the whinging and the negativity. The member for Swansea is an expert, let's face it. What did she talk about? She spoke about Stockton Beach. I do not know how many times I have been to Stockton Beach and how much we have worked with Newcastle—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That is not appropriate behaviour from the member for Blue Mountains.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Whatever she does is highly inappropriate, I would say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will not do that. She is in the Chamber virtually.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I think the member has been completely inappropriate on many occasions. She has not come to the House to talk about the bill. Let us talk about Stockton Beach. We have worked very closely with Newcastle City Council because Stockton Beach was facing huge challenges. I have visited Stockton Beach and talked to the mayor and the general manager. What have we done? We have committed \$1.73 million towards solutions for Stockton Beach. Again, members on the other side of the House say that we are not doing anything, we are not doing enough or we are not spending anything. We continue to work with those councils very closely. The Government and I, as the Minister, understand the complexity of these problems, which are caused mostly by east coast lows. They happen in my electorate as well.

Basically, our coastline is changing. It is subject to alteration and threats every day, especially when we have storms and east coast lows. It is the real members of this place who understand their communities well and who work with the Government to try to find solutions. This legislation is nothing more than an attempt to help councils. Implicit in many of the comments by members opposite was criticism of their own councils. That was clear in what they said. They have no understanding of what is going on in their communities. As I have said before, this legislation came about because the Coastal Management Act passed in 2016 was not gazetted until 2018 as we had to spend more time on the State environmental planning policies—simple. Most councils have now completed their CMPs because we have directed a lot of money to help them do so. We will now give councils more time because they expected more time—they expected five years, not 2½ years—not because we have not helped them before. We have done so.

Members opposite need to understand the complexity of coastal issues. Judging from their comments today, I think they do not. They have demonstrated that they do not understand even the issues in their own electorates. Madam Deputy Speaker talked about the MidCoast Council and Lake Cathie. I have visited to look at those issues with her and the council. It is a great council. All councils are doing their best. I accept that they cannot always do it alone and that is why we have such a solid basis for the grant money we give councils when they submit their CZMPs or CMPs plans to us and when they offer actions—not just studies but actions, things that need to be done, and not in an ad hoc way as occurred under Labor. Labor did nothing to address those issues except, as the member for Wyong said, build a seawall incorrectly that is now sinking into the ocean. That is the sort of solution Labor offered.

As for pork-barrelling, I compared how much was spent in Coalition electorates with funding for non-Coalition electorates, and the difference was stark—so much more was spent in non-Coalition electorates. Wollongong and Shellharbour councils are Labor councils. Would I have committed so much time and energy to helping those two councils if they did not need assistance? I did not say I would not assist them because they are Labor councils. Of course I wanted to assist them. They both have great mayors and do great work. They both got great grants because they used their technical expertise, with assistance from the Government, to complete their CMPs and have them certified. Some great work has been done. There should be no conspiracy theories about this legislation. Those opposite are using this debate as an opportunity to come into the House and bash the Government. They are having a lovely time, but they clearly do not take coastal management seriously.

Mr Adam Crouch: Embarrassing.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: It is embarrassing. Some of their comments have been totally embarrassing. They do not understand coastal management and they have never wanted to. If they did, they would ask me for a meeting. They would pick up the phone or send me a text or an email and say, "Shell, get on the phone. Can you tell me what is going on?" I can tell you what is going on with every beach and coastal waterway in this State. I might not be able to rattle off the whole lot, but I understand most of them because I have been involved with most of them. I have been there and had a look. That is all I have to say on the bill. I thank all the members who contributed to the debate. Even though I have taken a swipe at some of the Opposition members, I do understand that they are passionate about their communities and their coastlines. Those of us who live in coastal communities are blessed.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It is a pleasure, isn't it?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: It is beautiful.

Mr Jihad Dib: Stop rubbing it in.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: It is five minutes to the beach. Obviously we want to protect it for our kids and our grandkids. I live in the most beautiful part of New South Wales. I knew that would stir them up. The South Coast is the most beautiful part of New South Wales.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It is not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will stop interjecting.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I thank every member who contributed to the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 13 October 2021.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:32): I lead for the New South Wales Opposition on the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. As stated in the second reading speech, the bill seeks to modernise and improve a series of administrative processes across a suite of energy legislation. It also seeks to legislate aspects of the New South Wales Government's \$3 billion hydrogen strategy. I confirm that the Opposition will not oppose the bill; however, we reserve the right to move amendments in the Legislative Council.

We are at an important juncture in time. The issues of energy security and climate change are interwoven in a way that implores people of all political stripes to find middle ground. Events over the last few years demonstrate that the New South Wales energy framework is in need of modernisation. We have lived through times of high energy costs. Many people will recall that a few years back we had an unstable energy supply. It is a truism that Australians want to look to a future of diverse, clean and cheap energy supply. This must be enabled by an up-to-date, flexible legislative and regulatory regime. The regime must protect and create jobs and at the same time hold an overarching view of not doing any more damage to this precious earth. This principle will be at the forefront of all NSW Labor energy and climate policy.

We must also address emerging cyber threats that require innovative approaches to energy security. NSW Labor Opposition will support the legislative change and reforms needed to provide that security both for industry and households. Like many others, I was concerned by the cyber attack in May 2021 that forced the shutdown of a major energy pipeline in the United States. We need to take precautionary measures to ensure a ransomware attack of that nature does not occur in New South Wales.

Labor appreciates that beyond improving administrative process, significantly, the bill gives effect to aspects of the Government's hydrogen strategy. Labor welcomes the in-principle hydrogen production incentives announced last week. While it was a significant announcement, Labor has been quite vocal on the importance of cleaner forms of energy, and hydrogen is a key possibility within this mix. Labor reiterates that the detail of the announced policy as well as the follow through and implementation of this strategy are far more important than the announcement alone.

The time to act has well and truly passed and the populous is tired of waiting for action. Far too often we have seen showy announcements on energy and climate, but we are still waiting on things such as the delivery of a climate change adaptation plan—New South Wales is the only State or Territory to not have one—the completion and implementation of an energy efficiency and energy saving plan, with the delay resulting in lost opportunities to cut energy bills for New South Wales by billions of dollars; and the finalisation of the Climate Change Fund Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022. Announcements and intent are welcome, but tangible actions are what is most important.

The use of renewable energy zones [REZs] go to the heart of the NSW Hydrogen Strategy. The hydrogen production fostered by these incentives will be generated by REZs in areas including the Illawarra and the Hunter. It is a good example of what can be achieved when the Parliament takes on amendments from all representatives, such as those put forward by the Labor Party. In November last year the Government introduced the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020, creating renewable energy zones in a number of regional areas in The Nationals-held electorates. Notably, the Illawarra and the Hunter had been overlooked for REZ status by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Labor moved amendments to ensure the Illawarra and the Hunter were included and would get their fair share of renewable energy jobs. Significantly, this allows some certainty for people at risk of losing their employment as a result of a move towards the development of new energy sources.

Labor is the party of green hydrogen, with Labor governments already delivering in Queensland and Western Australia. A Minns Labor government would do the same in New South Wales from 2023. At its heart, energy security is a household issue. Our constituents know better than anyone the pressure of mounting electricity bills. Many of our constituents are blue-collar industrial workers and know that industry relies on secure, affordable energy. A clean, cheap and secure energy future requires hydrogen at a macro level, for the reasons I have outlined, and at a micro level to provide long-term relief to households from crushing energy bills.

The bill proposes amendments to the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, the Forestry Act 2012, the Gas Supply Act 1996 and the Pipelines Act 1967. As I said at the outset, the purpose of these amendments to the energy Acts are in large part to improve administrative processes. The

amendments reflect alternate sources of energy that include hydrogen and biogas being introduced into the New South Wales energy supply.

The amendments will enable New South Wales to opt into the national regulatory framework for standalone power systems, or SAPs. There will be improvement to the administration of the Energy Security Safeguard and the Energy Emergency Framework. The bill also enhances cybersecurity protections for the energy system. The bill enables renewable energy projects in State forests but only in softwood plantations, not native forests. I will have more to say about that later in my speech. There are several miscellaneous provisions that, for example, will increase options available to networks to resolve issues of private structures encroaching on electricity and gas works.

We can deduce the following in relation to certain aspects of the bill. The bill addresses a lack of clarity in the definition of "natural gas" as a renewable gas source, such as the development of green hydrogen. The NSW Hydrogen Strategy sets a target of 10 per cent hydrogen gas network blending, which is considered safe within the existing pipeline infrastructure. However, blended gas would be illegal because it does not meet the current definition of "natural gas". These amendments allow for industry certainty and for a more practical application of the policy direction. The amendment makes sense.

As we know, one of the key inhibitors of new technologies and possible changes is the cost ratio. Often the scale means opportunities are limited to undertake changes in the early stages. The bill also enables certain concessions to lower the price of electricity for green hydrogen production. That allows electricity used to be exempt from costs associated with the Climate Change Fund under the Government's Energy Security Safeguard. As such, purchases of electricity that provide green hydrogen will be given an exemption from network system user charges. Concessions will be available for 12 years and, as I said, that certainty may attract investment and uptake of the scheme.

The bill enables a national energy standalone power system [SAPS] framework. SAPSs are electricity arrangements that are not physically connected to the national electricity grid. The amendments provide the option for New South Wales to opt in to the framework if it is beneficial to do so. Typically, a SAPS consists of photovoltaic solar panels, generators and batteries. They are an effective way to supply electricity to regional and remote areas rather than maintaining a connection to the grid. The concerns that arise with that include the loss of network maintenance jobs and the possibility of limited ongoing employment around SAPS. That raises the questions of how they will be maintained in the long term and how an energy supply will be generated if the renewable energy source is lost—for example, if there is a massive storm or, as we have seen in Armidale recently, a tornado. What are some of the solutions to that? We need to consider those questions. The changes will enable a distributor to operate a SAPS for a customer. Most importantly, it imposes consistency of rights and obligations on distributors operating a SAPS as other distributors.

The bill also gives effect to parts of the Energy Security Safeguard announced in 2019, which includes two separate schemes: the energy saving scheme [ESS]—there are a few acronyms in this legislation—running now until 2050, with an energy saving target of at least 13 per cent; and a new peak demand reduction scheme [PDRS] to support activities that reduce demand at peak times, including a flexible demand response. That was set out in a September 2021 position paper released by the Minister. The ESS provides financial incentives to install, improve or replace energy savings equipment and appliances in households and businesses. The bill will enable projects to switch to cleaner fuels but is focused on enhancing the power of the regulator, IPART, to enforce noncompliance provisions. I appreciate the Minister's office getting back to me when I had concerns about that element of the legislation, and I am satisfied with the intent of the Minister.

I acknowledge and thank the Minister's office for coming back to me so quickly with answers to the questions I had and for being frank about the information that I required. NSW Labor is pleased to see the extension of the ESS, which was a policy that was initially introduced by the former Labor Government in 2009. On the energy emergency and compliance framework, the bill amends processes to align how an energy emergency can be declared. Currently, an electricity emergency can be declared by the Premier but other energy-related emergencies can be declared by only the Governor. The bill provides that the Premier may now declare an energy emergency in non-electricity energy-related emergencies.

The associated process of information gathering is simplified by the bill. Again, that amendment seems sensible. In a time of crisis—and I hope we never have one—we need to have the opportunity to act decisively and manage the situation with all the information and resources at hand. On cybersecurity the bill creates backstop provisions to ensure energy generators, networks and pipelines have protections in place from cyber attacks. A Federal framework does not yet exist, and so the amendments effectively enable New South Wales to align with a future national framework. We have seen an example of overseas ransomware attacks and the crippling effect it can have on energy supply. We also know that cybersecurity is an issue across all elements of society, and that provisions that strengthen security for critical areas are supported.

On forestry, the bill enables renewable energy projects in State forests. The second reading speech and the department brief I received made clear that that will apply to softwood plantations and not native forests or vegetation. I am glad to hear that any developments will still have to go through the same rigorous planning and approval processes. It would be remiss of me not to speak to the timber shortage we are facing in New South Wales. I acknowledge that some of my colleagues will also speak in more detail about that. The timber shortage is a potential looming disaster. Any number of examples of shortage and rising costs point to the fact that there is a great deal of potential to actively grow our plantation timber stocks. In addition to creating more jobs, the plantations also act as an important carbon sink.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Hear, hear!

Mr JIHAD DIB: I thank the Minister. As we amend the forestry legislation, it is important to remember that nationwide current demand is 175,000 cubic metres per month or 2.1 million cubic metres per year and production capacity is restricted to around 150,000 cubic metres per month or 1.8 million per year, which is jeopardising the housing construction sector.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Hear, hear!

Mr JIHAD DIB: I acknowledge the Minister. I thank her very much for her interjections. Furthermore, a domestic industry ensures that sourced timber is developed in accordance with sustainable ethical practice. Forestry Corporation, for example, is bound by sustainable forest management certification, which also represents our responsibility as good global citizens. As we know from its website, the worldwide certification of programs aims to prevent unregulated or illegally logged forest timber entering international markets. Buying certified local timber not only helps reduce the market for timber from unregulated forests but also reduces emissions from importing timber. The responsible wood certification system sets out the criteria that forestry management must meet. According to the Forestry Corporation website, that includes:

- forestry activities undertaken in a systematic manner that addresses a range of forest values
- provide for public participation and foster productive community relationships, particularly with neighbours
- protect and maintain the biological diversity of forests, including their successional stages across the regional landscape
- maintain the productive capacity of forests
- maintain forest ecosystem health and vitality
- protect soil and water resources
- maintain forests' contribution to the carbon cycle
- protect and maintain the natural, cultural, social, religious and spiritual heritage values of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
- maintain and enhance long-term social and economic benefits.

As we can see, the requirements of the certification system are quite prescriptive and it is important to confirm that the bill and regulations that arise from it meet the aforementioned conditions. The second reading speech by the member for North Shore on behalf of the Minister made reference to offset land assets. In the speech, the member for North Shore said:

These actions could, for example, include requiring developers to offset land losses ...

However, that points to an aspiration and not a directive. The specific nature of that statement is not reflected clearly in the legislation. There remains some vagueness regarding it. Offsets are a crucial element, but it is also very important to note that offsets in areas far removed from the place of origin will have a significant impact on localised employment. The Opposition has been assured that regulatory changes will follow the bill that will require, for example, Forestry Corporation to implement actions to minimise the impact of any approved projects, including requiring developers to offset land losses at their own expense. That example was cited in the second reading speech, as I highlighted earlier. It is a sad reflection of politics that we may be sceptical and have to seek further information, but we must have guarantees that the appropriate regulatory changes will promptly follow the passage of this legislation to minimise the impact of approved projects.

The last thing the Opposition wants to see is an important form of carbon sequestration and an employment opportunity being removed to support renewable energy projects because the net result is not an improvement on securing a renewable energy future. NSW Labor will ask for a guarantee of offsets in the regulations to come, and I foreshadow a potential amendment to the bill in the Legislative Council on that issue. The Minister's speech in reply is an opportunity to hear a clear response to that concern. We seek clarity around the issue of offsets, particularly any land used for the purpose of this legislative amendment being offset by the same, which is essentially a net zero loss. We also strongly urge an increase in the landmass used for softwood and exotic tree

plantations in consideration of offsets. Furthermore, it should be expected that as mature trees are replaced, CO2 absorption is reduced. It would make sense then that smaller and immature trees planted as replacements be greater in number to make up for that shortfall.

I also raise an issue around biomass incineration for energy. I thank the Minister's office and the department for getting back to me with some clarification. The conversion of biomass to energy is a complex and polarising issue. Whilst it is not in the intent of the bill, it is possible that the generation and storage of energy from renewable sources will leave the door slightly ajar if one considers biomass incineration a renewable energy source. Given the possible wiggle room in the legislation, it is important to put on the record that the bill is not designed to enable the use of Forestry land for the generation and storage of energy obtained from biomass incineration. I look forward to the response from the Minister in his speech in reply, as this concern has been raised by a number of stakeholder groups. In addition, section 60 of the bill, "Forest permits for non-forestry uses", refers to the issuing of permits for:

- (a) the purposes specified in the permit, including recreational, sporting or commercial activities ...

To this end, the Opposition would like assurances that this proposed use of land would be regulated to ensure that safety risks and extensive community consultation are taken into account and covered. As members know, forests are open to a variety of recreational activities. An assurance that rigorous processes will be undertaken to ensure that those permits will be for safe, affordable and non-exclusive activities is important. I ask the Minister to respond to this in his speech in reply. As I touched on earlier, the bill does not make clear the impact that this may have on Forestry Corporation employees. As members can imagine, regular and secure employment is a key issue for people. The Opposition supports the bill to, amongst many other things, enhance employment opportunities rather than diminish them, especially in the public sector.

NSW Labor will not oppose the bill because the amendments it makes to the Electricity Supply Act are largely administrative and serve to improve processes and address twenty-first century challenges to energy security. However, we will reserve our right to move amendments in the Legislative Council based on the responses the Minister gives in his speech in reply to some of the issues that I have raised. The Opposition notes that consultation with certain industry and employment representative groups has been lacklustre. If the Government is serious about protecting and creating jobs then energy modernisation legislation should be developed with proper input from unions such as the Australian Workers Union [AWU], which became more engaged with the bill when I contacted it. I thank the AWU, the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union's manufacturing division, the United Services Union, the Public Service Association, the Electrical Trades Union, Timber NSW and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW for their feedback on the bill.

The greater the consultation, the better the chance of addressing all concerns to make the legislation as good as it can be. By and large, the message from the unions was the same. They are employee bodies that have a social conscience agenda and recognise the reasons behind the amendments in the bill. They raise very important issues of safeguards to employment, guarantees that things will not be lost and a desire for genuine quality control. They are an important part of the process. I urge that any future legislation takes into account their viewpoints when developing policy and processes. Job protection and creation should be at the forefront of energy legislation. Energy modernisation and the creation of new industries like hydrogen will create jobs. The Government should not ignore the fact that revisions that enable a regulated, standalone power system in various locations could have an effect on maintenance jobs. It should consider how best to support affected workers.

Labor will continue to support efforts to modernise the legislative and regulatory energy regime. We know that the energy market and the opportunities and challenges that accompany it change at a rapid rate. Where the Government can provide clarity and certainty to households and industry, we will support it. The Opposition champions the importance of balancing the need to position our State as a renewable energy superpower with the need for energy guarantees and affordability, the development of the manufacturing sector and outstanding employment opportunities. By and large, the bill addresses some of those guiding principles. I thank stakeholders for their input on the bill. I also thank my many colleagues who have contributed to the bill. I also thank the Minister's office and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for their input. I look forward to the Minister's responses to the questions that I have asked at the conclusion of the second reading debate.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:54): I am pleased to support the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I jumped at the chance to speak in debate on the bill, which will modernise and harmonise procedures that relate to energy supply issues and emergencies. It is time for those emergency provisions to be updated, as they have been operating unchanged since they commenced in 1987, when I was in year 2 at St Joseph's in Oatley.

Mr Jihad Dib: Were you born then?

Mr MARK COURE: I was born then. Given the recent demands on resources to respond to energy emergencies, it is critical that the emergency provisions relating to energy and energy resources are fit for purpose

and relevant. Those demands were seen in the 2020 Black Summer bushfires, during which multiple emergency agencies had to work together to manage the impact of the fires. The changes in the bill will allow the Government to implement the appropriate response plan when an energy-related emergency arises. They will also establish a consistent approach to how the Government manages energy emergencies across the New South Wales energy utility sectors.

Cybersecurity threats in Australia and the world have increased. Social media platforms such as Facebook have been exposed to cyber attacks. The most recent took place earlier this year and caused the personal data of 500 million users to be leaked. Two weeks ago WhatsApp was also attacked. Critical energy infrastructure assets are not immune to cyber threats and attacks. Those attacks are occurring more often as the energy sector becomes increasingly digitalised. In its 2020-2021 annual cyber threat report, the Australian Cyber Security Centre noted that top-tier cyber criminals prefer to hunt big game entities, which are often high-profile, high-value targets that provide essential services or critical infrastructure. That is why the Government needs to be able to act to ensure that the State's critical infrastructure is protected from any future cyber attack. It needs to ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place to protect the continuation of essential services.

The bill sets out a streamlined framework so that emergencies can be quickly responded to. The State's response to emergencies must continue to adapt, as threats can evolve very quickly. The bill will allow for quick action to be taken and will ensure that there is a single framework to respond to energy-related emergencies, whether for electricity, gas or other fuels. As seen during the devastating bushfires of 2020, an emergency can impact multiple energy sectors. One lesson learned from those catastrophic fire conditions was that the emergency framework needs to be more efficient. The bill will provide the backdrop to protect crucial energy infrastructure with a formed national framework.

We need to stay vigilant to the threat that cybersecurity poses to the State's critical energy infrastructure. In 2015 and 2016 cyber attacks on Ukrainian power stations affected more than 200,000 customers. Let me be the first member in this Chamber to refer to *Die Hard 4.0*, which I watched only a week ago. In Hollywood the threats are real. In *Die Hard 4.0* John McClane attempts to stop a cyber terrorist from hacking critical government infrastructure.

Mr Jihad Dib: Yippee-ki-yay, mother—

Mr MARK COURE: Yes, that is later in the speech. In May this year the United States' largest fuel pipeline operator was shut down for nearly a week, creating supply shocks in the US market. Those types of cyber attacks are becoming more common. So far in 2021 the Australian Cyber Security Centre has received more than 67,500 reports of cybercrime of all types.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

NSW ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:58): I move:

That this House acknowledges the Government's plan to build a strong economy for the future as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The New South Wales Government is building the economy of the future. Throughout the Delta lockdown the Government has taken strong action to ensure that lives and livelihoods are protected. That has meant balancing the critical health response with keeping the economy going. The priority was to protect the economy and workers to get to the other side of the pandemic by supporting the recovery of the economy and establishing the policies to ensure we win the future. The Government has been supporting businesses and workers so that we emerge from lockdown stronger than ever before. While the Government has been doing this critical maintenance and recovery, it has also been preparing for the economy's bright future.

The New South Wales Government has a track record of delivery for the people of the State. In the 2021-22 budget, \$5.1 billion was committed for COVID-19 response and stimulus support expenditure measures. As of 2 September 2021, the Government has committed more than \$8 billion in COVID-19 support measures in response to the Delta outbreak. That is in addition to \$3.4 billion committed by the Commonwealth, and \$6 billion in previously committed stimulus support measures as part of the 2021-22 budget. Of that, almost \$7 billion in business support grants has been paid to businesses. With respect to support for businesses, the critical business support measures included the JobSaver payments, to ensure workers and businesses maintain their relationships.

The Government's JobSaver program saved around 100,000 jobs that would have been lost. JobSaver payments for businesses impacted by the health restrictions provide cash flow support to businesses to maintain employment of staff. The program is implemented in partnership with the Commonwealth, whose contribution is

valued at over \$3.4 billion. More than \$4.6 billion has already been paid out. The Government is also funding two programs to expand JobSaver payments, including hospitality, tourism and recreation businesses with annual turnover of \$250 million to \$1 billion, with at least a 50 per cent decline in turnover, and a \$280 million expansion for registered charities in the social support and animal welfare sectors that have a decline in turnover of a minimum 15 per cent and less than 30 per cent.

The 2021 COVID-19 Micro-Business Grant program supports small businesses or sole traders with an annual turnover of more than \$30,000 and under \$75,000, with \$390 million already paid out to eligible businesses across the State. Additionally, the 2021 COVID-19 Business Grant closed on 1 October and applied to the first three weeks of lockdown, with \$2.24 billion already paid out to businesses. There are also support measures for individuals and communities. Lockdowns have had a significant impact upon mental health outcomes. That is why the New South Wales Government committed \$130 million to provide immediate access to help for anyone whose mental health has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government also created a financial assistance package for private residential landlords, providing up to \$3,000 per tenancy to landlords who provide rent reductions for COVID-19 impacted tenants for the short-term evictions moratorium period. Commercial and retail landlords who reduce the rent of financially distressed tenants will be eligible for a land tax concession of up to 100 per cent of the 2021 land tax year liability. Additionally, the arts industry has been hardest hit throughout lockdown with cancelled shows. The Government recently announced \$86 million in funding for the return of arts, screen and culture in New South Wales, to boost confidence and give some much-needed certainty after the past year.

The Government also introduced tax deferrals and waivers to provide cash flow support to businesses, including payroll tax waivers of 50 per cent of 2021-22 payroll tax for businesses with Australian wages of less than \$10 million that have experienced a 30 per cent or greater decline in turnover, and payroll tax payment deferrals for all payroll taxpayers on the 2020-21 financial year annual reconciliation return and on wages paid in July and August 2021 until 14 January 2022. Taxpayers can also seek an interest-free repayment plan for up to 12 months for the payroll tax payments due on 14 January 2022. The new measures are in addition to the existing \$6 billion in New South Wales Government stimulus and other support measures in the 2021-22 budget.

Existing recovery measures are already in place for post-lockdown and existing support. The Government has developed support measures to target highly impacted industries and revitalise the CBD, including the Dine & Discover voucher scheme that provides all New South Wales residents aged 18 and over with vouchers worth \$100 each, which has been extended until 30 June 2022; a \$50 million allocation to the CBD Friday voucher scheme to support people to return to the CBD when it is safe to do so; and a \$2 million Tourism Industry Marketing Support package to support tourism businesses to implement recovery marketing campaigns to drive immediate demand and bookings.

Additionally, the Government is continuing to deliver infrastructure and capital works as part of the 2021-22 commitments through the \$3 billion Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, and a range of other capital works upgrades and maintenance projects. The Government is providing small businesses with a fees and charges rebate of \$1,500 to help with the cost of doing business, and the \$250 million Jobs Plus Program to attract businesses into the State and create jobs. That brings the Government's total COVID-19 response and recovery commitments announced since March 2020 to approximately \$39 billion from 2019-20 to 2024, including tax deferrals and waivers. The measures introduced to date enable an appropriate health response, and timely support to communities and the economy during public health restrictions. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:06): Via video link: I am delighted to respond to the Public Interest Debate, yet again debating the economic recovery from the COVID pandemic. This working-class economist never shies away from an economic debate. It is obvious that the Liberal Government has been drinking its own economic Kool-Aid about the required economic solutions. It believes that economic recovery is to come into the Chamber, send in the novice economic privates, fire off some economic blanks, roll off some talking points and repeat previously moved motions. It does not do its basic homework. If it cannot do the very basics in parliamentary debates, how can it possibly be trusted to come up with economic solutions?

Let me take members back to 11 May, when the member for Hawkesbury moved that this House acknowledges that this Government is building for a post-COVID economy. Then, on 8 June, the member for Manly moved that this House acknowledges that the Government continues to build a strong economy as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, of course, the member for Miranda moved to acknowledge the New South Wales Government's plan to build a strong economy for the future as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Seriously? We are \$104 billion in debt. That is about \$13,000 for every man, woman and child in New South Wales. Since June, 234,500 fewer people are employed. Hours worked have dropped by 11 per cent, and 8.4 per cent of the New South Wales workforce worked zero hours. Zilch. Nought. Nothing. No hours worked.

A few word changes in a repeated Public Interest Debate motion is not the solution. Economics is a complicated profession, and we are in a difficult and precarious economic situation. We need thoughtful and targeted economic policy, not economic plagiarism. We do not need pass mark undergraduates who did not even do economics 101 and if they did, barely passed it. Those repeated motions clearly tell the people of New South Wales that the Liberal Government has no insight into the depth of the economic situation and no idea about the required economic recovery. It is the ultimate recycler. It recycles old media releases. It recycles the same old photo opportunities. It recycles bad policies. It even recycles Premiers like there is no tomorrow. Yet, here we are again, recycling the same old motions.

You would think that a government would try to play to its strongest hand. It would roll off its standard media lines on this project and that project, all of which, of course, went well over budget by the billions. What about the Sydney Light Rail project? After 11 years you would think the Government would have some positive tale to tell—something, surely. But, alas, no. Almost four months since the lockdown was imposed, we have weasel words that somehow make everything better. So here we are yet again, debating this Government's economic credentials—or, to be more specific, the lack thereof. It is something this working-class economist is only too pleased to talk about; it is surely the lowest hanging fruit.

You would think this Government would learn, given we already had these debates in recent months. Obviously not, because the reality is this Liberal Government—and yet another new Liberal Premier—has no economic or policy credentials at all. It is true that the new Premier is big on announcements. Toll hikes—tick. Copy Labor policy on tolls, social housing and education—tick, tick, tick. Did I mention land tax? Funny how that just seems to have fallen off the economic reform agenda, much like the Government's much-touted emergency services levy reforms—we have not heard much about that, have we? The truth is that all this Government ever actually does is talk. Nation- and State-building reform is simply alien to the current bunch on the Government benches. But they can talk—if only they actually ever followed through with some action.

The Government's policy and economic scenario goes something like this: Have a thought bubble—any thought will do, provided there is a photo op in it; hire a gaggle of consultants and pay them squillions; market-test the aforementioned thought bubble and consultants' report with photo ops and media releases; receive stakeholder and public backlash; realise the thought bubble is dead; scrap and bury; and repeat. The outcome of this Government's so-called reform process is the consultants make millions, New South Wales taxpayers get ripped off, opportunities are lost and the New South Wales people lose money that could have been spent to help our economy and businesses recover. I began by saying that this Government is all about recycling. This Government, despite cosmetic changes, is no longer up to the challenges facing a post-pandemic New South Wales. It is time for change.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:11): Via video link: I enjoyed the diatribe of fake news from the member for Macquarie Fields, and I expect there will be more fake news from the member for Wollongong. It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this public interest debate, brought on by the member for Miranda. I deliver my speech virtually from my electorate office in sunny Tahmoor. Even though I cannot hear the comments from Opposition members in the House, I will keep pressing ahead. As someone who ran a small business and who has been involved in small business for many years, what we have seen over the past 18 months to two years—I wish I was still running my small business to get this support—is that the New South Wales Government has spent up to \$3 billion that was allocated in 2019-20 and has allocated \$4.1 billion for COVID response and stimulus. That was after the bushfires, and people in the electorate of Wollondilly know how hard those were for business.

In 2020-21, \$5.1 billion was committed to the COVID-19 response and stimulus support expenditure measures. The majority of that funding was spent in 2020-21. In 2021-22, from 2 September the Government committed more than \$8 billion in COVID support measures in response to the current outbreak. That was in addition to the \$3.4 billion committed by the Commonwealth and \$6 million in previous stimulus support measures allocated as part of the 2021-22 budget. In early September this year, Wollondilly and Southern Highlands business owners had the opportunity to take part in a virtual town hall. Guest panellists included Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello, MP, and Small Business Commissioner Chris Lamont, and the panel was hosted by [inaudible] facilitator Randall Walker. The panel answered a wide range of questions on the New South Wales Government's COVID assistance package and its strategy to reopen businesses and the economy. If members wish to view that town hall meeting, I recommend they head to my YouTube channel, "NathanielSmithMP". Those on the other side of the House can experience how the pros do it.

The business support measures we went through with Wollondilly and Southern Highlands business owners mainly were JobSaver, the small business grant and the micro-business grant. As members know, we have gone through these measures regularly; our office and our [inaudible] staff have been like an extension of Service NSW over the past few months. The support measures really kept businesses' heads above water. As

someone who ran a small business, I know how hard it is. When you run a small business, you are the small business: You bear all the responsibility and you take all the risk. Our small businesses have been my number one focus over the past two years. Not only did we have the drought; we also had bushfires and floods. Now we have COVID-19 and the pandemic lockdown to get over, and it has been very tough on businesses. One of the grants that I spoke to a lot of small business owners about is the micro-business grant. This was the brainchild of our Premier when he was the Treasurer. There is no grant like the micro-business grant in any jurisdiction. It helps businesses with an annual turnover of between \$30,000 and \$75,000 per year. They are small businesses, they are single mums, they are retirees who work a couple of days a week, and now they are getting \$1,500 per week to keep their heads above water. The New South Wales Government has spent up to \$390 million already [inaudible] businesses.

As members would be aware, last week in the House I spoke about an exciting project to do with tourism, which is going to be a major way of fighting back and helping people in communities like my own. I announced an additional \$9.1 million towards a 32-kilometre Picton to Colo Vale loop line restoration project, which will bring in thousands of tourists to the Southern Highlands-Wollondilly region. I am hopeful that this project will rival the Puffing Billy in Victoria, which takes in about 500,000 tourists a year. The project will offer a superior tourist experience and will provide a much-needed economic boost to local businesses, which have done it tougher than anyone. In conclusion, looking at all the things that this Liberal Government is doing to help small businesses get back up on their feet and the infrastructure announcements we are making, I can only come back to what I have been saying on social media: You can't spell "freedom" without "Dom". We are going to get through this pandemic together, and we will make New South Wales great again.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:16): Via video link: I make a contribution to the public interest debate about "Building the Economy for the Future". If the past four months or the past 10 years are anything to go by, this Liberal Government is building a dystopian and divided society. What we have seen in my electorate, which [inaudible] the areas of concern and, before that, one of the 12 local government areas [LGAs], has been nothing short of discriminatory and horrific. My electorate suffers from having had cuts to public transport by this Liberal Government and has been pretty much forced onto the M4, where the tolls are going up by 4 per cent a year through the contract that this Government signed with Transurban. That will be the case for 40 years to come.

Fines are [inaudible] that always has their hand in our pockets. The economic future is one in which big corporations profit at the expense of the people of western Sydney. If you look around, the place is being filled with units and the infrastructure to support that—the social infrastructure, like schools—is not keeping pace. More than 20 promised schools or school upgrades in western Sydney have not been delivered. In my electorate, Westmead Public School needs to be supported by a second public school in the suburb. One was promised years ago but does not even have a site yet. The Government is looking at commercialising our parks even more than they already are. Not only that, but where they put all those [inaudible] when the Government does deliver school upgrades, it tends to put the school classrooms on the school ovals. That forces schools to hold kids' sports on the council ovals, which means that they are used seven days a week, and that places even greater strain on local infrastructure.

Time and again during the pandemic, the Government's language was very telling of its attitude towards the people of western Sydney and how it does not really consider us. Government members expressed surprise that we were not able to work from home. They expressed surprise that people from western Sydney worked in the east. They expressed even more surprise that hairdressers at Joh Bailey's salon in Double Bay who got COVID at the salon lived in western Sydney and spread it when they got home. They really need to look at how little a hairdresser earns and think about the capacity of people to actually live anywhere near where they work. They live in western Sydney; that is where they can afford to live. Western Sydney is a great place to live and an affordable place to live, but it is becoming less and less affordable under this Government.

Government members expressed surprise at the level of overcrowding in western Sydney housing. People can afford to live in western Sydney but sometimes they cannot afford to have a bedroom to themselves. Sometimes multiple generations live in the one home. That has made the spread of COVID an even greater challenge. But it came as a huge surprise to this Government because its members do not actually think about people in western Sydney much at all. All they think about western Sydney is that it is an opportunity to build more units and an opportunity to get us to pay more tolls. They leave us behind at every opportunity.

During the past four months over 20 per cent of people in my area have been receiving some sort of COVID income support. Some businesses in western Sydney have had a downturn of over 70 per cent. I have seen that time and time again. I have spoken to business owners in a whole array of businesses who still worked during the pandemic, which saw their cash flow and the number of people coming to their business drop off enormously. That is on top of all the businesses that were closed down. The business support provided by this Government took weeks and weeks to arrive and did not compensate people enough. Government members really need to stop

patting themselves on the back for their record of making life harder for people in western Sydney while talking about how great our economic future is going to be. As we have seen, the past few months have been awful for us. That has further exposed the divide that this Government has been perpetuating and worsening for the past decade.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:21): Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr Jihad Dib: You are one of the nicer members.

Ms STEPH COOKE: I thank the member for Lakemba very much. It is evident that this Government is highly committed to supporting the recovery of our State economy, including record investments in regional New South Wales. I commend the member for Miranda for moving this motion in the House today, which gives me an opportunity to talk about this record investment right across regional and rural New South Wales. Just last week the New South Wales Government unveiled the \$200 million recovery package for regional New South Wales. It includes \$30 million for round two of the Regional Job Creation Fund and \$50 million for the Regional Events Package. It also includes \$20 million for round two of the Regional Events Acceleration Fund and \$5 million for the country shows support package, which I know is really welcome in my electorate. We have 24 regional shows across the electorate, many of which have been unable to be held for the last couple of years.

There is also \$25 million for the Reconnecting Regional NSW community events package. On top of this, there is \$40 million for priority infrastructure projects across regional New South Wales. This latest investment comes on top of the \$2 billion Regional Growth Fund, which has transformed communities right across rural and regional New South Wales, as well as the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. Regional New South Wales warmly welcomes these investments. I know they are very much appreciated by the communities I represent and that I have had the great privilege of visiting over the past four years.

Employment growth and job security are crucial to the development of our regional populations, so it is unsurprising that the Government has recognised them as a priority. Job creation increases employment prospects in regional areas and gives locals the opportunity to gain new skills. This is why the New South Wales Government continues to support regional employment with \$147.6 million in additional funding in 2021-22 to implement the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. This will support 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs, with the majority of these in regional New South Wales. It is fantastic. We also have committed \$462 million to the special activation precincts [SAPs] in Wagga Wagga and Parkes. I have had the great honour of visiting those SAPs. They are absolute game changers for those communities and more broadly. They are expected to create an additional 6,000 jobs and attract business and investment from interstate and overseas to regional New South Wales. The newly announced NSW Hydrogen Strategy is expected to attract more than \$80 billion of investment and create a bonanza of jobs.

Community facilities play a major role in regional New South Wales. Whether it is the council library or the local footy ground, locals take great pride in their shared amenities. It has been wonderful to see all of the infrastructure upgrades in these facilities across regional New South Wales, which have really come about because of the Stronger Country Communities Fund. We are about to embark on round four of this incredible fund. Through three rounds of the fund my electorate alone has seen around \$35 million invested in everything from swimming pool upgrades and scoreboards at footy fields to park upgrades and new amenities left, right and centre. It has been absolutely fantastic. The \$50 million in round four is specifically going to increase female participation in sport, which is absolutely fantastic. There is \$75 million coming in round eight of Resources for Regions, which supports mining-impacted communities with more local amenities and community infrastructure. The list goes on and on.

Of course, the Government continues to invest in hospitals, schools and mental health. One of the biggest game changers in recent times in regional New South Wales has been the regional seniors travel card, which provides \$250 to our local people for better access to taxis, public transport and community transport to continue doing the things that they love. I commend the New South Wales Government for its ongoing support of regional New South Wales and look forward to seeing our communities flourish. I commend the motion.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:27): Today it is my pleasure to contribute to this public interest debate. The topic is "Building the Economy for the Future". It is a big statement from those members opposite. What members really need to consider is how we support this economy. We support it by supporting the small to medium business community. In my 30 years in practice representing small business, I got to understand how small businesses operate and how small business operators think. What they want is for government to keep its hand out of their pocket, reduce obstacles and red tape—just leave them alone. And when it imposes hardship on them, support them when they are taking a hit for the team. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, which recycled into the Perro-Toole Government—it sounds like some type of failed consumer product—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Rockdale over the interjections of members.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From day dot this Government has come out with some flimsy, vague announcements about how it will support the small business community once it has compelled small business owners to lock down. They were vague announcements with lump sums. The Government did not consider microbusinesses or many elements of the business community throughout the whole process. Opposition members are sitting there—

Mr Adam Crouch: Doing nothing.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I say to the member for Terrigal that we are receiving hundreds and hundreds of calls because none of the members of the Government are addressing them. I was getting calls from small businesses from all over this State—in electorates represented by Liberal MPs. I was asking them, "Why don't you speak to your MP? They are in government." These people would say, "Do you know what they said? They said, 'You shouldn't be complaining because we are supporting—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Rockdale over the interjections of members.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You do not build a strong economy by neglecting your small business community. There were days when I would get phone calls from small business owners, such as Leah, from Leah's Waxworks, saying, "Steve, I don't know what to do. I have four businesses in Westfield Miranda." There was no road map as to how she was going to manage the rent arrears. The shutdown was in the never-never. What was she going to do? What support was there? I had to harass the Minister for Finance and Small Business with a cattle prod nearly, with a hot stick, to try to do something, to give these people surety, to let them know that there is something there for them, that there is some support. This was happening on a daily basis. I was ringing and pleading with Ministers to change the criteria for microbusinesses. Some people could not get disaster payments because they got one dollar of Commonwealth benefit. This is the sort of thing the Government is not thinking about.

How can the Government say it is going to build a strong economy for the future when it has no connection with the small-to-medium business community? They are the lifeblood of our society. They are the biggest employer in New South Wales. The Ministers sit in their ivory towers while the business owners are waiting for bread and water, just to stay alive. These are proud business people who have never put their hands out before. We should be delivering support to them immediately, not having them wait for eight or nine months while The Three Stooges—Perrottet, Tudehope and Dominello—argue about who is getting it wrong and who is getting it right. Service NSW has people sitting there for hours and hours a day, with no result. They just want to find out where they stand. The Government has the hide to come into the House and say it is going to build the economy for the future.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale does not need any help.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: How about the Government engages with the small business community and looks at targeting greater support, not cutting it short, looks at what has happened in western Sydney and stop denying that nothing has happened there. Data shows that there was a 70 per cent decrease in trade in western Sydney and a 30 per cent increase in trade in other parts of Sydney. How can the Government deny? The Minister for Western Sydney likes to play his postcode games, but he should drill down into what has happened in western Sydney and put out a road map on how the Government is going to support our business community moving forward.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:32): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Macquarie Fields, Wollondilly, Granville, Cootamundra and Rockdale for their contributions to this public interest debate. I must say though that upon reflection on the contributions made by those opposite, it is unimaginable that they would have said the things they did today, given the way that the Government has led the State through a once-in-a-generation, once-in-100-year pandemic. The number of financial measures that have been rolled out to support not only business but also individuals has been unprecedented. Had those opposite been in government, the economy of the State would not have been in a position to provide any relief. It is well and good for them to criticise, but not only would they not have been able to support the people, but also they would not have done better than what this side of the Chamber has done.

Mr Jihad Dib: I don't know. That's a big call, Eleni.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will come to order.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: I wholeheartedly believe that. The member for Macquarie Fields, in particular, has been extremely critical and talked about recycling things. In case he is a little bit confused about what the Government can deliver, it has not just been focused on short-term recovery, but also on building industry and energy infrastructure of the future. He may have missed the announcement about the NSW Hydrogen Strategy. Through that, the Government is set to attract more than \$80 billion of investment into the State, which will create jobs and opportunities, drive decarbonisation, and establish our nation as an energy and economic superpower. There is nothing about that that is anything other than world leading. The member for Macquarie Fields should eat his words.

Our major trading partners see hydrogen as part of their energy future and our State has the skills, the infrastructure and the renewable energy resources to compete globally in this new and emerging industry. Hydrogen is a huge opportunity for regional New South Wales, and regional economies will be able to diversify through this. The strategy will create jobs in our industry hubs like the Hunter and the Illawarra, and many areas represented by those opposite. One would think they would want to support that. The hydrogen strategy is forecast to increase the size of the economy by more than \$600 million by 2030, and halve the cost of green hydrogen production, which will make New South Wales the best place in the world to invest in hydrogen. The Government is ready for a future and with its policies the future is bright.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:35): I will recap a little. The bill will also provide a backstop to protect critical energy infrastructure in the lead-up to a formed national framework. We need to stay ever vigilant to the threat that cyber security poses to our critical energy infrastructure. I talked about how cyber attacks on Ukraine power stations in 2015 and 2016 affected more than 200,000 consumers. In May this year the United States largest fuel pipeline operator was shut down for nearly a week, creating supply shocks in the United States market. I mentioned earlier that recently I watched *Die Hard 4.0*. I am probably the first member in this Chamber to mention *Die Hard* with Bruce Willis. *Die Hard 4.0* attempts to stop a cyber terrorist attack to hack into government computers, framework and infrastructure. It happens in real life and in Hollywood as well.

Those types of cyber attacks are becoming more common. Over the past 12 months the Australian Cyber Security Centre received more than 67,500 reports of cybercrime of all types. It noted that approximately one quarter of cyber instances reported during this period were associated with Australia's critical infrastructure and essential services. We must do everything we can to prevent those kinds of attacks from impacting our energy supplies. Whether it be electricity, gas or pipelines we must ensure that the Minister has the appropriate powers to respond to cyber-related emergencies, which could avoid such crippling events as those in the United States, the Ukraine and around the world. In 2017 in his Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market, Australia's former Chief Scientist recommended stronger security measures be put in place. While the national framework is currently being developed, the timing and the outcome of these measures are uncertain.

As I mentioned earlier, the number of attempted cyber attacks on our critical energy infrastructure is growing and that is a concern. We do not have time to wait. That is why it is appropriate and important for the bill to introduce a backstop measure that ensures energy generators, networks and pipelines can be required to implement appropriate cyber security arrangements to ensure continuity of our essential services. These backstop measures can also be designed to support the cyber security framework that is currently being developed nationally. Everyone in the Chamber knows that I could talk about the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, energy emergencies and cyber security for hours. It is important that the bill passes. I understand that those opposite support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:39): Via video link: I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. It is somewhat fitting that I do so remotely from Wollongong, a matter of kilometres from where a hydrogen hub should already be operating in New South Wales—but it is not. I will get to that in a moment. As previous speakers have noted, the bill amends a number of energy Acts, including the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, the Forestry Act 2012, the Gas Supply Act 1996 and the Pipelines Act 1967. In the main, these amendments are aimed

at improving administrative processes. It is the tidying up, if you like, of a range of Acts to reflect the changing energy mix in New South Wales.

Of course, Government members will boast of their efforts in energy policy, as the member for Miranda did at the end of the Public Interest Debate. They will no doubt try to run the proverbial mile from their Federal colleagues, who are still tortured with division about whether to agree with the Liberals and Nationals twentieth energy policy in eight years. Government members in this place will be painting themselves as the heroes of energy reform when they are nothing of the sort. In setting the context for debate on this bill, we also have to examine the discussion that occurred when the Government introduced its Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020. At the time there was much fanfare about the bill. It was painted as the dawning of the renewable energy revolution in New South Wales.

In short, it was nothing more than an anti-blackout bill, as the Government knew that it had to hedge its bets on ageing power generation and the possible early closure of power stations—hence taking the time to build renewable energy infrastructure. At the time, we heard lots about jobs. The publicity included promises of a "steel mandate" by the then Deputy Premier—a mandate that did not feature in the bill and a mandate that, despite the diligent efforts of Labor in negotiations with the Government, still does not appear in the Act. Of course, Labor fought for improvements to the renewable energy bill, and many were achieved. We fought for local content provisions and were successful in part, securing the Renewable Energy Sector Board that is tasked with providing guidance to the Government on how it can maximise local content in the provision of renewable energy infrastructure.

As I said, the Government would not go so far as to implement the steel mandate it promised, but Labor forced it to this point. The board is co-chaired by Daniel Walton from the Australian Workers' Union and Craig Memery from the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. They are busy doing good work, seeking to determine supply chains, work health and safety, and job opportunities, all the while having in mind existing trade law. In its second report to the Minister the board noted that there was great work underway. I would like to know when this work will be available and when the Minister will make the various reports public. Labor also had to push to have workers in the industries that are set to change provided with support. While the then Premier claimed at the time that she would be inclusive of all corners of the State, the original bill did the opposite: It ignored the Illawarra, the Hunter and the Central West regions.

Labor argued, ultimately successfully, that the large investments in transmission lines in all those areas meant that they should be part of the renewable energy infrastructure. We have had the Illawarra and the Hunter included as renewable energy zones. Labor also tried to include the Central West but it was resisted by the now Deputy Premier, the member for Bathurst, who did not want Lithgow and surrounds to be part of the energy future of New South Wales despite energy being central to its past and its present. Perhaps that reflects the current leadership's views on matters relating to energy and climate change. Perhaps someone should ask why the now Deputy Premier, and member for Bathurst, is so strongly resistant.

But I guess that is The Nationals' energy policy vision of net zero: to prioritise a net increase in job and investment opportunities in regional New South Wales while delivering areas like the Illawarra, the Hunter and the Central West zero. I repeat this story because it provides important context for this bill. It is a story of negotiations and discussions occurring behind the headlines. Minister Kean is keen on selling himself as the very model of the modern Liberal, embracing climate action and renewable energy. But for all the hot air there is little delivery and, when it comes to reducing emissions and sustaining and creating jobs, delivery is what matters. That brings me to an important part of the bill before the House regarding the Illawarra. Since the 2016 by-election, we have been working with stakeholders and industry in the Illawarra to increase opportunities and integrate the Illawarra into the new energy supply chain for long-term employment growth by transforming existing heavy industry.

It is something that the region had already been working on with the South Coast Labour Council, the former Labor Government and others. South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris has been a strong proponent. In 2011 the initiative was cut by the incoming Liberal-Nationals Government. Over the past couple of years we have relaunched as Recharge Illawarra, which is a group of local unions, business, industry, educators and researchers who are working together to promote opportunities for our region. It is part of the reason I am so determined to play a role and secure a better deal for Illawarra workers from the renewable energy infrastructure bill. With the high-quality steel we produce in the Illawarra, we should not be watching ships arrive at Port Kembla filled with wind turbine towers made overseas, only to be trucked past the steelworks for installation. Most people would be stunned to learn that there is virtually no New South Wales produced steel in New South Wales wind farms or solar farms. Let that undeniable fact sink in: There is virtually no New South Wales produced steel in New South Wales renewable energy projects. It is not good enough. I would go so far as to say that it is unacceptable.

In trying to address this, I acknowledge that BlueScope Steel has made some funding and space available at the steelworks to support investment in the fabrication of wind turbine components. It is not the only Illawarra-based organisation involved in renewable energy and wind turbines. David Brown Santasalo at Bulli is part of the power generation supply chain. Crane operators in the region are involved in the installation and maintenance of wind turbines. The Illawarra has the capacity and the capability to play a far greater role. While hydrogen is not an emerging technology—it has long been referred to as the fuel of the future—it is an emerging industry in Australia. It is an industry that the Illawarra wants to be part of and must be part of if we are to be successful in New South Wales. However, in the years to come the Illawarra must not be seen as just a consumer of hydrogen once large-scale green steel production is perfected. The Illawarra is on the spine of the Eastern Gas Pipeline and should be part of the entire hydrogen supply chain and ecosystem.

This bill takes an important step in getting to that point. It changes the definition of natural gas. Prior to this bill there was a lack of clarity around the definition of natural gas as renewable sources of gas were developed. It is interesting that this bill has taken so long to be brought before the House, given that in late 2019 the Government already claimed to have a goal of requiring 10 per cent of the State's gas to come from green hydrogen by 2030. So it claims to have had a commitment for some time, yet it is only introducing amendments to the legislative framework now—some three years later—that allow that commitment to be achieved. It is another case of making announcements for the publicity with little follow-through when it comes to energy initiatives in New South Wales. Nonetheless, Labor supports this change—it is a case of better late than never.

The fact that the former Berejiklian Government now Perrottet Government has been all announcements and slow to follow through is becoming the story of hydrogen in New South Wales. We cannot allow this to continue and I will take every opportunity to push the Government and others on this matter. Announcements without follow-through will not deliver the change that people and industry want and expect from government. They will not deliver the jobs that regions such as the Illawarra and the Hunter demand. While a small contribution to a hydrogen refuelling station has been secured for Port Kembla, the Government has not been setting a cracking pace when it comes to supporting other hydrogen initiatives.

In March this year—more than 220 days ago—and with much fanfare, a commitment of \$70 million was made to support the development of a hydrogen industry in the Hunter and the Illawarra. It was welcomed by both regions, with the expectation that there would be a speedy call for funding and projects would be underway quickly. After all, most other Australian States already had projects underway with respect to hydrogen and interest in the sector was building globally. New South Wales was late to the party on this and I note that, while a Hydrogen Strategy for the State was announced last week, we were the last State to deliver one. Yet here we are, more than 220 days later, and not a cent of the \$70 million announced multiple times has been committed to actual projects—not one cent. There is a new website of course—no announcement or action today would be complete without a new website—but, despite a range of interested parties putting forward suggestions, no actual projects are being delivered yet.

In the Illawarra we put forward a detailed road map for the development of an industry that would put the Illawarra at the heart of hydrogen supply and demand. We put forward ideas around workforce development, development of generation technologies, end-use options to progressively grow supply and also ideas around the development of the pipeline and the related supply chain in the region. We want to be, and will be, a one-stop shop for hydrogen. We accept that we might not have things exactly right. We are willing to work with the Government to help achieve its policy objectives while helping to deliver for our region, but it seems that an overly cautious approach has taken hold. [*Extension of time*]

I think it is important for the Government and its public servants to remember that it should be working with all parts and all representatives in a region if it intends to build an industry. Picking and choosing those who are involved is short-sighted and should be called out for what it is. The Government also needs to accept that occasionally some of the projects will not deliver the results that might be expected. That is part of the risk of building a new industry from the ground up. While the bill is a step in the right direction, we would be helped a great deal more if the Government stuck to its existing commitments.

Today the global hydrogen business is small. Around 90 million tonnes is produced with revenue of around \$150 billion a year according to *The Economist*. In order for it to play a role to decarbonise sectors like steel and energy supply and aluminium smelting, it needs to dramatically reduce in price. The accepted industry standard is around \$US2 per kilogram. That will take a lot of work, but just reducing the cost of running an electrolyser is not the only thing that will need to be done. Supply chains must be built. Safe integration of the technology must be undertaken. A skilled workforce needs to be created. There are some other small steps that need to be taken, such as those in the bill before the House.

We also need to consider other regulatory elements and the skill set of other regulatory bodies to make sure they are also prepared to take on the task of building an emerging industry. If we are to become the hydrogen

superpower the Minister says he is so fond of seeing, it needs to be backed up by a lot of hard work to develop a supportive regulatory regime and a receptive investment framework. Supply can be built; it is largely infrastructure with technological improvement through time. But supply does not create its own demand. Work needs to be done on that side of the equation, and that is why I propose that the free Gong Shuttle in Wollongong is the perfect vehicle to rev up demand for hydrogen in the transport sector.

Electric buses may be suitable in some environments but perhaps not if your bus has to be on the road for 16 hours a day. Last week I put forward a suggestion for a locally manufactured hydrogen bus trial for the Gong Shuttle and, pleasingly, I report to the House that Wollongong is on board. Interestingly, Transport for NSW claims that it lacks a suitable partner, despite my own discussions. Perhaps Transport for NSW was not as keen on a locally produced bus and instead had an imported option in mind, hoping to save a few dollars along the way. We must remember that if the full jobs dividend of developing a new industry is to be realised, we cannot take the easy roads and just import technology platforms, particularly if we are already producing them in this State. Trucks, trains, agricultural vehicles, factory vehicles, mining equipment and delivery vehicles are just some of the platforms that could provide for an early uptake of hydrogen as a fuel.

It will take a lot of work to build a hydrogen industry in New South Wales. It is a substantial undertaking, with potentially massive benefits and with energy-hungry trading partners, such as those we already have long-established trade relationships with, to sell our coal—an important source of future demand. The amendments to the Gas Supply Act in the bill are important, but we need to consider, develop and build a regulatory structure around hydrogen that supports our aspirations. We need to equip agencies with the means and, at times, the flexibility to support investment. We have heard a lot of hot air from the Government to date. Big announcements are one thing, but it is the follow-through that will support industry development and create jobs across the regions of New South Wales. Labor supports the bill and will continue to hold the Government to its commitments with respect to energy and climate change initiatives because, as I said earlier, announcements without delivery will not deliver lower emissions or sustain and create jobs. I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate remotely from what should be the hydrogen capital of New South Wales—Wollongong and the Illawarra.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:53): I am pleased to support the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. As Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Forestry, I support the amendments made to the Forestry Act 2012. The New South Wales Government has a vision to deliver some of the cheapest, most reliable and cleanest energy in the world. That is the vision set out under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap by the Minister for Energy and Environment last year. I am pleased to see that the amending bill will continue the Government's commitment to making sure that we do this at the lowest cost and in places that work for our regional and rural communities.

The bill will unlock opportunities for the development of renewable generation and storage near available transmission assets that are located within State forest softwood plantations. The development of those electricity projects will deliver cheap, sustainable power whilst benefiting the economic development of regional communities. Wind farms have been developed within softwood forests internationally for over 20 years, including in Canada, Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom. In Queensland the 1,200 megawatt Forest Wind project is approved and construction is expected to begin next year. In Victoria two forest-based wind farm projects totalling 1,100 megawatts are at the development application stage.

In New South Wales we want to ensure that similar opportunities can become available in our State forest softwood plantation areas. Those developments can assist the State in its transition to low-cost renewable energy and bring investment to regional New South Wales. They will also be consistent with the Government's implementation of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which will provide support for the private sector to bring 12 gigawatts of renewable energy projects. That is consistent with the New South Wales Government's commitment to reduce emissions by 50 per cent by 2030.

The projects will be located across five renewable energy zones and in areas outside the zones with spare transmission capacity. The Forestry Corporation has identified locations in softwood plantations that are near quality wind resources and available transmission assets with a potential generating capacity of one gigawatt. An unsolicited commercial interest suggests that the total opportunity could be substantially bigger. At current market rates, the Forestry Corporation would earn about \$5 million in annual lease payments for every gigawatt of capacity developed. That potential opportunity, if acted on, would materially add to the value of State forest assets and diversify their revenue streams.

The Forestry Corporation of NSW will implement safeguards to minimise the impact on forestry operations. That could include requiring developers to offset land losses in State forests at their own expense. Overall, the change will unlock a new revenue stream for the Forestry Corporation of NSW without impacting its original objective or purpose. While the changes provide new opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure

projects in State forests, developers and proponents will be required to obtain relevant approvals under the existing planning approval process. For example, at the local level a developer must consider the environmental impact; noise, landscape and visual impacts; traffic and transport issues; hazards and risks; heritage; water and soil impacts; and waste management. Community consultation must be undertaken. The planning process includes providing a clear framework for the assessment of a large-scale wind energy development proposal that is a development of State significance. The involvement of community, industry and regulators is key in the assessment process. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:57): As stated in the second reading speech delivered on Minister Kean's behalf by the member for North Shore, the bill makes a range of amendments to the following Acts across the Energy portfolio: the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, the Forestry Act 2012, the Gas Supply Act 1996 and the Pipelines Act 1967. The specific purpose of the amendments to those energy Acts is to improve administrative processes. The amendments reflect alternative sources of energy, including hydrogen and biogas, being introduced into the New South Wales energy supply and enables New South Wales to opt in to the national regulatory framework for stand-alone power systems [SAPS] while enhancing cybersecurity protections for the energy system.

The bill also enables renewable energy projects in the State forest softwood plantations, which I will touch on in a moment. In broad terms, the bill seeks to support the New South Wales Government's recently released Hydrogen Strategy, which the Opposition welcomes in principle. However, I note that the Government is playing catch-up with its policy, with Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia having already released their plans in 2019, and Victoria releasing its plan in March this year.

What I will say about the Government's hydrogen plan is that there are some very big numbers being thrown around with its announcement: the attraction of \$80 billion of investment by 2050, the contribution of \$600 million to the State economy by 2030 and the provision of \$3 billion of investment incentives by the Government. They are very big numbers indeed. I hope these figures are accurate and are not at all inflated by Minister Kean's obsessive pursuit of big headlines and attention-seeking news grabs. For instance, what are the specifics of the \$3 billion worth of incentives that Minister Kean has spoken of? What will be the oversight regime for these incentives? I suggest it is a very brave government that hands Minister Kean \$3 billion to throw around. As the Deputy Premier stated in the Government's media release about the policy, hydrogen energy is a huge opportunity for regional New South Wales. The Deputy Premier went further in his remarks to state:

Places like Parkes, the Illawarra, and the Upper Hunter are uniquely placed to take advantage of these opportunities, with existing supply lines, access to transport links and a skilled workforce ready to make regional NSW a leader in hydrogen technology.

The Deputy Premier makes quite an interesting point, considering it was Labor last year that moved the required amendments to the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020 to ensure that the Illawarra and the Hunter were included in renewable energy zones, which would allow them to capitalise on the green energy jobs that the Government is now taking credit for. I would like to think that the very large numbers being spruiked in the Government's announcement are very real and not designed to give false hope to our regional communities, which will be staking their very real businesses and livelihoods on these plans and numbers. I turn now to my earlier point about the bill enabling renewable energy projects in State forest's softwood plantations. Schedule 3 to the bill will amend the Forestry Act 2012 to enable the development of infrastructure for the generation and storage of energy from renewable sources located near available transmission assets within the State forests softwood plantations. In her second reading speech the member for North Shore stressed that the proposed changes will:

... only permit infrastructure for renewable energy projects to be located in State forests' softwood plantations. The changes will not permit these projects to be located in State forest areas that contain native forests. This change will also not remove any approvals or requirements that energy projects are required to adhere to under the existing planning process.

I sincerely hope the safeguards around approvals and requirements that are currently in place are not reduced to accommodate the changes proposed in the bill. I have received advice from several forestry industry stakeholders, including Timber NSW, which has raised concerns regarding the potential loss of forest plantation areas due to the anticipated installation of renewable energy infrastructure. The preservation of current timber harvesting volumes is a very important issue, particularly in light of the current timber shortage, which has been exacerbated by the 2020 bushfires and the recent boom in home construction. I recently highlighted that issue in an article in *The Sunday Telegraph* in which I exposed the current timber shortage by revealing that current builders like Vishu Moondra and his wife, Aditi Gupta, who I spoke with on their building site in Rouse Hill, are battling price rises of 30 per cent and contending with delays for materials of up to 13 weeks. Current figures from Master Builders Australia and the Australian Forest Products Association show that in the coming years New South Wales is facing a shortfall of 50,000 timber frames.

The timber shortage is also having very concerning effects on the broader timber industry. The lack of timber supply is affecting the viability of local timber mills and their workers. On 8 October I referenced this

troubling trend in an op-ed for *The Daily Telegraph* when I wrote about how the timber regions of the Illawarra and Tumut, where the current shortage has caused the reduction of workers' shifts and hours, has caused some workers to leave town. As I said in that piece, this produces knock-on effects for those left behind, like the midwife forced to commute from Tumut to Wagga Wagga to find work, or the bright high school student unable to study selective subjects like economics and chemistry due to a shortage of students.

These issues were discussed by several witnesses who provided evidence to the recent upper House inquiry into the long-term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry. I thank my colleagues the Hon. Peter Primrose and the Hon. Mick Veitch for their work on that inquiry. I also thank Timber NSW CEO Maree McCaskill and Australian Forest Products Association NSW CEO Sue Grau for their helpful contribution to the inquiry. I also thank the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union New South Wales branch district assistant secretary Alison Rudman, the CFMMEU national policy research officer Travis Wacey, as well as CFMMEU delegates Sharon Musson, David Webb and Peter Webb, who provided such honest and sometimes heartbreaking evidence of the reality of the current timber shortage as experienced on the front line of our regional communities. I also acknowledge the work of the Australian Workers' Union and its championing of the economic and employment opportunities of the hydrogen industry.

I foreshadow that the Opposition will consider moving amendments in the upper House to ensure that there will be no net loss to softwood timber plantation areas affected by the bill in the interests of preserving current volumes of timber harvesting. I respectfully ask the Deputy Premier to advise the House of the consultation on the bill that he has undertaken with forestry industry stakeholders to ensure that he has considered all the ramifications that it would have on the Electricity Supply Act. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:07): I support the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I commend the Minister for this excellent legislation, as well as his staff, who have put so much hard work into the bill. I am pleased to speak about how the bill will help to pave the way to grow the State's hydrogen industry, which is an issue that is very close to my heart. Minister Kean went to the Central Coast to visit a company called Star Scientific and met with stakeholders. It is working on a really interesting project with hydrogen to create energy for industry. We will see some very exciting stuff from Star Scientific. The recent announcement of the New South Wales hydrogen plan is very exciting. Hydrogen will play a massive role in the State's future economic prosperity and help to meet the Government's goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Hydrogen energy can reduce carbon emissions in hard-to-abate sectors, improve air quality, grow and diversify the economy, create new jobs, improve the State's energy security, and provide businesses with more choices to increase revenue and reduce emissions. Earlier in the second reading debate the member for Miranda said something very similar with regard to hydrogen energy. Hydrogen energy can help to decarbonise the State's gas networks, steel production at Port Kembla, industrial processes at Port Kembla like ammonia production, the State's heavy transport fleet, shipping and aviation. I have seen firsthand the unique and exciting developments of Star Scientific on the Central Coast, which is using a catalyst to create energy through hydrogen in a unique way. I believe it has a world patent on the process. It is exciting to see new technology emerging on the Central Coast.

I pay tribute to the team at Star Scientific and thank them for the time they took to show the Minister and me around the facility and how to engage with industry right across the Central Coast. As I said, I am sure there are exciting times ahead for Star Scientific. I congratulate the team on their work and thank them for their generosity and time. I must say it was really interesting to see the way that work is progressing with hydrogen through Star Scientific. Hydrogen will provide new opportunities for regional industries, as I have outlined, and help transition regions such as the Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast to thrive in a net zero economy. Once established, hydrogen is also expected to create an important export industry for New South Wales, as global markets strive to reduce emissions. The bill will support the developing hydrogen industry and address the uncertainty over how hydrogen should be regulated in New South Wales.

The NSW Hydrogen Strategy announced last Wednesday will provide up to \$3 billion in incentives to develop a green hydrogen industry in New South Wales. I cannot understate the importance of that \$3 billion in incentives. It includes investing \$70 million in hydrogen hubs in the Illawarra and Hunter regions, exemptions from electricity network and government scheme charges, a hydrogen expansion to the Energy Security Safeguard and rolling out hydrogen refuelling stations. Hydrogen is being embraced by the automobile industry and, again, by Star Scientific. Looking at the way it creates energy using hydrogen through a different medium was really interesting stuff. I highlight the great work being done by the Star Scientific team on the Central Coast and their willingness to work with the New South Wales Government on exciting emerging technology revolving around hydrogen. It is right around the Central Coast and it is very exciting.

The measures aim to support an industry that could add \$26 billion per year nationally in additional GDP and 16,900 jobs by 2050. That strategy will establish New South Wales as a green hydrogen and renewable energy superpower. There are very exciting times ahead. Simply put, it means more jobs and more investment in the

regions and cleaner, cheaper and reliable energy to power the economy. I have no doubt that Star Scientific will lead the way with its hydrogen technology. Part of supporting the developing hydrogen industry is ensuring that it is clearly defined in the gas laws and that the licensing and safety frameworks are streamlined. I highlight the team at Star Scientific again. They specifically raised that issue with the Minister. It is great to see the outcomes of that engagement with industry to provide better outcomes for business and industry moving forward with hydrogen technology.

I am pleased to see that the bill will provide the ability to define hydrogen and other renewable gases and also remove burdensome, unnecessary red tape. Under the regulatory framework, a network operator who distributes natural gas and natural gas hydrogen blends must hold a distributor's licence and reticulator's authorisation. Currently, there are several project proposals that seek to inject hydrogen and other renewable gases into the gas distribution network. That reform will support those projects by removing the duplicative requirements placed on the gas network operator. Importantly, while the change removes duplicative licensing requirements, it does not alter the safety and technical requirements that networks must meet to inject renewable gases into the networks themselves.

The Government's Hydrogen Strategy will transform the State into a green hydrogen superpower. The bill includes the first of several reforms to reduce the cost of producing hydrogen in New South Wales by up to \$5.80 per kilogram. One of the major costs in producing green hydrogen is the cost of electricity. To reduce those costs, the Government will exempt green hydrogen production from a range of charges and scheme costs, which is an excellent initiative. The bill will enable the Government to help industry close the commercial gap between hydrogen and existing fuels at this early stage of development. That will help kick-start the New South Wales hydrogen industry and position our State to seize the hydrogen opportunity for regional economies. I hope that will be the case on the Central Coast through companies like Star Scientific.

The concessions introduced in the bill are expected to significantly reduce the cost of hydrogen and bring hydrogen prices within reach of the \$2 per kilogram mark. That figure is the cost the Australian Government has identified in its Technology Investment Roadmap for when hydrogen will be cost competitive with other fuels and enable hydrogen to decarbonise the hardest to abate sectors of the economy. That will position New South Wales to compete in the all-important international export market. It is a fantastic piece of legislation. I acknowledge the contributions of the staff of the department—Collette Grigg, Jason Scattolin and Andrew Lewis—and Dimitry Palmer, Ava Hancock and Ben Coles from the Minister's office and thank them for their hard work. They do a lot of work behind the scenes at both department and ministerial office levels.

It is an exciting time moving forward for the industry. We have businesses like Star Scientific on the Central Coast that are willing to embrace this opportunity and work with the Government to help provide better technologies and outcomes for industries on the Central Coast, as well as nationally and globally. The legislation encapsulates the exciting times ahead for industries associated with hydrogen. From what I have seen firsthand at Star Scientific, it is groundbreaking stuff and exciting indeed to know that we are removing the roadblocks and red tape and are actively encouraging industries with huge amounts of financial support to lead the way with hydrogen technology in New South Wales. I see only bright things ahead for companies like Star Scientific and others in New South Wales that are working together to improve hydrogen technology. Thank you to the staff, Minister's office and department for working on the amendment. It is an exciting time ahead.

I commend the Minister for his work. It was a pleasure having him on the coast and to see him listening firsthand to industry providing its feedback. To see that feedback replicated and put into improving legislation shows that this is a Government that listens and takes on board industry and community feedback to ensure the best outcomes are delivered for everybody in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House and the Minister for the excellent amendment.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:17): Via video link: I contribute to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and note Labor's overall support for the changes comprised in the legislation. Energy policy is one of the defining issues of our time. While we debate sensible changes in this place, I note that in Canberra the National Party continues to drag its heels on even accepting that there is a reason to change how we use and export energy. There has been lots of debate in the media about whether the Prime Minister should attend the upcoming conference in Glasgow, with even the Queen having a crack at world leaders who do not turn up or fail to act on their international commitments. But it is increasingly clear that Scott Morrison does not set the energy and environment policy for this country; Barnaby Joyce does. I suggest that it would be more honest for the Prime Minister to send his deputy to Glasgow so the world can meet the real decision-maker in Canberra.

What is happening in Canberra is perfectly relevant to what we are discussing tonight because many of the changes proposed in the bill are made in anticipation of changes that are necessary at a Federal level. Given the embarrassing and irresponsible position that the Morrison Government has placed Australia in internationally as

an environmental laggard, it is very hard to have hope that the changes we are discussing tonight will be given effect by a Federal Government that clearly has no will to act in this area. My home in the Hunter is at the forefront of the energy debate. With steel, coal, ammonia and aluminium—whether it is energy in its raw form or embedded in materials—we make it in the Hunter. I want the Hunter to remain a powerhouse for New South Wales and the world, but it is clear that the world is changing and that it too must change.

Countries that buy our coal and other products are changing their views about what they will buy in the future, and we need to keep up with them. It is no good making the best VHS tapes in the world if everyone is watching Netflix. But too often what is missing from the debate is how existing workers are supported and protected during that transition. It is not a question just about the mining industry; it includes energy workers at power plants, the many businesses that supply and support those industries and the other small businesses right across the Hunter that support mining. That is why locating the renewable industries in the Hunter is critical, and it is why it was so shocking to see the Hunter left out of the Government's original renewable energy zone legislation.

Thankfully, my colleagues from across the Hunter pushed to amend that plan and we made sure that the Hunter was not left behind in the new rules for cleaner energy developments. While work from the department has progressed, the New England, the South-West and Central-West Orana renewable energy zones, the department's website states that the Hunter-Central Coast and Illawarra renewable energy zones are still in the "early stages of development" and will "take a number of years to design and build". The Hunter is the renewable energy zone that the Government forgot, then took credit for it renewable energy zone during the Upper Hunter by-election and has now failed to act on it. If you want to genuinely support workers, then you need to attract investment to the places where impacted workers live. The go-slow on the Hunter renewable energy zone has to end.

Cleaner hydrogen is a current focus of this transition and it is one in which the Hunter and the Illawarra are best placed to gain a first-mover advantage. We have a skilled workforce, the electrical grid capacity, the land, the ingredients, major customers like Tomago Aluminium and the Commonwealth Steel Company, or Comsteel, and we have the port to take it to the world. In the Hunter, we know how to make things and whether it is green steel, green aluminium or ammonia for export, we can be a leader in creating sustainable manufacturing jobs. We want to do that here, and we have wanted to do it for a long time.

What has been lacking is the political will from the Liberal-Nationals Government. I think back to Bill Shorten's 2019 commitment for a national hydrogen plan; the imitation we see from the New South Wales Government is surely the best form of flattery. That 2019 proposal was at a time when Federal Coalition MPs were playing dress-ups as working-class miners putting make-up on to look like Edwardian chimney sweeps, while also supporting the outsourcing and automation of those same jobs. Like most of the debate in the 2019 election, it was too early to be placed or accepted. Perhaps if News Corp had found its current environmental [inaudible] years ago, this debate would be very different.

Ultimately, it is a decision for members in this place to decide whether we support workers and businesses to adapt to the changing marketplace or whether we let them become the victims of a badly managed transition. People in the Hunter remember vividly the closure of the BHP steelworks. Some parts of that transition worked well; others not so well. We must learn from that transition, and we must learn from any mistakes. So whilst Labor supports the bill and the foundations it lays to spark the hydrogen industry in New South Wales, we despair at the delay by this Government to back up its big talk and big announcements that we keep hearing. Here in the Hunter, we deliver every day and it is about time that the Government started delivering for us too.

I now turn to schedule 3 to the bill, which amends the Forestry Act in order to enable construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure in what it describes as "certain forestry areas". In her second reading speech, the Parliamentary Secretary noted the development of wind farms in State forests in other jurisdictions and the benefits of those developments to the electrical grid and to Forestry Corporation. The land used for plantations can indeed be a suitable location for certain renewable energy projects, particularly when those projects require buffer areas that can continue to be used for plantation timber. While broadly supportive of this change, I repeat the call from the shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change for an assurance from the Minister about the type of projects that may be approvable under this change.

We continue to see a number of projects try to advertise themselves as renewable or clean, even when the evidence for the claims is non-existent. I am reminded of a recent proposal in the Hunter to operate an old coal-fired power plant with so-called forestry waste. It is a biomass project. Meanwhile, the applicant is also seeking permission to export tonnes of woodchip renewables from the Port of Newcastle to Japan in order for them to be burnt at Japanese power plants. Any proposal that leads to a further increase of land clearing just so the woodchip can be burnt or exported clearly fails the test of being renewable or clean, so we must ensure that that aspect of the bill is set in stone. I trust the Minister will be able to give some assurances that the proposal

permitted in the bill will be genuine renewable projects and not a greenwash rebranding of a polluting decarbonising activity.

The Energy Legislation Amendment Bill also contains a number of tidying-up provisions [inaudible] in a sector facing changing technology, as well as changing consumer expectations. Preparation for a cleaner energy future is welcome and enormously necessary, but it is a path that many of us have thought would have been paved well before now. Certainly, had the Government put to practice some of its previous announcements, this would have been a long time ago, but here we are. It is a desperately needed, long-awaited step towards a cleaner energy future or a lower carbon future. I look forward to the Minister's clarification of the renewable energy projects that the bill would allow, if passed, in State forests.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:26): Via video link: I contribute to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Labor does not oppose the bill. We think the bill is incredibly important towards facilitating [inaudible] for hydrogen and putting in place a whole lot of important administrative amendments that will facilitate that, as well as modernise some of the Acts that we have been addressing today. The Hydrogen Strategy was a major announcement by the Government, and one of the things that it really emphasised was the target of having 10 per cent hydrogen within the natural gas [inaudible] network. But only now do we have the capacity to do that because only now are we amending the definition of "gas" to allow the introduction of hydrogen as part of the mix with natural gas. That is important for Jemena's project in western Sydney, and it is important overall.

Throughout the world, there is a move to green hydrogen, and it is very exciting and very important. The European Union is investing €470 billion in renewable hydrogen projects between now and 2050. Green steel, which is developed using green hydrogen in place of fossil fuels in blast furnaces, is a great opportunity presented to us in the Illawarra in particular and also in the Hunter. It works very well with the renewable energy zones that were developed last year when we adopted the sustainable energy plan, and it was a Labor amendment that included the Illawarra and the Hunter as renewable energy zones.

For the past year, Labor looked at the plans the Government drew up to play catch-up renewable energy. For 10 years the Government did nothing. A generation ago, New South Wales led the world with renewable energy development. We developed the world's first emissions trading scheme, and we supported renewable energy projects throughout the State. When the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected, it stopped for a decade. Nationally, we are still dealing with that legacy of climate change denial by the Coalition. The last week has just been an embarrassing series of backflips. We did not know whether the Prime Minister was going to go to Glasgow or whether he would not, and whether the National Party would let him do anything about addressing climate change or not. The reality is the world has moved on and there are immense opportunities in developing renewable energy.

Renewable energy is also cheaper. Green hydrogen is not cheaper, but the market is actually rapidly moving. The price is falling very quickly and is expected to drop by 70 per cent over the next decade, and we are expecting to have price parity by 2030. It is important that the Government puts in place changes to facilitate a reduction in all sorts of charges, which would make sure that happens as soon as possible. That will allow the growth of hydrogen as an energy source and as an export opportunity. It is a fantastic opportunity.

The bill also presents a number of other changes. It facilitates changes to the standalone power systems that bring New South Wales into line with the rest of the country. That is really important in remote areas, where people want to put in place power systems off the grid or where the costs of connecting to the grid are prohibitive. That is certainly the case at the moment. Parts of New South Wales were only connected to the grid in the past 30 years, and it cost the people who were connected to the grid back then a really large sum of money, which was paid off over a decade. It was worthwhile for them, but a lot of others have not had that opportunity or do not want to take up that opportunity now that they could generate, store and use their own energy—not just for them but for neighbouring properties as well. It is really important that we are able to do that in a nationally consistent way.

One thing that others have raised that I think is a concern is that this leaves the door open for the use of biomass. As the shadow Minister said, it is very important for the Minister to clarify, contrary to his second reading speech, that is not the intent of the bill. Allowing the use of State forests for renewable energy generation will certainly take advantage of the fact that there is a lot of transmission infrastructure already within the State forests. It is certainly not incompatible with wind generation. It is also important to make sure that those forests maintain access for recreational activities and that energy generation does not create any impact on State forest employees or people who need to access other opportunities within State forests. A lot of tourism and recreational activities currently occur in State forests and they may not be suitable to be conducted next to electricity generation.

Another thing the bill addresses is cybersecurity threat protections, and they are incredibly important. A generation ago—or more like 20 years ago—the big threat to the energy network was from physical acts of terrorism. That has now changed, and cybersecurity is the bigger threat. I worked in the industry back then, and there was a huge effort to make sure every asset within the State was physically secure. Cybersecurity was not a consideration at the time, but now we have seen attacks around the world that certainly mean that we could lose our electricity supply through an act of cyberterrorism. It is very important that we are able to modernise the legislation and facilitate those protections.

The bill is important, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak in debate on it. It reflects the Government yet again being an absolute laggard in dealing with renewable energy and making huge announcements that are followed up with very little action. I really want to see those things come to fruition, and I certainly hope that for a change they will. We have seen very little come out of last year's announcements other than consolidation of the renewable energy zones around the Dubbo and Wellington areas. With those, we saw a whole range of problems with workers' safety in developing the solar farms.

Solar farms are not inherently dangerous, and they are certainly no more dangerous than any other form of electricity generation. They are probably safer to be around. But because there are some cowboys in the industry, and the Government does not try to kick them out, we have had some problems. I certainly hope that will not be the case as we move towards the use of hydrogen. We need to facilitate electricity and gas growth, and we need to do that in a safe way. We need to make sure that all aspects throughout the supply chain are safe. I thank the Government for introducing the bill. I look forward to the growth of the hydrogen economy and the growth of green hydrogen being incorporated safely into the natural gas networks.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:35): Via video link: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I support the bill and welcome the Government and the Parliament taking action to reduce greenhouse emissions and promote renewable energy sources. As many members have said, hydrogen technology and green electricity generation have a significant potential to benefit Australia. Hydrogen can be used for energy transport, storage and export. When it burns, it produces not carbon dioxide but water. There is an opportunity for Australia to export hydrogen made in a way that limits greenhouse emissions. The Act will contribute to supporting the development of that industry.

I also comment on another aspect of the bill. As I understand the bill, it seems to amend the Forestry Act 2012 by adding to the objectives of the Forestry Corporation in section 59 the capacity to "facilitate the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure in the forestry area". The definition of renewable energy infrastructure includes "associated transmission and distribution infrastructure". This will no doubt create some opportunities for renewable energy and for the Forestry Corporation, but I make several points on this matter.

Firstly, as the member for Bankstown said—and I welcome her recognition of this issue—the firewood industry in this country is facing real challenges. The fires of 2019-20 saw something like a 10 per cent loss of the natural stock in the State. We were already facing shortages before those fires, and now that is much worse. In the south-west slopes of New South Wales it is estimated, with 58,000 hectares lost, that a decrease of 44 per cent will take place in the supply of timber starting from 2024. In the midst of the housing boom that we are currently experiencing, and with significant constraints in shipping and high prices for imported timber, we are rapidly approaching a significant crisis. I echo the concerns of the member for Bankstown and her calls that any development of renewable energy infrastructure should not compromise the supply of softwood and should not come at the cost of plantation.

Furthermore, I encourage the Government to consider options for expanding the softwood plantation estate, including considering the necessity for government and public investment in the short term, with a view to a longer term public arrangement. Without some form of market intervention, the market alone will not stop this issue of softwood supply. The turnaround time is 30 years for these products. The market will simply not come in and tackle that, and so some sort of government intervention is needed.

The member for Clarence alluded to the second issue about developing renewable infrastructure within State forests when he talked about how there would, of course, be community consultation. It is very good that he mentioned community consultation. Everyone talks about community consultation, especially when it comes to renewable energy projects. For people living in the city who benefit from lower prices and feeling good about doing something good for the planet by buying clean energy, what is often forgotten is the price paid by the people living next door to the renewable energy infrastructure. Certainly, it is becoming a problem in my electorate, with several landowners inflicted with large solar farms right next door to them and very little compensation.

It has become a major issue with the Transgrid HumeLink development, where community consultation is simply taken for granted. It was only after strong action by the Kyeamba Valley concerned landowners group, the Adjungbilly to Batlow group, and the Yaven Creek group in my electorate that we were able to get a review of

that community consultation process. Transgrid, to its credit, did facilitate that. The review itself was very critical and Transgrid has agreed to accept the community consultation process. In essence, after a year of so-called consultation, that had to begin again. That is good, and I wait to see what the new consultation will produce. But the point I am trying to make is that we should not take community consultation for granted. I emphasise, once again, that the development of renewable energy infrastructure in different renewable energy zones—with the equipment, the connections of wires, holes and so on—will affect landowners and it will affect communities. Basically, they should share in the benefits of it. They should not have to bear the pain of that without appropriate consultation and compensation.

The final point I make about the development of renewable infrastructure within State forests and the associated transmission and distribution is that this should, once and for all, put beyond doubt any question that forestry land can be used for transmission lines. To me, it highlights the opportunity in my electorate of using public land instead of privately owned land for the Transgrid HumeLink project. The massive towers of this project, which will be 70 metres or higher, carrying 500 kilowatt lines, will scar the beautiful countryside of the Snowy Valleys. They will scar the land and lives of landowners who will have to put up with the impact on their prime agricultural land, farming practices and way of life. It will scar the surrounding communities who will have to put up with these towers in close view, without any compensation under current arrangements.

Much of this can be avoided if public land is used, such as forestry land. As I pointed out earlier, that land needs to be replaced, no question about it, because we need to maintain our softwood supply. But at the moment there happens to be an opportunity. In the aftermath of the 2019-20 fires, there is an opportunity to situate these power lines through forests with minimal impact. I urge Transgrid and the Government to look seriously at routes for the HumeLink project that will not affect private landowners but instead go through the State forest. There is a route there. I know that Transgrid is looking at it and I know it is what the community wants it to look at, so I encourage it to consider that seriously.

The Minister for Energy and Environment visited the Wagga Wagga electorate this year and clearly stated his view that public land should be used when it is available. This bill, in my mind, removes any doubt about the opportunity to use forestry land, where appropriate, for transmission infrastructure. I reiterate how important it is for the people of my electorate that we do that. We must focus on the use of public land for transmission lines, well ahead of the use of prime agricultural land, where those opportunities exist. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:45): Via video link: The Greens support the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, although I flag that we may move some amendments in the other place. The purpose of this bill, according to the Minister, is to modernise and improve the legislative framework to ensure legislation remains fit for purpose to support the Government's policy objectives of making New South Wales an energy economic superpower and to "maximise bill savings and improve reliability and protect the environment". They are very noble aims. The bill will amend a range of New South Wales energy legislation, including the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Gas Supply Act 1996, the Pipelines Act 1967, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987 and the Forestry Act 2012.

The bill purports to enable the adoption of new energy opportunities for cheaper electricity and presumably to assist New South Wales to reach its net zero by 2050 target. But some actions taken by the same Minister and by the same Government are completely at odds with that rhetoric. Just over 10 months ago, legislation was passed in this House with the support of The Greens, the crossbench and Labor to deliver a new era of energy policy. That future promised 12,000 megawatts of renewable energy and 2,000 megawatts of storage by 2030. That will produce enough electricity to replace about three-quarters of the electricity produced by the five large coal-fired power stations in New South Wales. Energy Minister Matt Kean described it as putting power back in the hands of the community, wresting it from "powerful vested interests—the big energy money, the coal barons", and suggested that defending fossil fuels was the equivalent of defending Blockbuster in a Netflix world. How do we process then the Government's decision in May this year to give \$78 million to EnergyAustralia, one of the energy market's largest vested interests, to build the Tallawarra B gas-fired power station?

The New South Wales planning Minister approved the power station in December 2010, but it has been sitting on EnergyAustralia's books since then, gathering dust. The huge handout from the Coalition, probably one-quarter of the total cost, has obviously been sufficient enough to entice EnergyAustralia's Chinese owners to commit to the project. Let us be clear: This is a handout, not a loan or a share of equity. It is a gift awarded without any competition and with basically no strings attached. The Coalition is trying to sell it as an investment in Australia's first green hydrogen gas power plant, but all that is on the table is a commitment from EnergyAustralia to offer to buy up to 200 tonnes of green hydrogen each year from 2025—which, by the way, is up to 5 per cent of the fuel the power station could burn each year.

EnergyAustralia has also committed to undertake further engineering studies to understand if more hydrogen can be burnt, and supposedly buy offsets for the residual greenhouse gas emissions. That is not a lot of surety for \$78 million in terms of where we need to get to by 2050 or, indeed, as The Greens would like, by 2030 or earlier. Even if the offer to buy is accepted and 200 tonnes of hydrogen are bought and burnt, it will mean only a 3.5 per cent lowering of greenhouse gas emissions. It does not take a genius to know that is not a good return on your money. The Government's handout to EnergyAustralia will do absolutely nothing to deliver the net zero by 2050 strategy that it has outlined. Obviously, to reduce emissions we need to stop producing electricity from fossil fuels and replace it with renewable energy. As Professor Bruce Mountain, Bruce Robertson and Ted Woodley noted in their article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in May this year:

Dropping \$78 million of public money on Blockbuster when the world has well and truly moved on to Netflix makes a mockery of the government's fine words and legislated commitment.

When the Blockbuster of this metaphor is literally sealing in 2 degrees Celsius to 3 degrees Celsius of global warming and all the extreme weather events, human suffering and species extinction that that will entail, it renders as cynicism all of the rhetoric in this legislation. I say to the Libs and Nats that we are watching everything they do and they cannot continue to mislead our communities when it comes to strong action on climate change. It is time to prove it.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:50): On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate on the important Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which aims to modernise our energy system and support low-emission technologies such as standalone power stations and green hydrogen. I thank the member for Lakemba for his contribution to the debate and I welcome the Opposition's support for the bill. The member spoke rightly about the need to ensure energy security and resilience as our electricity system undergoes a huge transformation over the coming decade. I note the member's comments about the NSW Hydrogen Strategy and welcome his support for investing in a strong hydrogen economy in New South Wales.

I also note the member's concerns about the status of various energy and climate change plans by the Government. The NSW Climate Change Fund Draft Strategic Plan was finalised in a series of policy and program decisions between 2017 and 2020. The Government released the draft plan in November 2016 and then consulted with industry, businesses and households. The draft plan included a form of energy savings action plans for large businesses. The Government then announced various packages of energy efficiency and electricity supply programs for households, industry, business, local government and communities. These packages included the Energy Affordability Package 2017; more energy efficiency programs for low-income tenants, for energy intensive manufacturers and for local council-provided street lighting announced in 2018; the 2019 NSW Electricity Strategy; and the 2020 Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which is the New South Wales Government's plan that will deliver a reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity system. They also include the energy efficiency programs announced in early 2020 under the *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030*.

With respect to the adaptation strategy in particular, I reassure all members that the Government is fully committed to making the State more resilient and is prepared to respond to change in our climate. I draw the attention of the member for Lakemba to the Government's recent *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 Implementation Update*. It outlined the Government's commitment to commence reporting in line with the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures, as well as to develop an adaptation strategy that sets out the Government's strategic approach to preparing New South Wales to manage the impacts of climate variability on the State. I also note the points the member raised about the resilience of stand-alone power systems [SAPS] in extreme weather events. I reassure the member that the SAPS framework was developed over an extended period under the national rule change process, led by the Australian Energy Market Commission. It will provide strong consumer and system security protections for these systems. Indeed, SAPS can improve the resilience of the energy system because they avoid outages caused by weather events damaging long powerlines that are needed to connect regional and remote communities.

With respect to the concerns about the potential impacts on employment, I inform the member that the amendments in this bill do not themselves provide a regulatory framework for distribution networks to transfer customers to standalone power systems in New South Wales. The regulatory framework to permit distribution networks to transfer customers to standalone power systems is instead established in the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Stand-Alone Power Systems) Act 2021 of South Australia as a national framework. New South Wales is yet to opt in to this national framework. There will be a separate consultation process with all industry stakeholders prior to New South Wales opting in to the national framework. What these amendments do is ensure that once New South Wales has opted in to the new national framework, there is no change in rights and obligations imposed on distributors in relation to electricity connection and supply for customers transitioned to a standalone power system.

I acknowledge also the member's comments on the amendments to permit renewable energy in State forests. The member spoke about the importance of plantation forests in providing timber supply and about the need to make sure any developments are in the right place and do not have unintended impacts on core forestry activities. The Government agrees with those comments. I reassure the member that appropriate safeguards will be put in place via the supporting regulatory and planning framework to require offsets for the loss of forestry activities.

I acknowledge also concerns about the impacts of the legislation on biomass energy generation in forestry areas. I confirm that the primary motivation for the amendment is to permit renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind farms, rather than biomass energy generation. I am informed by the Forestry Corporation of NSW that interest to date has been primarily from wind farms, although there has been some interest registered in relation to pumped hydro facilities. Wind farms in State forests would not result in a large area of land unavailable for future timber production. It is a requirement of Forestry Corporation's certification that it maintain the defined forestry area so it would always seek to replace cleared areas with offset forested land.

All forests sequester carbon in the standing trees, and that carbon remains locked up in the timber products created from those trees. Wind farms would have no impact on that. Forestry Corporation of NSW would make it a condition of entering into a lease with the wind farm operator that either an area of productive land equivalent to that lost to the renewable energy infrastructure be provided directly as an offset or sufficient funds be paid to the Forestry Corporation for it to acquire the land for planting. The offset land would be required to have, as a minimum, the productive capacity of the land lost and be in the same timber supply area. The requirement for offsets would be made clear at both the expression of interest and request for proposal stages of the process and would be incorporated into any contracts for development.

The Forestry Corporation is also replanting the plantations burnt in the fires. I am advised that replanting will be completed by 2027. While in theory a biomass incinerator could be considered renewable energy infrastructure, it would still face all the constraints and approval processes that it would face on other land tenures. To the extent that the underlying concern is that a facility could be set up within the pine plantations to burn native forest biomass, clauses 125 to 127 of the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2021 place strict restrictions on the use of native forest biomaterials in electricity generation.

With respect to managing renewable energy infrastructure permits to ensure that State forests can continue to be used for recreation and other purposes, and remain safe, affordable and non-exclusive, I can assure the House that State forests are already managed for multiple uses with activities like recreation, tourism and permits for things like apiary cultivation and grazing all taking place amidst sustainable timber production. Most permits issued for State forests are not exclusive and enable all uses to coexist. In some instances, small areas of State forest are granted for exclusive use. Any exclusive-use areas for wind farms are expected to be very minimal and would certainly not be the entire footprint of the development. That will not impact adversely on access to State forests across the totality of the estate. Regarding the member's concerns relating to employment within the Forestry Corporation, we do not anticipate that the presence of wind farms in pine plantations will have any detrimental effect. Rather, it is anticipated that substantial additional opportunities would be created with the new investment from wind farm developers.

While the changes provide new opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure projects in State forests, developers will still be required to obtain relevant approvals under the existing planning approval process. Proponents also will be required to follow the New South Wales planning legislation and approvals process, which is summarised in the New South Wales Wind Energy Guideline. State planning requirements will apply, including energy generation, transmission and network security as well as localised considerations for each renewable energy opportunity. At the local level, a developer must consider the environmental impact, noise, landscape and visual impacts; traffic and transport issues; hazards and risks; heritage, water and soil impacts; and waste management. Community consultation must also be undertaken. The planning process provides the community, industry and regulators with a clear framework for the assessment of large-scale wind energy development proposals that are State significant developments.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Oatley and his support for the bill. The member spoke about the importance of having a fit-for-purpose energy emergency framework, including appropriate cybersecurity safeguards. I welcome the contribution of the Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Clarence, and his support for unlocking the development of renewable energy projects in State forests. He rightly pointed to the economic development opportunities that can be created by allowing the Forestry Corporation of NSW to maximise the use of its assets and the existing commercial interest in developing wind farms in State forests.

The member for Terrigal also spoke about some of the innovative projects being developed on the Central Coast regarding hydrogen and the huge opportunities they present to the State. He spoke in detail about Star Scientific and the impact that a meeting with it and the Minister had on ensuring this legislation met the needs of

this emerging industry. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Wollongong and his passionate support for making New South Wales, in particular the Illawarra, an energy and hydrogen super power. The member rightly spoke about the great work that is underway by the Renewable Energy Sector Board. As the member acknowledged, the board is busily working on its plan to present to the Minister for Energy and Environment. The Government looks forward to receiving it and making sure our manufacturing sector reaps the benefits of the renewable energy transformation that is underway in the State. I also acknowledge the member's support for making the Illawarra one of the biggest hydrogen hubs in the country. The Government's hydrogen strategy is essential to making this vision a reality.

I thank the member for Bankstown for her contribution to the debate and reassure her that the Government is committed to delivering on its hydrogen strategy and realising its benefits. She rightly pointed to the importance of hydrogen for job creation in the Hunter and Illawarra and the need to safeguard our timber supplies in State forests. I thank the member for Port Stephens for her contribution and her support for the Hunter to become a renewable energy powerhouse—a theme with a lot of support for the Hunter and Illawarra to take on these mantles. I also welcome her support for the Government's renewable energy zones and I respond to her, as I did to the member for Lakemba, in ensuring that she is aware that genuine renewables are required under this policy. While some people may see forestry biomass as a renewable option, the green hydrogen process that we will be utilising through this strategy uses electrolysis and does not use forestry biomass.

I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his contribution. He spoke at length about community impacts and the impact of transition lines, in particular, on local communities in his electorate. I want to make sure that he knows that the Government views genuine community engagement as non-negotiable as we progress this strategy and legislation. I thank the member for Ballina and welcome The Greens support for the bill. She spoke extensively about the Tallawarra B project and the grant provided by the New South Wales Government. I reassure the member, as she stated, that the terms for the grant incorporate the requirement to use green hydrogen for at least 5 per cent and any emissions over that must be offset. The reason that this is so crucial is that ensuring that we deliver the Illawarra hydrogen hub means that we need to create demand for green hydrogen. This early demand will be created through this agreement and the grant provided to Tallawarra B.

I reiterate the importance of the bill to deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for the State. I thank the Minister for Energy and Environment, who is also now the Treasurer, for the work that he has put into the strategy and the legislation. I particularly thank the team in his office, Ava Hancock, Ben Coles, Dimitry Palmer; and the departmental staff who have done a lot of the detailed work, Colette Grigg, Jason Scattolin and Andrew Lewis. We all know that New South Wales can be an energy and economic superpower. The term "superpower" was used consistently by members in the debate on the bill. The bill takes a huge step forward to deliver on that vision. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms FELICITY WILSON: On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

COVID-19 AND WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (19:03): Yesterday morning as I drove around beautiful Bowral in the southern part of my electorate of Wollondilly I heard the sound of freedom, and the sound of young children chirping, laughing and generally having fun again. They were on their way to school for the first time in many months. As a father of two school-age girls, I acutely understand the difficulties many families have around balancing work and their children's learning from home. I can only imagine how chaotic things have been in the Perrotet household with six children to manage. But in the light of yesterday's news, I congratulate the Premier and his wife, Helen, who are expecting another girl. They are handling it well, which should not surprise anyone. A large family has certainly set our Premier up very well to manage and keep the big kids in Cabinet and the party room well behaved. On a more serious note, as our children begin to return to school along with their friends in the best learning environment of all, the classroom, I do believe that now is the time to assess the effectiveness of lockdowns.

I was supportive of last year's statewide lockdown, as well as the localised northern beaches lockdown. Worldwide we were dealing with an early strain of the virus that proved to be incredibly deadly. More importantly,

its transmission rates were relatively low, making it possible, with the aid of best practice contact tracing, to eliminate the virus. The Delta strain has proved to be very different to its predecessors. It is much more contagious. It rapidly became the dominant strain throughout many parts of the world. For that reason, eliminating the virus from our shores was never a credible option, unless it is suggested we keep our international borders closed forever. The reality is that lockdowns ultimately fail. We must not permit basic liberties to be surrendered without reasonable justification.

The economic consequences of forced business closures due to lockdowns are well known. Not only does our entire economy suffer, but for some individual businesses the lockdowns have had devastating effects. There are also other non-financial costs associated with lockdowns. The *Journal of Public Health* recently published an article highlighting 25 separate studies with the common finding that isolating a person puts a strain on their mental health. We are now beginning to see those findings feed into data suggesting a spike in suicides, particularly among our youth. Lockdowns result in other health costs. A study published in *The Lancet* predicts substantial increases in the number of avoidable cancer deaths in England as a result of COVID-imposed diagnostic delays.

Personally, I know of one case where well-meaning COVID protocols prevented the early detection of what turned out to be cancer, with almost deadly consequences. When those economic, health and social costs are factored in, lockdowns simply make things much worse in the long term. Vaccination proves to be our best defence. Statewide we now have first dose vaccination rates above 92 per cent and the fully vaccinated rate is over 80 per cent. It will not be a silver bullet. The next 12 months will still hold sorrow for many families that will lose loved ones to this deadly beast. But we must open up and remain open. We must not lose our nerve simply because the case numbers rise again.

COVID has brought out the ugly side in our society. The comments of some of our national leaders have at times disgusted me. I am a proud New South Welshman, but I am also an Australian. The hard borders separating young children from their parents or loved ones from their dying relatives should be a source of national embarrassment. Our basic liberties should never be stripped away or lockdowns imposed, unless the benefit of those restrictions outweighs other health, social and economic costs. Those decisions and the reasons for them should never be withheld from the public. Moreover, those decisions must be made only by elected and accountable representatives.

National Cabinet should be made to pledge that by Australia Day next year we will again be one nation and one people with one destiny. There is absolutely no reason to prevent any Australian family from visiting loved ones or even relaxing on a beach on the other side of the country. As a society, we must adjust to living with COVID and the other viruses that will follow. It will require more investment in our health system and medical research to meet the health challenges of tomorrow. For this reason, Dominic Perrottet is a leader for our times. He understands small business, the daily balances of family and career, and the limited role governments should play in our lives.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (19:09): Our State is in the midst of a housing crisis and the Wallsend electorate is bearing the brunt. Thanks to the pandemic and the economic downturn, many people have lost their jobs or have seen their working hours cut. Housing costs are soaking up more and more of people's wages at the exact time we need the community to spend more money in local businesses to help rebuild the community. Many Hunter Valley renters are facing eviction or have already been evicted at a time when the regional rental market has a vacancy rate of just 0.3 per cent. Public housing in Wallsend is unable to accommodate the people who rely on it. The public housing system is not keeping up with current and future demand. Emergency homelessness services are at or above capacity, and it is getting worse.

The crisis has been building for a long time, but the combined pressures of COVID-19 and the economy have pushed the housing system to the brink. Yet for years the Government has ignored the warning signs. My office deals daily with people seeking housing assistance. We are bombarded with calls, emails and messages from locals who are struggling to find affordable accommodation due to increased prices and high demand. Some of them are forced to live in their cars; some are forced to live in tents. I know that in Wallsend some live under the bridges on the canal system down from the main street. Meanwhile, the people who are in public housing or who are trying to access public housing are waiting for months or even years to have their issues resolved. Either they need important maintenance work done, which can take months, or they need help with access or a transfer request. In both those situations, people face waits of months or years.

One local woman who stayed in a women's refuge after months of living in her car attended my office. She was living with her son, but he turned violent, threatening to end her life and badly damaging the property they shared. She took out an apprehended violence order against him, but she had to leave that untenable situation.

There was nowhere for her to go. She could not afford a private rental, which is not surprising given the competitive market and the limits of the age pension, and she was left languishing on the waiting list for public housing. She is just one of the 1,200 applicants waiting for housing in the Newcastle area.

We are facing an economic and humanitarian crisis in New South Wales, and it is certainly reflected in Newcastle. Added to that is an unemployment rate that is higher than the State average. There needs to be a significant investment in social and affordable housing in the very near future to avoid a return to the tent cities of the Great Depression, and that is the way we are going. Not only will increasing the housing stock help take the pressure off the rental market and keep people from living in their cars or on the streets or under the bridges on the canals in Wallsend; it also makes economic sense. For too long, public housing has been allowed to decay or has been sold off, with inadequate investment in new stock. We need to urgently increase social and affordable housing stock.

TAMWORTH ELECTORATE COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (19:13):

From doctors to nurses, admin staff to managers and practice managers, council staff to volunteers and pharmacists to retail workers, the push for vaccinations in the Tamworth electorate has been a mammoth community effort that has brought us together in ways we never would have imagined. Whether it has been our hardworking doctors, nurses and administration staff in our general practitioner surgeries, our brilliant staff in our hospital clinics, or our great Aboriginal organisations that waved in the Royal Flying Doctor Service at vaccination hubs for operation "Let's get vaccinated", it has proven to be a huge community effort. I thank every single person who has played a part. The Tamworth electorate now has some of the highest first-dose vaccination rates in the State. The push for vaccinations has been led by our community leaders, organisations and individuals who all share a dedication to public health.

I will update the House on a few key individuals and organisations that have been kind enough to give me a behind-the-scenes look at the vaccination push in Tamworth. I start off with Hunter-New England Health, as Health has played a major role. Last week Dr Jim Stacey of The Belmore Surgery took me on a tour of his practice, where he has vaccinated over 6,400 people, who lined up to be vaccinated—and that is in just one practice. Our local GPs have been carrying the baton for vaccination since the beginning, and doctors right across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Walcha, Werris Creek and Quirindi areas deserve our recognition. When I think of local doctors, I cannot forget Dr Adrian Allen and his staff at Walcha, who in fact have put Walcha at the top of the list in the State when it comes to vaccination rates. I thank all of our doctors, nurses and administrative staff, who have been pushing hard for months. They are the ones who have provided the protective blanket our regional communities needed to keep COVID out.

I thank our pharmacists and pharmacies, who have diligently added their names to the list of organisations providing this blanket of protection. I highlight the pharmacies at Gunnedah and Manilla, who drove up vaccination rates at a rate of knots when they came online. Karen Carter and her team at Karen Carter Chemist, and others in Gunnedah, including Lisa Hagley and her team, told me on their first weekend of operation they had vaccinated over 100 Gunnedah residents in a day. This was crucial in supporting the local doctors, who had been feeling the pinch for months. With this push for vaccination, more groups started to come on board. I give special thanks to the Tamworth Aboriginal Medical Service and Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre in Gunnedah, which were both critical in bringing the Royal Flying Doctors Service Pfizer hubs to our region. I also thank the University of New England [UNE] for the AstraZeneca hubs, with special mention of David Schmude from UNE.

The atmosphere at these hubs was amazing, with the whole community getting behind the cause. Over 5,000 people across the Tamworth electorate were vaccinated in the first round of these hubs alone. With our second round happening right now, I eagerly await our weekly vaccination update. Vaccination in regional communities of the Tamworth electorate has been a collaborative community effort. It has been brilliant to see just how much a pandemic, of all things, can bring our community together. Through adversity comes opportunity and the chance to shine as we work together. I thank the people of the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Walcha, Werris Creek and Quirindi regions for coming together when our community needed it most. We can get through this and we will. I say to everyone to please continue to keep getting vaccinated. It is the key to keeping our community safe.

STRICKLAND HOUSE ESTATE AND NIELSEN PARK MASTER PLANS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (19:14): Last month I announced the important news that two of our most treasured foreshore public open spaces, Strickland House Estate and Nielsen Park, received \$350,000 to kickstart the process of delivering a master plan for those spaces. The master plan will scope the potential use of these places so that they can be enjoyed and also protected for the future. At Strickland House Estate and Nielsen

Park residents and visitors alike walk, swim and relax—including at the sparkling harbour beaches Milk Beach and Shark Beach—and they reconnect with nature. They are both places with exceptional historical significance and with stunning nineteenth century villas. The Strickland House mansion, called Carrara, is an 1850s marine villa and an example of early colonial architectural history. As well as being a long-term home, it was a women's convalescent home in the twentieth century and an aged-care facility.

Nielsen Park's Greycliffe House was built in 1851 by the family of a local colonial politician, William Charles Wentworth, whose portrait is on the wall of this Chamber. For over 50 years Greycliffe House functioned as a hospital for babies and then as a Tresillian mother-care home. Both estates are rare examples of historic homes that have their landscape settings and harbour view lines intact. Of course, both Strickland House Estate and Nielsen Park already have significant protection through their State Heritage listings, which I was so pleased to deliver, with the strong support of my local residents. A State Heritage listing was awarded to Nielsen Park in September 2017 and then a State Heritage listing for the five hectare Strickland House Estate in October 2018. Significantly, in 2018 local residents joined with me, as the then New South Wales environment Minister, in marking the transfer of Strickland House Estate into our national parks estate, which was a significant moment because it meant we were forever protecting it as part of the Sydney Harbour National Park, as it should be.

I mention also the timeless and generous contributions of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society's President, Peter Poland, OAM, and his late wife, June Poland, OAM, to the preservation of the Strickland House Estate and indeed many other parts of heritage throughout our local area. June authored a booklet entitled *Carrara/Strickland House: the finest site on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour; the history, recent and not so recent*, which chronicles the estate's history. There is a memorial bench adjacent to Carrara named in June's honour. It faces the harbour so that people can look out over the harbour, as June liked to do. The master plan process also will give us a chance to further enhance the State heritage listed Hermitage Foreshore Reserve and walking track, which traverses through both properties. In August last year I joined local residents Olivia Babarczy and Peter Poland to announce the State Heritage listing of the reserve, thereby acknowledging its rich history and sublime natural landscape and views.

The investment in the master plan for Strickland House Estate and Nielsen Park is timely and it lines up with the master planning process for another part of Sydney Harbour Park, South Head precinct. South Head includes parts of Camp Cove, Green Point and Gap Bluff. Together they are all well-loved places of natural beauty in my local area. The South Head precinct is well known for its Indigenous, colonial and military history, its amazing views out to the heads, its walking tracks and harbour beach visibility, and the way it offers a sense of remoteness, despite being close to Sydney's central business district. The master plan represents an opportunity to identify necessary upgrades, such as walking tracks and wayfinding, to enhance its cultural and natural attributes and identify uses for the existing building and facilities.

I acknowledge local residents who shared their early ideas on the master plan, including Watsons Bay Association representatives Julie Bayliss, Camilla Strang, Louise McElvogue, Ron Berkelmans and George Miller, AO, as well as Hylda Rolfe representing the Sydney Harbour Association. The process is now well underway, with a stakeholder reference group which includes Roger Bayliss; Chris Ingrey, CEO of the La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council; Ben Khan, the National Parks and Wildlife Service Area Manager; David Joyce from HMAS *Watson*; Hylda Rolfe, Camilla Strang, Daniel Sealey from the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Federation Trust; Karen Wright, President of Sydney Game Fishing Club; and Councillor Susan Wynne, Mayor of Woollahra council. As we know, community support is so vital to ensure that these unique community assets continue to serve residents and visitors alike and are well protected for the future. I look forward to continuing that important work with and alongside my local community.

YOUTH POWR

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (19:23): I inform the House of the outstanding interfaith work being done in my multicultural electorate of Rockdale by the Youth Parliament of the World's Religions, or Youth PoWR, which comprises a body of multifaith youth, whom I recently met. At the meeting with me were Zubaida, Shirrine, Zeynep, Sophie, Joyce, Bovey, Pravin, Ryan and the founding force behind Youth PoWR, Reverend Dr Patrick McInerney. Father McInerney may be much older than the other members of Youth PoWR, but he is young at heart and is a driving force for interfaith understanding.

Father McInerney is the director of the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim relations, which is a Catholic Church organisation dedicated to serving the world through interfaith understanding. Despite the Christian-Muslim title of the centre, Father McInerney and the Columban Centre see their mission as naturally extending to building relationships between believers of all faiths. They do this good work through education and outreach and the greatest example is Youth PoWR, which Father McInerney conceived in 2015. Modelled on our Westminster system, Youth PoWR is composed of young people aged 18 to 35 drawn from many different State and national religious peak bodies. They combine to form an interfaith cabinet, and this interfaith cabinet organises

an annual parliament of the multifaith youth of Sydney—an event where relationships form, ideas spark, and projects are conceived. The dynamism and energy of the organisation is best summed up by its motto: by youth, for youth, with youth. With so much young energy, it was inevitable that something special would arise.

That something started in 2018, when the elders of the multifaith Religious Leaders Forum of New South Wales were considering developing a uniquely Sydney interfaith charter, inspired by those produced in recent years in Athens, Fez and Beirut. After much discussion, the elders wisely decided to place the development of the charter in the hands of the city's multifaith youth through Youth PoWR. The first meeting of the charter process was held on 19 March 2019, which is the anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge—a date specially chosen because of the intention to make the charter a bridge between faiths. Work was funded throughout 2019 and 2020 by a Multicultural NSW Community Partnership Action [COMPACT] grant with assistance from Western Sydney University. After 16 drafts and many consultation sessions, the hard work culminated in the launch of the final Sydney Statement in February of this year.

The Sydney Statement is a magnificent example of the best aspects of interfaith harmony in our society. I will not quote from it here but I encourage all members of this House to go online and read it. There are significant and diverse communities of faith in my electorate of Rockdale, and I see the statement as a guiding beacon for building and maintaining a harmonious society. It is refreshing to see young, energetic, multifaith people working so proactively in this area. A truly diverse multicultural community needs to embrace religious diversity, as well as racial and secular difference. It gladdens my heart to see this in action so close to my home.

I mentioned earlier the symbolic reason that the Sydney Statement drafting process began on the anniversary of the opening of the Harbour Bridge. I should add that an image of the bridge was chosen as the logo of the statement, and it is the hope of the framers that the actual harbour bridge will become a recognised symbol of good relations between the faith communities of Sydney. To that end, starting with the ninetieth anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge next year, they hope to make 19 March every year Bridge Day in Sydney as an annual encouragement to all peoples of faith to make an effort to reach out to each other. I give my endorsement to this idea and I will look to implement such celebrations in my own electorate. I congratulate Youth PoWR on the production of the Sydney Statement and I look forward to working with them in the future.

ARMIDALE ELECTORATE STORM DAMAGE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:28): With a roar like a freight train, the full might of the storm season struck the city of Armidale last Thursday evening 14 October, destroying property, leaving multiple families in emergency accommodation and causing millions of dollars worth of devastation. The tornado, as it was officially defined by the Bureau of Meteorology, hit at 10 p.m., bringing hail, rain and gale force winds in excess of 90 kilometres per hour. It tracked north-east of the city of Armidale from Boorolong Road, across the grounds of the University of New England—which alone sustained tens of millions of dollars in damage and remains closed today—on through Girraween, across North Hill on to Rockvale Road and further out past the city and towards Metz Gorge. Throughout the city it left a four-kilometre path of destruction—something akin to what we could expect to see in Tornado Alley in the United States of America.

Going from silence to a deafening roar, the tornado tore roofs from homes, lifted sheds and carted them hundreds of metres, flipped vehicles and put one four-wheel drive into another person's living room, ripped out trees and levelled power lines. Erskine Street, Chestnut Avenue, Arundale Drive, Taylor Street and Watson Avenue, just to name a few streets in the North Hill area of Armidale, bore the brunt of the supercell storm. And yet, despite all that destruction, not one life was lost; nor have there been any serious injuries reported—an absolute miracle among the huge amount of devastation. On Thursday 14 October the Bureau of Meteorology issued a severe storm warning at 1.30 p.m. and, as for any impending storm event, Armidale SES Commander Matthew Elsley and Deputy Commander Jock Campbell—I praise them both for their amazing work; they are two outstanding young men who really stepped up in this crisis—had crews on stand-by that afternoon for what was to come in the evening.

As the extent of the damage was realised—and it was much greater than expected—SES Superintendent Mitch Parker, who also worked amazing hours during the clean-up, called on SES units from the Hunter and Northern Zones, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and the Volunteer Rescue Association and the Armidale Regional Council for help. Everyone helped. A total of 180 volunteer and staff personnel from across all of those agencies made up 28 fast-action response teams. As of today, around 300 calls-for-help jobs have been responded to and completed in the city of Armidale alone. Those whose homes were impacted most heavily will stay in emergency accommodation until structural assessments can be undertaken on their properties.

Of the buildings that Armidale Regional Council, its inspectors and various contractors have attended and assessed to date, 11 residences have been declared fully non-habitable. In addition, nine residences have been

declared to require full demolition, two of which have adjoining properties that also may be affected; and one residence has been declared to be partially non-habitable. These assessments are just the results of the SES calls alone. Anecdotally, much more damage has been suffered by a number of people, particularly those on rural properties, and they have contacted their insurance companies directly. At the height of the storm, more than 6,400 Essential Energy customers were without power. After a herculean effort as Essential Energy crews from across the region worked overnight, that number was reduced to 3,900 without power by Friday morning and 3,167 at midday on Friday. Power was fully restored to all customers by the following Monday.

The Armidale Water Treatment Plant was out of action from Thursday night when the storm hit until four o'clock Friday afternoon, which of course prompted an immediate warning by the Armidale Regional Council for residents to observe water conservation measures. The council issued the warning because, without power to the plant, the water could not be pumped around the reticulated water supply. Power was restored as soon as possible. Once again, after the storm we saw the best of human nature. Bleary-eyed residents worked through the night to support each other along with BackTrack Youth Works, which cleaned up and lent a hand. I acknowledge the Armidale Regional Council's chief assets and services manager, Alex Manners, and his team, the BackTrack Youth Works team, who have been tremendous and who continue to do a brilliant job; the local tradies; the Rapid Response Team, which has worked to keep all the emergency services personnel fed; and the community's overwhelming generosity and stoicism with GoFundMe pages.

Lastly, I pay tribute to 28-year-old Damien Wilson and 90-year-old Dawn Sargeant. The storm ripped Dawn's roof off and the roof then collapsed while she was inside the house. Without fear for his own safety, Damien smashed through a window and stayed with Dawn until the SES could arrive to help her and resolve the situation. Armidale has experienced a devastating past few days, but thanks to the quick work of emergency services we will survive and we will rebuild.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): We all thank the emergency services. I know it has been a tough time in Armidale too.

NSW POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:33): The New South Wales Police Remembrance Day was commemorated in September this year. Each and every day in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice I have the great privilege of sharing a small part of the experiences and service of over 17,000 police officers right across this great State. It is always pleasing to hear the stories of our police officers—their courage, their integrity and their selflessness. Each year in September, ceremonies are held across the State for National Police Remembrance Day to acknowledge and honour officers who have paid the ultimate price in the service of our communities. Recently, I attended a service at the Blacktown police station to recognise a 50-year commemoration of two officers who sadly passed away whilst on duty in Toongabbie, which is a suburb that is right in the heart of Seven Hills.

The service held a deep significance for me, as these officers' lives ended as they responded to an incident within the community in which I grew up and now represent in this place. At the time of their deaths I was a young boy who lived only streets away and whose father was also a police officer. Sergeant William Riley and Sergeant Maurice McDiarmid were responding to a domestic incident in Toongabbie when they were both shot by a citizen who was later fatally injured during his arrest.

National Police Remembrance Day is a time for all of us to stop and reflect on the incredible sacrifice many officers have made to ensure Australians can feel safe in their communities. Officers like Sergeant Riley and Sergeant McDiarmid and countless officers put their lives at risk on a daily basis attending violent calls, being the first line of defence for vulnerable individuals and in many more unthinkable scenarios. Put simply, our police officers put their safety and security of the wider community before their own. This day of reflection holds significance not only for remembering Australian police officers but also officers from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. We take time to reflect upon officers across these regions who have had their lives tragically cut short in the line of duty.

Aside from senseless acts of violence, officers across Australia can experience life-altering events such as the contraction of illness or sustaining serious injury while in the line of duty. This day of remembrance helps us to reflect on the enormous sacrifice they have endured for our communities. Various organisations now exist to assist officers in these circumstances, including the New South Wales Police Legacy and the Police Association of New South Wales. I thank these organisations for their great work in assisting many officers and their families in recovery. Their work is invaluable.

Prior to entering this place, I served as a NSW Police Force officer, a prosecutor and as an intelligence officer with the Australian Federal Police for more than 20 years. In my time as an officer I knew colleagues who

lost their own lives whilst on duty. I will not focus on a particular officer or event in my recollections. However, these occurrences deeply impact every person involved, their families and the wider community. They are mostly senseless, violent and unprovoked attacks where the officer on duty is targeted for no reason other than being the one who was on duty at the time. It is this fact that binds those who serve so closely together. National Police Remembrance Day not only draws attention to those officers who have either lost their lives or livelihoods serving in our communities but also calls on us to remember and honour officers who today continue to serve our communities despite the frequent dangers they face.

Citizens of New South Wales play an important role in supporting all current officers, a fact brought to attention as our State welcomes the NSW Police Force's Class 349. I welcome six probationary constables to the Blacktown Police Area Command, five to the Parramatta and Riverstone areas and three to The Hills, all of whom will serve the electorate of Seven Hills. Hundreds of dedicated and selfless individuals choose to pursue careers in the NSW Police Force each year as part of the 1,500 new officers promised by the Government in 2019. I pass on my sincere best wishes for their services. All members of this House praise them and admire their service.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY STATE CONFERENCE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (19:38): Earlier this month the NSW Labor Party held its annual State conference virtually. I am delighted to acknowledge the Labor Party members who received the award of life membership of the Labor Party at the conference. Life membership of the Australian Labor Party is not an easy feat to achieve. To nominate, one must be a member of the Australian Labor Party continuously for 40 years before such an honour is bestowed. It is an incredible achievement and one that is well deserved for members who have remained loyal to Labor's core principles and values for over 40 years. I congratulate the following Labor Party members who reside in the electorates of Bankstown or the East Hills on being recipients of this prestigious award.

I congratulate my dear friend Mr Kevin Boyd, OAM, who was nominated by the Birrong branch, on receiving his life membership. Mr Boyd has been a member of the Labor Party in the Birrong area for more than four decades and is an important figure in the labour movement. In 1993 Kevin was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his important service to industrial relations, particularly for his work in fighting for the pay and conditions of workers in the Clothing and Allied Trade Union of Australia, now the textiles union, for which he was the general secretary for many years. I also acknowledge my dear friend Mr Albert "Bert" Collins, who was nominated for life membership by both the Condell Park branch and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association [SDA]. Mr Collins is the oldest living member of the Australian Labor Party. At 105, he is the mainstay of the Condell Park branch and an icon to his local community. Bert has also been a member of the SDA for an astonishing 90 years and holds a very special life membership with the union. Earlier this month I had the pleasure of visiting Bert with the Federal member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, and SDA secretary, Mr Bernie Smith, to present Bert with an award acknowledging this terrific achievement.

I congratulate also Mr Ron Harvey on his life membership. Ron has been a member of the Labor Party since the 1970s. He was a member of the Waterloo branch, where he first joined, before moving to the Bankstown area. He now resides in Villawood. Ron has also been a lifelong member of the labour movement, being a part of the Transport Workers' Union. I also acknowledge Mr Tony Re, a very good friend of mine, who joined the Labor Party in 1980 and has since devoted 40 years to volunteering in the Bankstown area. Tony is currently the secretary of the Blaxland Federal electorate council and has held various executive positions over the years. He has also served on the Bankstown State electorate council and on the executive of Georges Hall branch. I congratulate Mr Michael Kahla, who was nominated for life membership by the Chester Hill branch. Also a dear friend of mine, Mr Kahla has helped Labor candidates campaign in local council, State and Federal elections since he joined the party in the 1980s. Michael was a secretary of the Chester Hill branch, where he was an active member for many years.

I acknowledge Mr Bruce Bailey, who was nominated for life membership by the Birrong branch. Mr Bailey has been a stalwart member of the Labor Party since 1981. As an active member of our branches, Bruce has volunteered at local, State and Federal elections for a number of decades. I make special mention of Mr Ian Stormborg, OAM, who served four years as mayor and as a councillor for 30 years on the Bankstown City Council. He has been a member of the Revesby Workers Club for 52 years and a director for the past 16 years. I congratulate him on this terrific award. I also congratulate Messrs Raymond and Simon Melham for receiving their life membership, following in the footsteps of their great brother, the former member for Banks and current president of the Revesby Workers Club, my good friend Mr Daryl Melham, AM.

I acknowledge also the following recipients of life membership of the Australian Labor Party: Ms Judith Blake, Ms Maureen Corbal, Mr Raymond Davin, Ms Kath Farrell, Mr Brian Horne, Mr William Lovelee, Mr Alan Moroney, Ms Betty Ruthven, Ms Carmel York and Ms Helen Lynch. I congratulate each of these recipients on achieving such a prestigious honour. We are all very proud of being members of this great Labor

Party, but it is a terrific honour to have a life membership bestowed upon a member to honour their great service and the pride they have in our terrific party. I thank the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I, too, congratulate and thank the life members. It is really a labour of love to be a member of the Labor Party for that long. I say thank you to all of them.

COVID-19 AND STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (19:43): Via video link: As we emerge from the pandemic, I reflect on its impact on my community. It is important to note that I am delivering my statement virtually, which as all members of Parliament know is as a result of the pandemic and our need to be COVID safe. First, I recognise all those people who have lost someone they love during the pandemic and pass on my condolences. COVID-19 is a terrible disease and it has impacted so many families in New South Wales, particularly during this last Delta wave, which hit my electorate and others across the State so much harder. We have recorded around 1,519 COVID cases in postcodes across my electorate, and more than 1,400 of those occurred in the most recent Delta outbreak. The pandemic reached its peak in the Strathfield electorate in mid-September, with all suburbs reaching their peak in active cases from 13 to 25 September. I cite statistics, but the hundreds of calls and emails that constituents made during this time made me, as their local member, starkly aware of how each of these numbers was a radically life-changing event, sometimes temporarily and at other times irrevocably.

In my electorate of Strathfield three local government areas [LGAs] were declared "areas of concern" due to trends in case numbers or their proximity to high-risk areas. The "declared" status of Canterbury-Bankstown, Strathfield and Burwood LGAs brought a slate of new challenges for residents in those communities, who found themselves placed under stringent restrictions. Many members online or in the Chamber have faced something similar. Residents in my electorate had many questions about the criteria on which this "declared" designation was determined. I was pleased to see that my community became involved and wanted to have a say in how this designation could be applied in the future. They wanted the "area of concern" status applied to a postcode rather than to LGAs. I was pleased to support that in a petition to the Parliament.

I recognise the generosity and empathy of many people in my community who found ways to help others throughout the pandemic. It was lovely to see everyone get involved and reach out to help their neighbour. I thank the many groups that I worked with, including St Paul's Parish Pantry, St Merkorious Charity, Vinnies, who were terrific, the Sri Gayatri group and the Hindu Council of Australia. As well as providing material support, they were a source of much-needed social connection. The value of local, small-scale social welfare groups cannot be overstated because the relationships formed in the community are just as valuable as the goods and services they provide. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the way that we lived, worked and studied early in 2020, but the Delta outbreak brought our reliance on communication technologies to a new level. My e-newsletter, which is normally a monthly distribution, became a daily publication as we sought to keep residents updated about the constantly changing and sometimes confusing health orders. We were answering the most basic of questions, but they were questions about issues that impacted enormously on the lives of those whom we were working with.

During this period it was near impossible without technology to carry out daily tasks like shopping and we had to be smartphone literate. This stressed to me the importance of programs that help seniors to access the digital world. The members of the Burwood waist drum group learnt to use Zoom to continue rehearsing and socialising. I attended their second Zoom meeting, which included an online soiree of solo performances from the group's members. Our Tamil seniors also became proficient in Zooming. Through a series of online forums arranged through my office, public health experts, community leaders and police volunteered their time to answer constituents' questions to assist them to get on with their daily lives.

I acknowledge Superintendent Danielle Emerton, Acting Superintendent Andrew Graham, Senior Constable Lisa Latu, and NSW Police Force Multicultural Community Liaison Officer Tammy Tong. I also thank Associate Professor Stephen Li, Associate Professor Ying Zhang and Associate Professor Charlotte Hesse for their roles in educating my constituents about the COVID-19 vaccines. Given our multicultural Strathfield electorate, we made sure the forums were delivered in different languages. The enthusiasm for the vaccination information forums was matched by the rapid uptake of the vaccine in my electorate. As the vaccination map moved from yellow to green to teal and to shades of blue, the commitment of my electorate as well as of our neighbours in western and south-western Sydney to protect themselves and their communities was apparent. [*Time expired.*]

SCHOFIELDS COMMUTER CAR PARK

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:49): Yesterday I was pleased to turn the first sod on the Schofields commuter car park project, which will deliver 700 car spaces for residents accessing rail services at Schofields railway station. Delivery of these additional spaces will bring to more than 1,000 the total car park

capacity at the station. These additional spaces are urgently needed to meet the constantly growing demand generated by urban development across the region. The 2021-22 budget allocation in the Transport portfolio for Riverstone includes \$13.7 million for the construction of the Schofields commuter car park. Earlier this year planning approval was granted and a contract for construction was awarded. Prior to that, land was acquired on the western side of the rail line to enable the project to proceed. This acquired land also makes provision for a corridor for a future extension of the Metro Northwest westwards from Tallawong to Marsden Park. Site works have now commenced and substantial construction is imminent.

The car park is projected to open in two stages, by the end of the first and second quarters of 2022. While there have been delays, the project will be delivered in full, ensuring much greater access to the public transport system in the region. The project follows the completion earlier this year of the car park project on the eastern side of the line, which added 85 spaces. This project, funded by the New South Wales Government, was undertaken in conjunction with the Blacktown City Council upgrade occurring at Railway Terrace. I note that over the past five years cumulative increases in bus access to the station have been provided, with increased frequency on existing bus routes; a new bus route introduced, which serves the station; and the introduction in 2019 of the Cooee on-demand bus service moving passengers to and from Schofields, Tallawong and Rouse Hill stations. It is also worthy of note that in 2019, with the opening of the metro, there were 1,000 car spaces provided at Tallawong station, 1,300 at Kellyville station and 880 at Bella Vista station.

Yesterday's small launch event included a welcome to country and a smoking ceremony conducted by western Sydney Aboriginal elder Uncle Greg Simms. In welcoming those who attended, Uncle Greg noted, as he often does, that in Aboriginal culture no-one is excluded from the circle around the fire. The welcome he extended was for all, whatever their background. Uncle Greg's words resonate with me in my role as a local member in a rapidly urbanising district, with new people joining our community all the time. In delivering new facilities and services, my goal is to play a part in building not just infrastructure but communities, not just suburbs but neighbourhoods. My hope is that all of those who settle in the neighbourhoods that form part of the Riverstone electorate will feel that they are at home and belong in communities that are open to all, whether they be Indigenous Australians like Uncle Greg, ancestral Australians like me as a fifth-generation descendant of Second Fleet arrivals, or migrant Australians who have chosen to make Australia their new home.

It is the goal of the New South Wales Government to ensure that all of our residents have access to the opportunities that this State can provide. In planning and building the infrastructure to support new communities, we aim to ensure that all can participate in our society. The Schofields commuter car park is but one of many infrastructure projects that have been and will be delivered in Riverstone. Since 2011, within the boundaries of this electorate the Government has delivered four new schools, four major school upgrades, major arterial road projects on Schofields Road and Richmond Road, a new police station at Riverstone, upgraded sewer and water infrastructure and upgraded local roads and has facilitated the arrival of the Metro Northwest at Tallawong. Other major investments have occurred serving the wider north-west Sydney region. The start of construction on the Schofields commuter car park project is yet another milestone in delivering for the new communities in Sydney's north-west. I am proud to be part of a team that is delivering this new infrastructure for so many people settling in our region. Our Government does its best to provide services, infrastructure and facilities to make life better for those new communities.

COVID-19 AND FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:53): During the June 2021 lockdown Fairfield experienced challenging times from very early on. As New South Wales entered a lockdown in a bid to slow the spread of the Delta strain of the COVID-19 virus, Fairfield was the first suburb to become an area of concern and became subject to the harshest restrictions almost from the very beginning of the lockdown period. As non-essential businesses closed their doors and strict stay-at-home orders were issued, many residents lost their jobs and livelihoods and were in desperate need of assistance. Fairfield was well and truly in the media spotlight at this time and as a result I received many generous offers from a variety of different organisations who wished to make donations of goods in order to help sustain the community through this challenging time.

In conjunction with these groups and partner charity organisations, the Fairfield electorate Care Package Program was established, with donations collected and coordinated for distribution to the community. Thousands of individual items were sorted and packed into care packages. These care packages consisted of a package containing essential care products and non-perishable food items. I thank our partners and contributors: Good360 Australia, Rapid Relief Team Australia, Our Pure Planet, Safenet Nooh and NAFFCO Australia for their donations and assistance in packing the items for distribution. The community was advised of the Fairfield electorate Care Package Program via social media and word soon spread throughout the community that relief was on hand.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues the member for Coogee, Dr Marjorie O'Neill; the member for Cabramatta, Nick Lalich; the member for Prospect, Hugh McDermott; Federal member of Parliament, Chris

Bowen; Fairfield City Councillor, Tan Kien Ly; and community representatives, Mr George Barcha and Mr Basim Shamoan, for their assistance in getting the message out to the local community via social media and in videos in languages. As our friends at Good360 Australia say, "It takes a village to make good happen". This was certainly the case in Fairfield as so many organisations jumped on board to get as many care packages out as possible in record time. The care packages were distributed to the community via community groups, charity organisations and pre-booked COVID-safe appointments at the Fairfield electorate office.

The focus was on making sure that everyone who needed assistance received it, and the office was inundated with calls and emails seeking help. The distribution would not have been possible without the help of the following organisations: Food Angel; the Australian Mancave Support Group; St Merkorious Charity; Salvation Army Fairfield; CORE Community Services; Villawood Senior Citizens Centre; Alkesaa Association; C.A.S.A; Kingdom Living Community Services; Fairfield Uniting Church; Fairfield Meals on Wheels; New South Wales Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance [SLASA]; Shayna Humanitarian Services; Mr George Barcha; Mr Basim Shamoan; and Fairfield Councillor, Tan Kien Ly. I also thank the Fairfield City Police Area Command and Australian Defence Force personnel for assisting in distributing packages to people who were in COVID-19 isolation.

The Fairfield electorate Care Package Program was a huge success and helped many families who were struggling financially during the June 2021 lockdown. While it helped to provide relief for the immediate challenge of putting food on the table, there is still much that needs to be done to help the community recover from the impact of the 2021 lockdown. The Government needs to provide more assistance to Fairfield and other areas in south-west Sydney hit hard by the lockdown. South-west Sydney was particularly challenged during the lockdown and many suburbs were subject to the harshest restrictions for a considerably longer period than the rest of New South Wales. While aid was promised by the Government, it was late in coming and, as a result, the community suffered.

I acknowledge the work of the many community organisations and charities that stepped in to bridge this gap and help the community through this challenging time. Without their assistance, the Fairfield electorate Care Package Program would not have been possible. The collaboration of so many groups of people ensured the program was a success and that everyone who needed assistance was able to access it. I take this opportunity to once again thank the business donors, the community organisations, the charities and individual citizens who made the Fairfield electorate Care Package Program a success.

PINK ELEPHANTS SUPPORT NETWORK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:58): I inform the House about an organisation that supports parents and their families through early pregnancy loss. The Pink Elephants Support Network, which was established in 2016, provides early intervention support to women and their families through digital-based peer support, educational information and resources. Those resources are available for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss to support them as they grieve and nurture them as they heal and usually try to conceive again. Why the name Pink Elephant? It is believed when a mother elephant loses her baby the other elephants stand in a circle around her, allowing her all the time she needs to grieve and mourn. The reason I have chosen to promote the life-changing work of the Pink Elephants Support Network is that October is International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, with hundreds of Australian parents sharing what is hurting them right now—silence.

October is a time for Australia to break the silence and acknowledge the heartbreak happening too often right now. From now until the end of October, families are sharing their silence stories with Red Nose in a bid to get Australia talking about this too-often taboo topic. Every year approximately 110,000 Australians have a miscarriage, 2,200 more endure the pain of stillbirth, 600 lose their baby in the first 28 days after birth and many more face the grief of termination for medical reasons. Recent Australian research found that 74 per cent of women who suffered a miscarriage reported feeling very unsupported, and there is evidence that miscarriage can induce an intense period of emotional distress. If left unsupported, this can lead to heightened symptoms of clinically significant anxiety and depression.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated what is already a very difficult time for women. Last year during the first national lockdown and similarly with the Victorian and New South Wales lockdowns we saw a significant 63 per cent increase in demand for our support materials and membership to our online communities. In 2021 in New South Wales and nationally there has been a 30 per cent increase in requests for peer support phone counselling, a 60 per cent increase in women joining the Pink Elephants online support communities and a fivefold increase in the number of downloads of our online resources compared to the same time last year. Miscarriage support is not just a moment in time; it is often a long journey that needs support and understanding at the time and for years to come. In 2018 Pink Elephants started supplying Port Macquarie Base Hospital with its resources designed to be handed out to a woman and her partner when they suffer a miscarriage.

In 2019 Amy was referred by her GP after a scan revealed that her baby's heart had stopped beating at eight weeks. Amy and her husband had been trying for a number of years and this was their first pregnancy—a much-loved and wanted baby. They had planned a future for this child, nursery designs, names and excitedly shared the good news with their friends. Their miscarriage came as a complete shock. They were scared about what was next and felt very alone in their grief. Amy was referred to Pink Elephants by the Early Pregnancy Assessment Service—EPAS—nurse at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Amy utilised the digital resources from the website and joined the online community for miscarriage support, connecting with other women who had also lost their precious babies.

Together, they supported each other by listening to each other's experiences and validating each other. Together, they began to heal. Happily, in Amy's case, she was able to overcome her grief and successfully navigate pregnancy after loss with the support of Pink Elephants. Amy recently welcomed a beautiful baby boy into the world. Let me read a testimonial from Julie, who is a Nurse Unit Manager, Early Pregnancy Assessment Service--Maternity at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. She said:

Your work is wonderful and I thank you that you are able to provide thoughtful and relevant advice for families in grief. I recommend your site to the clients I see in EPAS and have even learned that some of our registrars who I have told about your service have looked at your site and are also documenting in their notes that they have encouraged the women and their support people to use your site.

Sadly, Port Macquarie EPAS sees approximately 30 bereaved parents a month for the clinical management of their miscarriage. Finally, I acknowledge Sam Payne, the Co-founder and Chief Executive officer of the Pink Elephants Support Network. I thank her and her team for the compassion they show to women and families as they mourn the loss of their precious babies. I encourage all members of this House to learn more about the Pink Elephants Support Network and share its life-changing work with their community.

COVID-19 AND SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:03): The past few months have tested us all—tested our resilience and our connectedness like never before. Many people have lost work and faced financial hardship; small businesses have been pushed to the wall; parents have struggled to balance the competing pressures of work, home life and home learning; and, of course, many people have contracted COVID-19 and some have lost loved ones. Things have been especially difficult for residents in Ashbury, a suburb in my electorate that sits within the Canterbury-Bankstown local government area and was therefore subject to harsher health restrictions, including the curfew. For everyone across the inner west, one of the most difficult aspects of the pandemic has been its power to keep us apart. We know that the strain on people's wellbeing and mental health has been immense—this has been a challenging period in our history but one in which our very best nature has shone through, none more so than in our extraordinary essential workers.

Heroes on our front lines have put their lives and the health and wellbeing of their families on the line to keep our communities safe. We owe deep gratitude to doctors, nurses, paramedics, hospital cleaners, contact tracers, vaccination nurses, workers conducting COVID-19 tests and the many thousands of administrative staff who have supported our health system during this outbreak. We also owe our thanks to essential workers in transport and freight, emergency services, pharmacies and, of course, all those workers in the food and beverage supply chains, including people working in supermarkets. Teachers worked around the clock to ensure our kids kept on track, running Zoom classes, preparing worksheets and regularly checking in on every child's learning, often while juggling their own demands at home. As the outbreak worsened, all those heroes kept showing up to work, no matter the risk, to ensure people had access to the most basic of fundamental goods and services. They put the needs of the community ahead of their own. Each and every one of them, I believe, is a hero.

Local community groups have helped to hold our community together. I cannot name them all here today, but I especially want to acknowledge some of the local organisations that have been supporting the inner west community during the outbreak. I thank all those organisations that have been working to address food insecurity, including the Addison Road Community Centre, Connect Marrickville, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and the Bill Crews' Exodus Foundation. The Addison Road Community Centre has been feeding up to 8,000 people a week across the inner west and in designated local government areas of concern. Local businesses and supermarkets have donated food, which was then boxed up by volunteers and distributed by organisations to the people and families that needed it most. I thank all those organisations that have been working to increase rates of vaccination locally and ensuring that relevant health and vaccine information is available to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and also those who worked to directly provide vaccines.

The Exodus Foundation teamed up with Aspen Medical to provide pop-up vaccine clinics across the inner west, including at the Marrickville West Public School. Organisations like Metro Assist and Cultural Community Connections worked to ensure that vaccine information was available in multiple languages. They hosted online information sessions with community leaders to help get out vaccine information and reduce vaccine hesitancy across the community. I note also that the Gender Centre recently hosted a vaccine clinic for trans and gender

diverse members of the community, and that ACON hosted a fabulous Super Saturday vaccination drive for members of the LGBTQ community at the Qudos Bank Arena.

We know young people have been hit especially hard by the lockdown, with home learning keeping kids away from their friends and social networks. Organisations like Connect Marrickville have been instrumental in making sure that no kid falls through the cracks. They have provided critical support with food and housing security, hosted online playgroups and story times and run programs to support parents. Headspace in Ashfield has run regular sessions to support young people with their mental health. I acknowledge the work of the Marrickville Legal Centre, which has worked tirelessly to support people who were issued with penalty notices. I also acknowledge the Inner West Tenancy Advocacy Service, which helps those navigating issues around the eviction moratorium. I thank the local chambers of commerce, including AshBiz. Lots of small businesses have been devastated by the outbreak and those local groups have helped make sure they can access crisis payments. Those that have made it through are now facing many challenges, with the evolving health orders and with making sure they are looking after their staff and opening their doors. It is clear that making it through the pandemic has been a collective effort. Our community has looked out for one another and I am certain we are stronger and more resilient because of it.

BLAND SHIRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:08): Today I celebrate the Bland shire and the incredible people who call it home. This is a community that can poke fun at itself, happily joining the League of Extraordinary Communities with Dull in Scotland and Boring in the United States of America. And while I cannot speak for Dull and Boring, the Bland shire is certainly an extraordinary place and one that I am proud to serve. Since I took office in 2017, I have worked closely with the local community and council to ensure the people of West Wyalong, Wyalong, Barmedman, Tallimba, Ungarie, Weethalle and Mirrool have the services and infrastructure they need to thrive. This Government has invested in the Ungarie community, helping to enhance local recreation and community spaces. It has supported renovations to the much-loved Country Women's Association Hall; created three new tennis courts; funded new amenities for the showground, which will be used by hundreds of local sportspeople each weekend; and has helped to revamp parts of the showground's pavilion.

In Weethalle the Government has supported upgrades to the showground, with new outdoor seating, a refurbished kitchen and power to the recreation ground. It is also upgrading the Weethalle Public School toilets through the Regional Renewal Program. Goldfields Way near Barmedman has been improved to create a stronger, smoother and safer road surface, with improved drainage, wider lanes and improved resistance to flooding, recognising the importance of this road to the community and to the primary producers who use it as a vital link in their businesses. Bland shire continues to benefit from the Resources for Regions program, which supported five local recreation projects with almost \$2.1 million at the end of 2020 and which will invest a further \$3.14 million into the community in the next round.

West Wyalong is the hub of this great shire and the service centre for these small communities. It is a town with a bright future. The New South Wales Government is ensuring the entire Bland shire has the health services it needs to grow and thrive. A bricks-and-mortar commitment to this was the upgrade to the West Wyalong health facility and new community health hub. This \$433,000 upgrade has created a one-stop shop for people in the community to see doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other services at the one site. I have had the pleasure of announcing upgrades for West Wyalong's ambulance station. This station services a huge area with busy roadways and thriving mining and agriculture sectors, meaning the demands on local paramedics are extensive. Upgrades to the station include new roller shutters for the vehicle plant room, refurbished office and administration space and refurbished medical storage and staff amenities, as well as other internal upgrades, helping to create a more functional and comfortable workplace.

This Government is investing in the future and ensuring our students have the facilities they need for their education. I visited the Wyalong Public School to announce a \$40,000 upgrade to the school's playground from the school renewal program and to share the news that it will be one of the first schools in the State to have new LED lighting installed. Our schools must be places where students have the best conditions possible to study, but the Government is also providing for the dedicated staff who teach them. In February this year I joined the housing Minister in announcing that three newly built three-bedroom units had been purchased for further teacher housing in the community, creating housing opportunities for local teachers.

The New South Wales Government is serving the interests of students at a tertiary level in the Bland shire. I am incredibly proud to have fought for and delivered the TAFE West Wyalong Campus Connected Learning Centre. This incredible facility is enabling students to study hundreds of courses never previously offered in West Wyalong and is working with local industry to ensure the skills they need can be learnt on site. This innovative new learning space is a game changer and means locals do not have to travel hundreds of kilometres to undertake study. I am proud of the support this Government has provided to local farmers during drought and floods. I urge

everyone to explore the Bland shire, to celebrate everything that it has to offer and, above all, to recognise that it is certainly not dull and boring.

REGIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (20:13): Via video link: I draw attention to the difficulties and challenges facing regional ambulance officers and paramedics. I recognise the incredible service of the ambos and paramedics in the Ballina electorate, particularly in the past 20 months during the pandemic. Recently I met with our local ambulance officers and paramedics, and the matters they raised about their working conditions and the pressures on them as a workforce were very sobering. Some of the key issues they raised, such as staffing ratios, come as no surprise because they have been highlighted over and over again in the health sector. In addition to staffing matters, they also brought to my attention other crucial issues such as resourcing, dysfunctional processes and insufficient triaging to support their work.

Since mental ill health was classified as illness, the ambulance has taken on the role of transporting patients presenting with mental health issues to hospitals in addition to the regular emergency transfers that they were required to undertake. Our region has one of the highest prevalence of mental health patients requiring care in the State. That means that each time an ambulance is called out to attend to someone presenting with mental health needs, the community is short of at least one ambulance for a minimum of two hours. With only a few ambulance trucks on duty at any time, our ambos are, we are told, waiting for up to six hours at a hospital for somebody to admit their patient with mental health issues. It is hoped that there will be no car accidents, people falling off cliffs or people who have a heart attack in the community in the meantime.

The recent Committee on Law and Safety inquiry into the physical health of our frontline emergency services personnel, of which I was a part, found that the ambos and police are dealing more and more with the transfer of patients with mental health issues in the absence of properly resourced and staff mental health support services in regional New South Wales. The workload is not currently supported by an efficient triage system. The ambos in my electorate reported a triage system that is not fit for purpose. They are frequently sent to attend patients who do not clinically require emergency care and yet have to be taken care of until they are handed over to hospital staff.

A recent survey by the Australian Paramedics Association found that one in two paramedics was regularly called out to perform an unnecessary transfer. The process of transferring a patient could take anywhere between two to seven hours, depending on the availability of beds in our hospitals. That means that for that time the paramedics attending to the client are occupied and not available for emergency work, which is a real issue in regional areas where large distances are involved. As a result, many trained paramedics are leaving the profession as they do not feel like they are productive and they are not undertaking the role that they were trained to do—we are talking about highly qualified people—and, instead, they end up being a taxi service.

We need to see more resources going into the enhancement of New South Wales' excellent patient transfer system. Our model is very effective: It is a fraction of the cost of using ambulances to transfer patients, and it is a safe way to support non-life-threatening hospital transfers. Enhancing non-emergency patient transport services to provide 24-hour coverage and improved consultation systems to avoid paramedics undertaking unnecessary transports would ensure that paramedics are available for emergency work which is, after all, their fundamental reason for existence. I understand the importance of having transfers for people who require mental health clinical support but increased patient transport for those who are low risk will help our regional communities as mental health transfers will be able to be done by emergency vehicles.

Expanding the training of ambulance officers and paramedics to include specific qualifications in mental health support will also strengthen the care offered to patients. A submission to the Committee on Law and Safety's inquiry into the violence against emergency services personnel reported that 40 per cent of incidents involving physical aggression against ambulance officers and paramedics over the past four years were caused by people experiencing acute mental health symptoms and that 10 per cent of those incidents happened in emergency departments within hospitals. Paramedics tell me that they sit for hours and hours waiting for admission because there simply is not the mental health support on weekends or after hours. Living regionally does not mean settling for a lower standard of health care and working regionally should not mean settling for inadequate resourcing or low workplace standards. We need a better system that supports our hardworking and deserving ambos and paramedics.

WILCANNIA

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:18): Formerly heralded as the Queen City of the West, Wilcannia on the Darling was once home of the third largest port in New South Wales behind Sydney and Newcastle. The mark of the thriving town back in the day were 13 pubs to drink at and multiple car dealerships. The port is now silent,

the doors of all the pubs have closed and you cannot buy a new car in town. Wilcannia once made headlines for world record wool clips and its thriving port; it now makes headlines like this: "Wilcannia: Death of a wealthy, thriving river port"; "The alarms sounded in Wilcannia long before COVID"; "Wilcannia in 'humanitarian crisis'"; "Scared and angry': Warnings ignored before Delta ripped through Wilcannia."

Wilcannia is home to approximately 740 people, 70 per cent of whom identify as Aboriginal. Sadly, their life expectancy is among the lowest in the country: 36.7 years for men and 42.5 years for women. The rate of domestic violence is 13 times that of other Australian communities, and the infant mortality rate is three times higher than for non-Aboriginals. Drug and alcohol use soars high above the national averages and there are alarmingly high rates of co-morbidities and respiratory illnesses. Wilcannia has been named consistently as one of the most disadvantaged communities in New South Wales. Given all that, COVID-19 making its way to a community like Wilcannia was—and I say this with all sincerity—my biggest fear. In March 2020, I wrote separately to the Premier, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Minister for Health and the Federal Government. I stated:

Aboriginal people are already facing issues such as a lack of disposable income, and overcrowded housing. Both factors significantly impact on their ability to adhere to the public health advice and protect themselves from COVID-19.

Should corona virus take foot in these communities it would have devastating impacts. Many Aboriginal people in these communities live with chronic health conditions, which would make fighting off the virus all the more challenging.

In May 2020 I received a response on behalf of the Premier from Gabrielle Upton, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, who stated:

Together Aboriginal Affairs NSW and NSW Health are leading a coordinated NSW Government COVID-19 response to reduce the health and non-health impacts on Aboriginal communities

The public housing issues were not addressed, and the real kicker of the letter was a bunch of links to further information—links to online information in a town that relies on walkie talkies to communicate between healthcare workers because the phone reception is worse than some Third World countries. But I digress. Action from Government when the alarm was raised not only by me, but by the Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Central Darling Shire Council, Maari Maa, and others, could have prevented Wilcannia being overrun with COVID-19. But the Government was far too slow off the mark in locking down Sydney, which allowed the virus to seed in the bush. It was a foreseeable and devastating outcome.

From where I and many others in the Wilcannia community are standing, there was no plan put in place by the Government to protect them, leaving the community to fend for themselves. Thank goodness the community of Wilcannia are tough and resourceful because the New South Wales Government was monumentally slow to provide assistance into the town. Volunteers—and there are many who deserve recognition—ought to be thanked for their selfless work. They threw up their hand at great personal risk to do what was right on behalf of their community. There are no amount of words that can capture what they have done. Lives were quite literally saved thanks to their efforts.

To the bureaucrats—with a fleet of white cars that flock to places like Wilcannia—I ask that they take a good hard look at the way they have conducted themselves during this pandemic. They were warned by the community and yet they failed to listen to them. They failed to advocate for their needs. They should consider why they did that, the privileged position they occupy and what it means to be in public service of the people of New South Wales. The Aboriginal affairs Minister, from my search, was totally silent on the crisis in Wilcannia. Overcrowded and poorly maintained housing, the product of decades of government neglect, meant people could not isolate in Wilcannia unless they slept outside.

In October 2020 the Minister visited Wilcannia on a whistlestop tour to sprinkle money about and told the community that housing was being prioritised. Not a single new house, of only five that were promised, has been built in Wilcannia yet. In 2017 the New South Wales Government funded a survey in western New South Wales to find out the extent of overcrowding. The survey showed 54 per cent of properties in Wilcannia were "often or always overcrowded" and 26 per cent said their living conditions affected their health. And yet when you talk to the department, it says only a handful of people are seeking housing. What it fails to consider is that applications for housing can be done only online—hard copy applications are not available in the Wilcannia community—and applicants are required to say they are willing to accept tenancy in another town when they apply.

The housing crisis in Wilcannia is really demonstrated through the overcrowding issue. Information from the council shows that 35 three-bedroom houses in town are being occupied by three generations of the same family. Why do they not speak up about it? That is because they fear being split up. They fear losing government support. They fear having their children taken off them. I call on the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to do better in this space—and I mean really do better. The announcement over the weekend is a drop in the ocean when there are over 50,000 people on the wait list and many more hidden in overcrowded

homes. If we do not learn what needs to be fixed from COVID-19, what will all the suffering and sacrifice have achieved?

TRIBUTE TO REBECCA WEST

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:23): In 2020 teachers across the world were forced to adapt quickly to new technology and innovative teaching methods to ensure that our students continued their education as a result of the ever-increasing prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to recognise one particular teacher in my electorate: the incredible Ms Rebecca West. Ms West, the Deputy Principal and Instructional Leader at Bonnyrigg Public School, has become something of a role model and an inspiration for many within my electorate. Ms West has gone above and beyond to mentor and help guide the teachers not only at her own school but also throughout our nation and across the globe. She has provided a range of new approaches and means to create and manage engaging content, which enables educators to continue supporting their students through virtual teaching.

Ms West has created a very popular YouTube channel where she records and uploads videos to teach students about school topics and to educate teachers on how to utilise online resources to teach, which has been noted as an immensely invaluable resource that has supported so many, especially when COVID first hit our nation. Ms West's videos have continued to gain traction not just in Australia but across the world, and for this work Ms West was selected as one of just 12 people across our nation to receive the 2021 Commonwealth Bank Teaching Award, which provides the capacity for additional outreach and support programs to be developed that would assist and support not only those of us locally but also those of rural and regional communities throughout our State.

Ms West has been such an inspiring individual that it is no wonder she was chosen to be recognised and celebrated through the award, which highlights her leadership and commitment towards school communities. Students in my electorate—one of the most multicultural electorates in New South Wales—come from a diverse range of backgrounds. With over 70 per cent of Ms West's students speaking a language other than English, her YouTube videos offer visual aides to assist students in their learning. Ultimately, her innovative teaching solutions have helped to improve the academic performance of not only her school throughout a pandemic but also many other educators, students and parents, who have given their all throughout this trying time.

For all her efforts, I am proud to advise that Ms West also has been short-listed among the top 50 educators for a prestigious international Global Teacher Prize, which aims to put the spotlight on the pivotal role that teachers play within our community. As part of the nomination, the extraordinary work done by her and her team will be showcased to the world and a winner will be chosen in Paris in November this year. I congratulate Ms West on her well-deserved accolades and sincerely look forward to seeing more of her incredible work in the community. I am sure we can all agree that educators like Ms West play such a crucial role in our school system. We should all be thankful for the valiant efforts made by local educators, who have gone above and beyond to support students and their families throughout the pandemic.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:27): I acknowledge the excellent speech made by member for Cabramatta, his acknowledgement of Ms West and her contribution to education. I come from a family of teachers and I know firsthand the amount of extra time, effort, care and love that goes into being a teacher. I also acknowledge the incredible work our teachers have done across New South Wales, not just in Cabramatta but also on the Central Coast, looking after their students during this very difficult time. I also know that on the weekends leading up to the lockdown, teachers were delivering laptops and dongles. I am sure a similar thing happened in the Cabramatta electorate. I congratulate Ms West on being short-listed to be one in 12 participants for the amazing Global Teacher Prize. She thoroughly deserves it. We wish her all the best of luck; hopefully she will bring home the gong. I suspect, from what the member for Cabramatta said, that Ms West will probably win. I thank her and all the other teachers across New South Wales, who have made an incredible contribution during these very difficult times.

WESTERN SYDNEY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:28): Via video link: I wish to discuss the challenges facing the Blacktown electorate that are replicated across western Sydney. The current Premier seems to be very, very annoyed regarding the debate of two Sydneys, but what is the evidence for Labor's claims? Inequality expert Associate Professor Roger Wilkins discussed economic prosperity and how it was reasonably shared in the early 2000s. He said:

Before 2009, it was really the story of a rising tide lifting all boats, just lifting some a bit more than others.

The Liberal-Nationals Government was elected in March 2011. The first Liberal Premier was gone by 2014, so by 2015 we were living under second Liberal Premier, Mr Baird. In May 2015 Jessica Irvine wrote an article in

The Sydney Morning Herald, "Sydney's rich and poor: the rising crisis in our suburbs" in which she outlined that western Sydney was falling behind.

Ms Irvine discussed the emerging concept of "suburbanisation of disadvantage" for many suburbs across western Sydney versus the glistening northern suburbs. Where you live matters, with youth unemployment in western Sydney, particularly in Blacktown and Riverstone, increasing to crisis levels. Associate Professor Roger Wilkins said that "more than any other Australian city, Sydney was undergoing a 'ghettoisation' process" when referring to the disadvantage of western Sydney versus the rest of Sydney. In 2015 Bill Randolph, who is the Director of the City Futures Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, said:

The more highly segregated a city is, the lower the rate of upwards economic mobility ...

The article went on to say that "There are things governments can do to arrest rising inequality, if the political will can be found." It quoted Mr Randolph again:

Governments can intervene. [The problem is] we have had governments that don't want to intervene.

The article also said that "better transport infrastructure would also help." The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage was released in 2016 and its ratings showed that many local government areas across western Sydney were at a distinct social disadvantage compared to northern Sydney. By 2018 we were on to our third Liberal Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and in October 2018, Kate Burke wrote in *Domain* an article entitled "Sydney's west a disadvantage when it comes to health opportunities". Ms Burke identified new research that demonstrated that residents in Sydney's west were at severe disadvantage regarding equality of health opportunities. Ms Burke also identified other issues of social disadvantage, including longer commute times and tighter household budgets, plus the design of the suburbs that hinder a healthy lifestyle rather than helping it. Also in 2018, based on their Healthy Sydney study, Deloitte Access Economics and Tract Consultants showed a city divided.

Fast forward to 2021, the COVID pandemic showed the inequitable treatment of the people of the west versus the eastern suburbs. People in the west were suffering the harshest lockdowns witnessed in Australia. The then Premier Berejiklian was saying, "We're all in it together", but the reality was quite different. Nowhere else but in western Sydney have residents faced 9.00 p.m. curfews, police helicopters circling above residences, as well as boots-on-the-ground Army deployment. Hospital wait times and ambulance response times are all higher in western Sydney compared to those in the east, but in question time today, the fourth Liberal Premier, Dominic Perrottet, boasted that the new mega ambulance stations that replaced the local ambulance stations were better. But, unfortunately, they have resulted in increased waiting times. A couple of weeks ago Minister Rob Stokes released a guide to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021, in which he states:

This current lockdown has also exposed some of the inequalities across Greater Sydney. Some of you—

that is, western Sydney residents—

who have been impacted the most by the tightest restrictions have also had the least access to quality public space.

This task is especially important given the growing population of Western Sydney ... It is critical that these growing communities have the same benefits and access to regional, beautiful parklands as the rest of Sydney.

The evidence is clear: Over the past 10 years, or some 3,860 days of the Liberal-Nationals governments, we have seen the emergence of the two Sydneys. Whether it is the experts or Government Ministers, there are two Sydneys!

DRUG LAW REFORM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:33): Via video link: In 2018 it was a bold and promising move by the then Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, to establish a Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice'. Announcing the inquiry, she said:

Ice is a destructive drug that is ruining too many lives across NSW, especially in our regional centres ... we want every option on the table to bolster our existing efforts to combat the evolving threat of this dangerous, illegal drug – and to get help for those who need it.

In January 2020, after 14 months of meticulous evidence-gathering, roundtables and public hearings around the State and hundreds of written submissions, the commissioner, Professor Daniel Howard, SC, presented his four-volume report with 109 recommendations. One of those public hearings was held in Lismore. The only response from the Government since then has been a statement rejecting five of the recommendations outright, including a pill testing trial and expanding the safe injecting room program. What happened to "We want every option on the table"? There was no further response on the other 104 recommendations. It has been more than 20 months. What happened to providing help for the people who need it? Lives are still being ruined. If the ice problem was great enough to warrant a special commission of inquiry, why are we still waiting for the Government's response?

Last December the Government's response was apparently held up because of Cabinet disagreement over how to treat possession of a small quantity of drugs. The Attorney General supported recommendations that divert people away from the clogged court system, dealing with it as a health issue, not as a criminal justice issue. Then Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said it is time to get it right. Yet the Government took a nano step to rule out those five recommendations. Perhaps it should have taken a bit more time to get it right.

The recommendation that the safe injecting room program be expanded beyond the one facility was rejected out of hand. On what grounds? In May this year the health Minister attended a ceremony to mark 20 years of the State's first medically supervised injecting room in Kings Cross, run by Uniting. To mark the anniversary, Minister Hazzard's tweet said, "Saving lives". So one Government member says it saves lives but the Government will not even consider a recommendation to set up any more rooms. The first manager of the Kings Cross medically supervised injecting room, Dr Ingrid van Beek, said that setting up the injecting room was the last brave thing that has happened in drugs policy in New South Wales. It was one of the controversial proposals to come out of the 1999 Drug Summit, which was held by the Carr Government. Then Prime Minister John Howard said it would make New South Wales the drug capital of the Southern Hemisphere. Well, that did not happen. But the Carr Government found the courage to set up the safe injecting room, and it has saved thousands of lives.

The New South Wales Opposition's approach is to convene another Drug Summit. I attended the 1999 Drug Summit and I recommend it. It worked. Professor Dan Howard said that implementing the report's recommendations would require truthful leadership and courage. Five months ago Professor Howard expressed his frustration with the lack of Government response, saying he wondered how many of the Government members had actually bothered to read the report. He said if they had, they would understand the urgency of the recommendations. It is a report not to be ignored. I have read it. It calls for urgent action to develop a drug policy, that is fit for purpose in the twenty-first century, which New South Wales does not have, and to provide urgent services to regional areas, like my electorate, and to First Nation communities.

The commissioner has written again in the media this month calling on the new Premier to find the political courage to act. I have a mountain of reports from round tables and inquiries over recent years, all saying the same thing: recognise drug use as a health and social justice issue. Who is behind these calls for drug law reform? It is not a bunch of radicals but former Premiers, police commissioners, health Ministers, judges, medical specialists, church leaders and humanitarian agencies. If the Premier wants to know what courage looks like, I would say to him to look to those who gave evidence to the inquiry; to every parent and grandparent who found the courage to come forward with stories of families broken by drug offenders; to the First Nation people who turned up to give evidence of the impact of ice on their communities, despite their fears that once again nothing will be done; and to all those with lived experience of ice addiction who fronted up, despite the stigma, to tell their stories in the hope that they would be heard and something would be done. I say to the Premier: Please find political leadership and courage.

FLOODS AND THE ENTRANCE ELECTORATE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:38): Tonight I want to talk about floods as they impact on my constituents. The Entrance electorate contains considerable areas of low-lying land and flooding is a real risk to my communities, particularly in the suburbs of Long Jetty, The Entrance, The Entrance North, Berkeley Vale, Ourimbah and Lisarow. One of the first natural disasters to impact my electorate occurred very soon after I was elected in 2015 when there was a significant flood of 1.45 metres and significant storms that impacted on the area. More recently we have experienced more significant flooding. In February 2020 there was a flood of 1.67 metres, which caused considerable community concern, even outrage, as to how it was handled and ultimately who was responsible for issuing warnings and responding to flood in our local area. That is mainly what I want to talk about tonight. Before I do, I mention that just 12 months later, in February 2021 there was another very significant flood of 1.52 metres. Flooding on the Central Coast is an issue that needs to be addressed squarely and professionally. I believe that more can be done.

Because of the prevalence of flood risk, it is an area I pay particular attention to. When floods occur, people ask who is responsible for the flood response. I acknowledge the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast is in the Chamber. Government members will say that council should be doing this or doing that. This finger-pointing is not helpful. The Central Coast has a local flood plan. I have it before me, a document of the State Emergency Services [SES], a State Government agency. Our local flood plan, dated 2013, was supposed to be updated and reviewed after five years, but that has not occurred. I have raised this issue a number of times in the House and with the Minister responsible, Mr David Elliott. I understand it is being reviewed at the moment—it seems only as a result of the agitation I have raised about the issue in this Chamber and in the local area. The plan, which was created in 2013, at page 17, paragraph 3.1, Control arrangements, states:

The NSW SES is the legislative combat agency for floods and is responsible for the control of flood operations.

So it is not council that is responsible, it is the SES. In terms of preparedness, at page 15, paragraph 2.1, Maintenance of this plan, it states:

The NSW SES Wyong Local Controller will maintain the currency of this plan ...

It is not council that is responsible, it is the SES. This State Government agency is not getting the support and assistance it needs on the Central Coast to maintain this plan in an adequate form. We need an adequate, up-to-date plan. We still do not have one. As I have said, I have written many times to Minister Elliott. The last time I wrote to him was on 30 September. I am still waiting for a response. I have been advised informally by the SES and council that we are on the cusp of the plan being updated, but it has taken far too long. There has been no public exhibition of the document and the Minister has yet to respond as to where the plan is up to.

I appreciate council has a role to play in developing risk management plans. There is one that has been in place since 2014, the Tuggerah Lakes Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan. That is the current study that informs the plan. The SES is responsible for making sure the plan is up to date. This Government has not done its job. We need to get moving sooner rather than later, as we move into the storm season and the floods that will follow. We have to get an up-to-date plan and then implement it better than we have in the past, including warning systems around the lake. I will continue to pursue this matter for the sake of my community and the wider Central Coast. I will make sure the Government does its job to reduce flood risk to a minimum for the peace of mind of our community.

Community Recognition Notices

YERIN ELEANOR DUNCAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I wish to acknowledge the hard work and achievements of Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services, which has worked closely with the Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corp to open an Aboriginal Health Clinic on the Peninsula. Both of these groups are vital in supporting the Coast's Indigenous community, but throughout the pandemic they have really stepped up. Recently they have joined forces to transform a now closed doctor's practice into an Aboriginal Health Clinic in Umina Beach. It is fantastic to finally have dedicated Aboriginal and community-controlled health clinic on the Peninsula, and it is something that Mingaletta have been advocating for, for a long time. I would also like to thank Dr Jay Chelladurai for his contribution to this initiative, and for assisting in the administering of COVID-19 vaccines in this health clinic. It is so important that we work to 'close the gap' in health outcomes, and I am grateful to have such fierce and dedicated community organisations in my electorate who are working towards these goals.

CENTRAL COAST ECO TOURISM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I am so proud to say today that my home of the Central Coast has been recognised as one of the 2021 Global Top 100 Destination Sustainable Stories by Green Destinations. Thanks to stories written by locals, our region is on display as a haven for ecotourism, and is the only destination in New South Wales to make this year's list. I would like to thank those involved at Destination Central Coast and Ecotourism Australia for their efforts to secure this award for our community. It is so important at a time like this, when our tourism industry has been hit so significantly over the past two years by fires, floods and the pandemic. I know that all of us on the coast, but particularly all of our small businesses, are looking forward to welcoming tourists back safely to our region this summer, to enjoy all of the beautiful beaches, bushwalks, parks and wildlife that our local environment has to offer.

IAN BUTLER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I join the Pearl Beach community in thanking Ian Butler for 19 years of dedicated service to our community maintaining the Pearl Beach destination website "Visit Pearl Beach", which he set up in December 2002. After moving to Sydney at the end of last year, Paul generously donated the site ownership to local resident Rebecca Jacobs to ensure that the contents stayed relevant and up to date. Paul, we thank you for your long service promoting beautiful Pearl Beach as a destination to local, national and international visitors. Our community is richer for your work and the benefits to local businesses are immeasurable. We hope you visit regularly.

TOM COUCHMAN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I take the opportunity to thank a Central Coast resident who has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to promote the safety and security of our community for some time via his very concise Facebook updates. Off his own bat, Mr Tom Couchman has devoted countless hours to aiding our community with understanding the prevalence of COVID, applying his skillset to aid in our fight against this virus. Preventing and tracking the spread of COVID has been the key in keeping our community safe, and Mr Couchman has contributed significantly to this effort by ensuring the community has been kept up to date with

the latest information. It is possible that through his work, Mr Couchman has saved lives—he almost certainly has prevented infections across the coast—and has undoubtedly equipped us to better manage movements, and risks of exposure. Whilst we may never know the true extent of the impact of his tireless work, we do know that he has helped countless Coasties in staying safe. It is for this reason that I would like to thank him personally, and on behalf of our community, for his contributions to keeping us safe.

CRS EARTH SCIENCE WEEK

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)—I bring Earth Science Week to the attention of the House. And in doing so, I note the 5.6 magnitude earthquake which occurred at Mansfield, Victoria on 22 September and which was felt by many in this state is a reminder we live upon a dynamic and changing planet and geological hazards impact all our lives. I also acknowledge the Geological Survey of NSW, which is the State's oldest continually operating government agency. New South Wales does not have an official program of events to support Earth Science Week. It should, and the Geological Survey of NSW is well placed to do it.

YAGOONA MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales have 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 Yagoona Medical Centre in Yagoona for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank De Sami Abdul Qureshi, Dr Asma Arain, Dr Farouk Karhani, and Managing Director Mr Sam Albassit 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 the Yagoona Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

ELDRIDGE ROAD MEDICAL HEALTH CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales have 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 Eldridge Road Medical Health Centre in Bankstown for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Kavitha Sivaranjan, Dr Meena Amin and Dr Bernadette Ponce 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 Eldridge Road Medical Health Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

ADVANCED HEALTH MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales have 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 working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Advanced Health Medical Centre Bankstown for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr John Barlow, Dr Peter Mikhail, Dr Anh Mach, Dr Con Keramianakis, Dr Daniel Isaacson, Dr Syed Hasnat, Dr Timothy Le and Dr Peter Dobie for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90% first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Advanced Health Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

BANKSTOWN MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales have 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 Bankstown Medical Centre in Bankstown for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Mark Toomey, Dr Talal Elsemary, Dr Anju Aggarwal, Dr Lila Halder and Ms Kim Vo for their tireless efforts in helping our

community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90% first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Bankstown Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

MICK SPRING

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I was pleased to attend Soldiers Beach Surf Club Annual Presentation night with Federal Member Emma McBride on the 5th of June. I would like to congratulate Mick Spring for being Club Person of the Year 2021. This season the Club's lifesavers were involved in 101 rescues over 5,265 volunteer hours. Thank you to Soldiers Beach Surf Club for keeping locals and visitors safe around our beautiful beaches.

COMMUNITY CAFÉ TEAM TOUKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I was honoured to attend the Volunteering Central Coast awards ceremony on May 26th at the Erina Centre, to recognise volunteers across the Central Coast who dedicate their time and energy into the community. The annual event is usually held to coincide with National Volunteer Week, with this year's theme being 'Changing Communities, Changing Lives' and over 40,000 volunteers on the Central Coast are contributing. Congratulations to the Community Café Team from Toukley Neighbourhood Centre, who received the Highly Commended Volunteer Team of the Year 2021. The volunteers at the Community Café committed more than 10 years of providing hot meals to disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially isolated people in our community.

NORAH HEAD SURFING FRATERNITY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I congratulate Norah Head Surfing Fraternity on being one of the successful applicants in the Local Sport Grant Program 2020. The Surfing Fraternity received a \$1,000 grant to go towards a new set of competitive rash shirts. The Surfing Fraternity has a rich and proud history of involvement in competitive surfing for over 40 years. They have a hard-working committee who are doing a great job for the local community by providing a good club environment for all members. I see the results of the club's organisational skills when they run their monthly contests at Soldiers Beach and the rash shirts will be a great representation of Norah Head Surfing Fraternity.

CENTRAL COAST HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I congratulate Central Coast Hockey Association on being one of the successful applicants in the Local Sport Grant Program 2020. Recently I visited the Central Coast Hockey Association grounds to present their \$15,000 cheque to the President Brett Johnson. The grant will be used to install security doors on the clubhouse entrance. Brett and the board have been doing a fantastic job on upgrading the hockey facility. It is great to see the growth in this sport and the improvements that have been made to Central Coast Hockey Association.

RETIREMENT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KEVIN ALFORD OAM

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I pay respect to an inspirational leader Associate Professor Kevin Alford who has recently announced his retirement after working in medicine for 44 years on the Mid North Coast. Associate Professor Alford will step down from his clinical and academic roles at the end of the year, including his appointments as Director of Advanced Physician Training and Senior National Examination Panel examiner for the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Only last year I acknowledged Associate Professor Alford's achievements after receiving an Order of Australia [OAM] medal for his remarkable career as a cardiologist, improving the lives of his patients while committing his spare time teaching the next generation through his work at the University of NSW Rural Clinical School. It would be remiss of me not to mention the Kevin Alford Cardiology in Port Macquarie was founded in 2016 for people on lower incomes and to provide an invaluable service to our indigenous population. This will be a lasting legacy of an exemplar man that has advanced and revolutionised cardiology services since commencing his career at the young age of 29. I congratulate Professor Alford for his extraordinary career in medicine.

ZARA BYRON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise Year 11 Hasting Secondary College student Zara Byron for her inspirational efforts in the Kitchen Garden Program. Zara Byron is a proud Birpai woman and strong advocate for acknowledging Indigenous cultural identity for Aboriginal youth at her school and the wider community. Through the Kitchen Garden Program, Zara showcased her entrepreneurial and leadership skills in growing, preparing and sharing food by transforming a bland corner of the school into a vibrant kitchen. Through her home economics class, Zara has turned a small section of the school into a vibrant, food producing hub offering produce and bush tucker to be grown and harvested. Inspiring her generation, Zara has teamed up with other Aboriginal girls to form their own catering business, creating awareness of traditional Aboriginal foods through

the 'paddock to plate' initiative. Supporting this wonderful initiative is the Sista Connections program which I have spoken about previously in this House. The program that aims to empower young Aboriginal youth to reach their full potential connected with the Kitchen Garden Program and enabled the girls to learn a range of skills from horticultural to commercial cookery. Congratulations Zara on this wonderful program.

HASTINGS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION - MEET THE CANDIDATES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I commend the Hastings Residents Association who have already organised a number of successful 'Meet the Candidates' events in preparation for the local elections in December. The meetings have been held in Port Macquarie, Wauchope and this Thursday night at Laurieton to give the community the opportunity to hear first-hand what candidates are offering and their views on key issues. Topics at the meetings have ranged from the Town Centre Master Plan Levy, Council's infrastructure backlog, the Tidal Pool, the proposed Orbital Road, graffiti, bus shelters, the environment, leadership and congestions on the Oxley Highway. While these meetings have been well attended, people also have the opportunity to view the meetings from the comfort of their homes via live-streaming. I commend the Hastings Residents Association and thank the Association's President Greg Franks, Vice President Bruce Thompson, Secretary Julie Atkins and Treasurer Di Gander for this initiative.

KCC GOLF CHAMPIONS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the Kew Country Club 2021 Golf Club Champions. As we emerge from COVID-19 lockdowns, we have seen our local sporting groups excited about the return to normal play conditions. Fortunately, Golf was a sport that people were able to enjoy safely during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Kew Country Club were still able to compete in their annual Championships. Arnold Palmer famously said "Golf is deceptively simple and endlessly complicated"; I'm sure those who have played golf understand the 'endlessly complicated' sentiment. Golf can be maddening, so it should be celebrated when someone manages to master not one, but three rounds of golf to be declared Club Champion. Congratulations to the 2021 Champions!

Club Champion - Ben Dunn, B Grade Champion – Bob Nix, C Grade Champion – Stewart Hardy, Junior Champion – Colby Wilkinson, Senior Champion – Steven James, and Super-Senior Champion – Robert Plante.

Congratulations must also go to the tee-rific nett winners!

A Grade Nett winner – Nathan Kerr, B Grade Nett winner – Paul Cullen, C Grade Nett winner – Steven Baker, Senior Nett winner – Warren Dyer and Super-Senior Nett winner – Ian Harvey.

Well done gentlemen, may your future rounds be blessed with no worse than par.

DEADLY CONNECTIONS COMMUNITY & JUSTICE SERVICES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Deadly Connections Community & Justice Services is an important Aboriginal-led, not-for-profit organisation which does crucial work that breaks cycles of disadvantage and trauma to directly address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the child protection and justice system. Their approach centres on recognising that connection, intervention and support can occur at any stage of a person's life, challenging the dominance of colonial systems, self-determination, and healing centred engagement. Many of us saw the inspiring work Deadly Connections does on the SBS documentary, Incarceration Nation, which showed an insight into their focus on the prevention of violence, substance abuse and incarceration. The organisation came under threat when their tenancy arrangement at Seaview Street, Dulwich Hill, came to an end. Following a determined campaign by Deadly Connections, I am very pleased that Inner West Council has secured a new home at the former Family Day Care Centre in Enmore Park. This gives much needed certainty to this critically important organisation and I wish them all the best as they embark on this new chapter.

HAWKE'S BREWING COMPANY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Hawke's Brewing Company, based in Marrickville, has been doing its bit to increase vaccinations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, with its "Jab and Slab" and "Race you to the pub" campaigns. In August, Hawke's Brewing offered a free slab of beer to 250 Sydney-siders who could prove they'd had their first vaccination. In September, they partnered with artist Scotty Marsh to paint a giant mural of Bob Hawke, post-vaccination, at their Sydney Street brewery. Hawke's empty schooner has been repainted to match our vaccination rate as we have edged closer to 80% and the artwork also features a QR code on Hawke's bandaid, where visitors can find their nearest vaccination clinic and raise money for Tip Jar, the hospitality relief fund raising money for those in the hospitality industry impacted by the outbreak and lockdown. Local businesses like Hawke's Brewing have been crucial to efforts to increase vaccinations, offering incentives to help encourage people to get their jab. I warmly thank and congratulate Hawke's Brewing Company for thinking outside the box

and for doing their bit to improve public health, lift us out of lockdown, and support local hospitality workers doing it tough. Hawkey would be proud.

COOKS RIVER LITTER PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The River Canoe Club, Cooks River Mudcrabs and Cooks River Alliance have spearheaded a new and bold effort to reduce the amount of litter in the Cooks River by 2025. The Strategy is funded by a grant from the NSW Environmental Protection Authority and was unanimously adopted by Inner West Council at its October meeting. I acknowledge and thank Cllr Mark Drury, Labor Councillor for Ashfield-Djarrawunan Ward, for tabling the motion and efforts more broadly to clean up our local waterways. As more people move into our communities, there is even greater pressure on the Cooks River, however, a growing understanding also of its importance to our local environment. The Strategy is the first time there has been a coordinated effort to stop litter entering the River and will support the extraordinary and long-standing efforts of local volunteers and organisations to clean up the Cooks River. I especially acknowledge the River Canoe Club, Cooks River Valley Association, Cooks River Alliance and Mudcrabs, and warmly congratulate and thank all those involved in the development of the Cooks River Litter Prevention Strategy.

METRO ASSIST

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Metro Assist, Ashfield, has been central to our community's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown. Metro Assist provides family services, settlement services, tenancy advice and advocacy, financial inclusion counselling, employment support including its Dress for Work program, and a range of community programs and events. During lockdown, they have been critical in ensuring information around COVID-19, health restrictions, vaccination and economic support is available and accessible to cultural and linguistically diverse communities across the Inner West and Sydney. Metro Assist has provided programs and support for parents and home learning; tenancy advice to those trying to navigate rental arrangements and support; and career advice for those looking to re-enter the workforce as we emerge from lockdown. I especially acknowledge their important work in connecting vulnerable communities to vaccine information and helping to reduce vaccine hesitancy in vulnerable communities. I sincerely congratulate and thank all the volunteers and staff at Metro Assist for their significant contribution to our State's COVID-19 response and for working so diligently to ensure no-one has been left behind.

TRIBUTE TO NOEL LAMING

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to the family of Mr Noel Laming in his recent passing. Noel, Campbelltown-Camden Ghosts inaugural president has been remembered as a progressive leader to the Camden-Macarthur Community. Through his passion and commitment to cricket, in 1998, Noel was honoured with a life membership for the NSW Cricket Association. Noel served in the community in a number of ways as a progressive leader, reformist, outstanding volunteer and cricket enthusiast. Again I pass on my deepest sympathies to the family of Mr Noel Laming and honour the work, commitment and involvement Noel presented within the community.

OPERATION ART PROGRAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Today, I would like to congratulate year 8 students of Elderslie High School, Grace, Caleb, Alisa and Charley on the selection of their artworks for the Operation Art outdoor gallery at Sydney Olympic Park. The ethos of the Operation Art Program is 'art for healing and well-being', as Sydney Olympic Park was one of the largest vaccination hubs in Sydney, the artworks brighten the park for many people queueing for their vaccinations. Last month the exhibition was delivered virtually on the Arts Unit website as well. I wanted to again further congratulate these students on their efforts and dedication to the community.

WORLD TEACHER'S DAY 2021

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—World Teacher's Day is held internationally on Tuesday 5 October. It is a chance to recognise and celebrate the incredible contribution teachers have made in their communities. This year, teachers around the state have continued to show their resilience, leadership and adaptability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers have adapted their learning environments, supported their students and school communities, and continue to share their knowledge with their students. World Teacher's Day 2021 is an opportunity to celebrate the teachers who are making, or have made, an impact on our lives. Every teacher in the state, I believe has achieved this, and I take this time to thank them for their efforts.

THOMAS ANDERSON

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I offer my congratulations to the outstanding efforts of Thomas Anderson of year 10 at St Gregory's College. Thomas was "Commended" for his poem 'Battle Against the Dust' in the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Competition. This month Thomas' poem has been made available in the

Anthology. I again congratulate Thomas on his efforts in creativity and imagination he captured through his poetry and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

GRANT WARGREN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to congratulate Westfield Hornsby Local Hero of the Year Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Rural Fire Service Volunteer Grant Wargren. Grant has dedicated an amazing 45 years as an RFS volunteer and is the group captain for the Hornsby region. Over his more than 4 decades of service he has fought fires and attended incidents on the M1 day and night, always putting the community safety ahead of his own. He has not just saved property but in 2019 he saved the life of a man having a heart attack when his home was impacted by bush fire. He has also implemented a safe training system for new recruits. With our shire surrounded by bush, the work of the RFS is so important in keeping our community safe. Grant says he didn't get in to the RFS for recognition, but I would like to thank him and the hundreds of volunteers across Hornsby who risk their lives to continue the safety of the entire Hornsby community. Congratulations on this well-deserved award and thank you for your continued service.

SURF LIFE SAVING – THANK YOU

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—I would like to acknowledge and thank the surf life-saving volunteers for their dedication and support with the surf season officially opening 18, September 2021. The red and yellow flags were officially raised to mark the start of the 2021/2022 beach season a couple of weeks ago, while we were in lockdown restrictions. This season, more than ever I would like to acknowledge the contributions these surf-life saving volunteers are giving to ensure our beaches are safe. These volunteers, give their time and put their bodies on the front line to ensure people visiting the beach are kept safe, educated on safe places to swim and assisted in the event of an emergency. My electorate has patrolling surf-life saving members from Coledale in the North stretching to Corrimal in the South. Many of these volunteers are as young as 16 and show commitment beyond their years. I acknowledge this year, in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, the dedication the surf-life saving volunteer has for their community. Thank you.

KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL – 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—Mr Speaker, I bring to the attention of the House the 25th anniversary of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. The Walkway is a memorial solely dedicated to WWII and focuses on the New Guinea campaign. Its beautiful granite centrepiece, and lush tropical vegetation framing the water feature and 24 stations representing the villages along the Owen Stanley Ranges, provides a tranquil place for reflection and contemplation. It's 25 years since the concept of the Walkway was planted as a seed. It has now matured into a flourishing tropical bushland memorial, a fitting tribute to those who served at the gravest time in our history. It is also a wonderful educational resource, dedicated to ensuring that future generations understand the sacrifices made to safeguard our freedom. None of this would have been possible without the personal commitment of many volunteers who launched this project and who have overseen its progress. I would like to acknowledge the chair of the memorial Jennifer Collins, deputy chair, Carole Anne Priest, honorary secretary Alice Kang, and Board Members Angelo Tsirekas, Craig Laundry, Bill Paterson, Peter Woods OAM, Robert Ridge, and Ray James OAM for their ongoing commitment.

KATHY BEVERLEY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—In mid-July, Coast and Country Primary Care welcomed a new CEO, Kathy Beverley. Kathy is a very experienced CEO and healthcare professional, having worked within the sector for over two decades. Kathy's experience covers both operational and executive areas, in both the public and private systems. I have been told that Kathy started her career as a speech pathology. She has held a variety of roles, including as Regional Manager with CRS Australia, before becoming National Manager with Ramsay Health Care. Kathy was also the CEO of Brisbane Waters Private Hospital for six years and I worked closely with her on a number of occasions while she was in this position. Given this experience, Kathy is an outstanding choice as the new CEO for Coast & Country Primary Care. Most recently the organisation has opened a Respiratory Clinic at EV Church, 331 Terrigal Drive, Erina to provide COVID-19 tests and vaccinations to our community. I also want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all staff at this new facility. I have had the opportunity to "virtually" meet with Kathy to personally congratulate her on this new appointment, and I wish her all the best.

MICHAEL KAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—A big congratulations to the Central Coast's 2021 Volunteers of the Year. The Centre for volunteering's awards celebrate people's diverse contributions from across the community. Jilliby's Michael Kay was recognised as Adult Volunteer of the Year. Michael is a volunteer for Jilliby Public School P&C and has taken on the challenge of organising transport for the school's students to help them participate in cultural and sporting activities across the Central Coast community. As well as single-handedly

raised the funds for the bus, buying it from Queensland and fitting it out, Michael now drives the bus. This is particularly helpful for students who may have previously been unable to attend events by subsidising the cost for local families. In addition to Jilliby, the bus helps other small mountain and valley schools, such as Peats Ridge and Wyong Creek. I would like to thank all of the Central Coast Volunteers of the Year for their fantastic contribution to our community.

CHRISTINE JARVIS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I want to congratulate Christine Jarvis, who on 25 July 2021 was appointed as Director of Regional Projects, Funding & Research at Regional Development Australia Central Coast, or RDACC for short. This is a new role which has been designed to support sustainable economic growth and expand future employment opportunities on the Central Coast. Part of Christine's role will be to analyse data and work to attracting funding for more projects. I have also been told that Christine's role will be to ensure business owners and organisations across the Central Coast are aware of, and have access to, the many grant opportunities which are available. I already work very closely with the RDACC Chair Lawrie McKinna and CEO John Moulard Mister Speaker, and I look forward to working with Christine. I congratulate Christine on her appointment to this new role and I look forward to working together in my role as Parliamentary Secretary to advocate for the Central Coast's fair share of funding.

LORRAINE CHURCHILL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Central Coast Kids in Need Secretary Lorraine Churchill was nominated earlier in the year for the Westfield Local Hero's Award and was also chosen as one of the six finalists. Lorraine, who is a retired nurse, has dedicated the past 16 years of her life to providing financial help to families with premature newborns or children who need hospital care in Sydney or Newcastle. Central Coast Kids in Need also supports families whose children have autism, ADHD or physical disabilities. I have met Lorraine a number of times and am absolutely inspired by her selfless work and unceasing dedication. Lorraine, or Loz as everyone calls her, has managed to fundraise almost \$4 million for accommodation and medicine costs for over 3,000 families since 2005. This is just incredible. Without Loz and her small team of volunteers, many parents would have been separated from their children while they are in hospital, or would have been without the help and support they need. I congratulate Lorraine on her extraordinary work through Central Coast Kids in Need, and for being chosen as a finalist for the Westfield Local Hero's Award

GOLDEN GROVE STUD CELEBRATES THE EVEREST BREEDING SUCCESS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—To the winner go the accolades and I also want to acknowledge the breeder of The Everest 2021 winner, Nature Strip - Golden Grove Stud, Denman. It is often said that horse racing is a sport full of fairy tales and legends and last Saturday at Randwick, Nature Strip, added another chapter to the history book. The seven year old, originally passed in at the yearling sales, won the world's richest race on turf, the \$15 million The Everest, at his third start in the pinnacle event. Jockey James McDonald rode Nature Strip to a thrilling victory for trainer Chris Waller holding out Masked Crusader and Eduardo. If Sydney's first big racing crowd since the 2021 lockdown ended enjoyed the race – the excitement at Golden Grove, Denman has been harder to contain. I am told "over the moon" with Nature Strip's achievement is definitely an understatement. Nature Strip sired by Nicconi from Widden Stud, Hunter Valley, was foaled by his dam, Strikeline, on 16 November 2014. His racing record is now 33 starts, 18 wins including the 2021 The Everest.

SINGLETON CWA 95TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I wish to congratulate Singleton CWA on the organisation's 95th anniversary. When over 30 ladies gathered in October 1926 to hear the then New South Wales president of the Country Woman's Association, Mrs A.J. Studdy, few could have imagined the profound impact that meeting would have. According to the Singleton Argus' account of the meeting there was "the hope that a good local branch would be formed." Fast forward to 2021 and Singleton CWA continues to deliver on that "hope" through fundraising efforts, supporting presentation day at the three local high schools and hiring out its hall for various events. The Singleton branch also has a global focus as an affiliated member of the Association of Country Women of the World, supporting international work that aims to enable all women and children to live without fear, poverty, starvation and poor medical facilities. To the branch's executive members Bronwyn Dunston (president), Judy Bates (secretary), Ruth Rogers (treasurer) and all of the members - I extend my best wishes on this special occasion with my hope that Singleton CWA will continue to thrive and prosper.

COVID COMMUNITY PANTRY

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne)—During the recent Covid-19 lockdown, a community pantry was established in my electorate for residents of the City of Canada Bay LGA. The pantry offered groceries for all who were struggling and most of all, it offered a place to go that was free of judgment and full of helping hands

and hearts. My community responded to the call out for groceries and donated food and non-perishables, baby and pet food, hygiene products and various household items. Each week that the lockdown pursued, the pantry continually remained full. It was truly heart-warming and a wonderful testament of community spirit. I wish to recognise the Abbotsford Presbyterian Church for providing the parish hall as a venue for the pantry. I would like to acknowledge Pastor Darryl Soh of the Abbotsford Presbyterian Church for his work in facilitating the pantry. Above all, I would like to recognise Ms Carmel Ruggeri who selflessly donated her time and was the ultimate champion of this supportive and compassionate initiative. Thank you to all who volunteered at the pantry and who donated items.

FRANCA RODILOSSO

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne)—I would like to acknowledge the 2021 Drummoyne Local Woman of the Year, Mrs Franca Rodilosso. She has also been recognised for her community and volunteer work as a recipient of a NSW Government Community Service Award. Franca is a well-respected member of the electorate and a volunteer for Inner Wheel and All Hallows School and Parish, located in Five Dock. I would like to sincerely congratulate Franca and thank her contribution to the local community.

95 YEARS AT THE GREEK HERALD

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)—I'd like to congratulate outstanding cultural newspaper, The Greek Herald, for 95 years of operation in Australia. 95 years ago, The Greek Herald was founded to connect the Australian Greek community back home, and to keep them updated on Greek affairs and events. The paper acted as a comforting reminder of home for the Greek migrant community. Now, the newspaper has gained a prominent social media presence and provides publications for readers of all ages. The Herald is Australia's largest national newspaper of the Greek Australian community, and is one of the only daily Greek newspapers that serves the Greek diaspora internationally. Particularly in my culturally and linguistically diverse community of Canterbury, the paper allows many of my constituents to understand national and international current affairs. Greek Herald also played a key role during the pandemic, providing health information to the Greek community, and raised awareness on issues such as emerging mental health challenges during the pandemic. I would like to thank the Greek Herald for their assistance during that time. Congratulations once again. Thank you for your role in enhancing our multicultural community.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)—October marks Mental Health Month, a time to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing, and to check in on our loved ones and on our own mental health as well. The COVID pandemic had many detrimental impacts on our mental health, especially in my community of Canterbury. Instances of domestic violence were up by 80% from last year, calls to Lifeline and BeyondBlue increased by 18.4% and 30.7% respectively, since before the pandemic began in 2019. Through this all, many community organisations have been working tirelessly during the lockdown to provide mental health support to the most vulnerable in the community. These organisations include but are not limited to: Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS]; Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs; The Canterbury-Bankstown Harmony Group; Metro Assist; Community Care kitchen; Mother Maria of Paris Greek Orthodox Mission; The Sydney Womens Counselling Centre; The Greek Orthodox Community of NSW; Barnados; Meals on Wheels; and St Vincent De Paul. The efforts of these and so many more are the reason that our community has been able to persevere during this crisis. My sincere thanks to you all.

123TIX WESTERN NSW BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Over the weekend Business NSW hosted the virtual 2021 Western NSW Business Awards. These awards are all about celebrating and showcasing the diverse array of talent in Western NSW's business community, and this year's winners should feel incredibly proud to be named as the region's leading businesses and leaders for 2021. I'd like to congratulate 123Tix, who won the "Excellence in Micro Business" award. 123Tix is a regional small business taking on national and international ticket agent businesses by providing turn-key ticketing solutions to the event industry from design, distribution, sales and event logistics. It was started in 2014, when founder and director Terry Wilcher discovered that there was no one who sold tickets online regionally. They now offer ticketing options for everything from small private events, to large-scale festivals – they even managed ticket sales for the Dubbo and Mudgee NRL premiership matches earlier this year. The business capitalised on the COVID-safe requirements for events to be ticketed, and was one of the first regional businesses allowing Discover vouchers to be redeemed online. Congratulations Terry and the team, and good luck at the state awards.

BEN FURNEY FLOUR MILL WESTERN NSW BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Over the weekend Business NSW hosted the virtual 2021 Western NSW Business Awards. These awards are all about celebrating and showcasing the diverse array of talent in Western NSW's business community, and this year's winners should feel incredibly proud to be named as the region's leading businesses and leaders for 2021. I'd like to congratulate Ben Furney Flour Mills, who not only won the Excellence in Business award, but also took out the top honour of 2021 Western NSW Business of the Year. For over 100 years and three generations, the Ben Furney Flour Mills family has actively operated farming enterprises, and their flour and specialty milling operations located in Dubbo. They are in control of their product from paddock to customer, and rely on long-established partnerships with local farming families. Our regional economy thrives because of businesses like Ben Furney Flour Mills, who are focussed on sustainable growth, grounded in innovation, a commitment to employing locals, and sourcing 90 per cent of their raw materials locally. Congratulations again to Ben Furney Flour Mills. I wish you the best of luck at the state awards later this year.

ORANA EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Over the weekend Business NSW hosted the virtual 2021 Western NSW Business Awards. These awards are all about recognising growth and entrepreneurship and celebrating the success of businesses from across the Central West, Orana and Far West Regions. I'd like to congratulate Orana Early Childhood Intervention, who were named the Outstanding Community Organisation. This award recognises an organisation that works to improve the social, cultural or environmental wellbeing of the community. Orana Early Childhood Intervention is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation and registered NDIS provider that offers a holistic, specialised service to support children with special needs. Having been around for some 30 odd years the centre has grown and now has a staff of 19 therapists, educators and an admin team providing speech, occupational, physio and hydrotherapy ... feeding classes ... education and support to children and families across the Orana Region. Congratulations again to Orana Early Childhood Intervention. I wish you the best of luck at the state awards later this year.

VALE RAY NOLAN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Stoic. Reliable. Wise. And larger-than-life. These are the words being used to describe Mr Ray Nolan, a stalwart of the Dubbo community who passed away last week aged 84. Ray was honorary solicitor for Group 11 and Western Division Rugby League, as well as the Dubbo Show Society for more than 25 years. He was also involved in Rotary, Meals on Wheels, served a term on Dubbo City Council, held numerous positions with the Dubbo Turf Club, and helped drive the construction of Macquarie Homestay – accommodation for patients needing treatment in Dubbo. In 2019 I stood here and congratulated the solicitor on his retirement after 50 years. But even in retirement Ray was active and I often saw him at community events, where he was always quick with a joke, and a word of advice or praise. He leaves behind three daughters, Diana, Virginia and Paula, and their families, of whom I know he was very proud. He also leaves behind a legacy as a man who, to quote Orana Law Society president Andrew Boog: "didn't sit around waiting for someone else to take the initiative". He'll be sorely missed. Vale Ray Nolan.

ADRA MACQUARIE FIELDS

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for many in our community, with the need for assistance at record highs. I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work of Not-For-Profit organisation, ADRA Macquarie Fields, in providing assistance for local families during this time. ADRA supplied more than 2,000 food hampers and emergency packages to people in need during lockdown, from July 2021 to early October. A further 200 hampers were provided to people with bridging visas, with around 110 food and sanitary packages supplied to international students. ADRA recorded 11,400 volunteer hours in 2020/21, down from 12,000 the previous financial year. Yet the distribution of food packages increased from 5,500 in 2019/2020 to 8,580 in 2020/2021, highlighting the increased demand for services. I commend ADRA for continuing to support our community during this challenging time, and extend my gratitude to Centre Manager Melissa Baleilekutu for her dedication in expanding ADRA's range of services and support. After close to five years with the organisation, Melissa is bidding ADRA farewell. I wish Melissa every success on her future endeavours and look forward to the next chapter in ADRA's journey with the Macquarie Fields community.

BOTANY-RANDWICK PUBLIC SPEAKING GRAND FINAL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The inaugural Sydney Catholic Schools' Botany-Randwick Public Speaking Competition was run in 2021 with students from across the Eastern Suburbs putting up their hand to give it a go. I was honoured to be an adjudicator of the competition. The competition was a great opportunity for students to engage in a tricky but rewarding learning activity, which will help them develop important skills for

high school and beyond. where children thrive academically. 42 students from 14 primary schools competed in the competition's semi-final, which was also live streamed on Zoom with thirteen students will progress to the grand finale. One of the more fascinating topics of competition was that 'the internet has caused more problems than it has solved'. For a generation that has and will grow up immersed in the internet and smart technology age, this topic is both important and relevant and brought out some very interested and varied position. I wish to congratulate every student that competed within in their school as well as in the semi-final and grand finale. I send special congratulations to Joseph Sullivan from St Anthony's Primary School Clovelly who was the 2021 overall winner. Congratulations Joseph!

HEALTHCARE WORKERS OF THE COOGEE ELECTORATE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—To the amazing healthcare workers of the Coogee electorate, on behalf of our entire community, I wish to say thank you and well done. I wish to thank and congratulate to our remarkable hospital staff including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, porters, cleaners, the food and patient support staff and administrative staff and everyone that has played a role on the front line of this pandemic. I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of everyone involved in the public health response to COVID-19. The wonderful staff at the South East Sydney Local Health District Public Health Unit as well as all of the amazing local health care workers involved in the COVID response, be that contact tracing, managing positive patients, administering COVID tests and administering COVID vaccines. These incredible health care professionals have turned up every day, on the front line of the pandemic with the goals of keeping our community safe and getting us out of lockdown. What I hope this crisis has taught us is exactly how valuable our health care professionals. They are absolutely essential and they deserve facilities and salaries that reflect how important they are.

DAENA MADON

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—A big acknowledgment for Glenmore Park resident, Daena Madon for her remarkable achievements and at only 17 years of age has been awarded the 2021 Young Citizen of the Year. At just 12 years old, she convinced her family to foster a Guide Dogs Australia puppy because she wanted to help a person who was vision impaired. She has been a cadet with the Penrith division of St Johns Ambulance for the past six years and in 2020, was recognised as their Senior Cadet of the year for her service and volunteering efforts. She has been recognised by her school for her community service endeavours, by Volunteering Australia for making a difference in the community and received a commendation from Charity Group Variety for donating her hair to help children with alopecia. For the past two years, Daena has written articles and designed front covers for the Lions Club of Emu Plains NSW, was selected by the Rotary Club of Penrith to attend the Rotary Youth leadership camp and participated in the Salvation Army's Red Shield Door Knock appeal. Congratulations to Daena on her extraordinary achievements, I wish her all the best!

PAIGE HADLEY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate vice-captain and St Clair junior, Paige Hadley, for winning her second Super Netball title in three years with her beloved NSW Swifts against the Giants and signing a new two-year deal. The Swifts got off to a blistering start, with the Giants playing catch up for most of the contest. The Giants did take the lead briefly throughout various periods of the first half but the Swifts were always in control. They led by nine points in the final quarter, with the Giants making things interesting via a flurry of two-point Super Shots in the final few minutes. However, the damage has already been done which paved the way for the Swifts to celebrate their seventh premiership in 25 years. Paige loves the Swifts and is passionate about what they have created over the past number of years and where they will go in the coming seasons. She is proud to represent a club which means so much to so many people all over NSW and beyond. Congratulations Paige and I look forward to hearing more of your success in the future!

DAVID STANLEY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge local artist, David Stanley who has captivated the Glenmore Park community with his amazing, hand painted rock designs. At first, David began painting and hiding rocks daily around Blue Hills Wetlands shortly after lockdown began. Those who have been lucky enough to find his designs whilst doing their daily exercise liken it to finding treasure where 100,000 NSW Rocks Facebook members sit and wait in anticipation to see which designs will be on offer to be found. David has been an artist on and off professionally for about fifty years. He first started as a survey draftsman, using pen and ink to draw plans and maps then worked as a biological illustrator in the Zoological Department of The School of Biological Sciences at Sydney University. After working in primary school teaching he was deployed with the Department of Education illustrating distance education learning materials. This together with additional freelance work in educational illustration and picture books meant more opportunity for imaginative work over the thirty years prior to retirement. Congratulations to David for creating simple joys in the lives of others.

TIM BAILEY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to congratulate local OzTag coach and player Tim Bailey, for his 10 years of service with the Australian Tagaroos. The Glenmore Park resident received an Australian Tagaroos Service Award for representing his country at the highest level for a decade. He began his career with the Tagaroos as a player in 2011 before turning his attention to coaching and developing the next wave of female stars. Tim's greatest memory and proudest moment of his 10 years with the Australian Tagaroos is coaching his talented daughter Brooke at a national level. To see her play for Australian and coach his daughter at the same time will be something he will never forget, but to win a World Cup together was even more special. Congratulations to Tim reaching this special milestone, here's to another decade!

MAYOR ROCHELLE PORTEOUS

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the newly elected Greens Mayor of the Inner West, Mayor Rochelle Porteous. Mayor Porteous was recently elected as the first female Mayor of the Inner West, what a marvellous achievement. She brings a wealth of experience to the role having served 12 years on the former Leichhardt Council including 3 terms as Mayor plus 4 years on Inner West Council. Rochelle has run a women's refuge, worked with survivors of childhood sexual abuse and worked in social justice, disability advocacy, political and environmental campaigner roles. Having worked closely with Mayor Porteous during my time at Leichhardt Council I know how much passion, knowledge and experience she brings to the role. I also know it would also be remiss not to mention the unwavering support of her husband Aurelio. Congratulazioni Rochelle!

WHERE'S WALLY HUNT IN ANNANDALE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the creative initiative started by a group of parents in Annandale: a real-life Where's Wally hunt. During the COVID-19 lockdown images of the Where's Wally character were painted on rocks, stuck on walls and drawn in chalk on footpaths, for children and adults alike to find. The Annandale 2038 community group on Facebook facilitated this project by allowing locals to share their creations and finds. In a time when many families were struggling with children being stuck at home, the Where's Wally hunt provided a safe, fun and creative outlet for kids, enabling people to connect with their community, and also enjoy walking the beautiful streets of Annandale. It has since spread to other suburbs, even being recognised through media coverage all the way in the United Kingdom! I would like to thank all involved in the project and recognise the importance of local Facebook groups such as Annandale 2038, particularly for bringing communities together in lockdown. I want to particularly acknowledge the locals who were involved in getting this project started, Lilianna Galea, Holly Lester, Kim Musznig, Zoe Erbacher and Joanne Sharkey.

MIA CAMPBELL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—At just 13-years-old Mia Campbell earned 'hero' status, rescuing her dad from the surf at Bar Beach after a freak accident. Mia had returned to the shore after being out in the waves with dad Ben one afternoon, only to find he wasn't behind her. Ben's board had washed up though, and when Mia turned to see that he wasn't swimming in she jumped back in the water to find out what was going on. In a true case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, Ben had been struck by a dolphin jumping out of the water which took a hole out of his board and caught him the shoulder and chest. It left him unable to swim and struggling to stay afloat. Mia paddled 150 metres out to him and used a technique she had learned as a member of the Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club to get him onto her board and safely into shore. Well done, Mia. You were brave beyond your years and your Dad was very lucky to have you there that day.

MELISSA HISTON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Melissa Histon for being named the Urban Inspirational Woman of the Year at the 2021 Rotary inspirational Women's Awards. Melissa has been recognised for her dedication to women experiencing domestic violence, founding Got Your Back Sista in 2016 to help women from Lake Macquarie to the Upper Hunter and Taree to restart their lives through setting up new homes, connecting them with services and assisting them with gaining skills for employment. Amongst a field of women who have done phenomenal work with people with a disability, people with diabetes, and young and Indigenous people, Melissa stood out. While her work is no secret to us in Newcastle, it's wonderful to see Melissa deservedly be recognised on a state-level.

PETER COOKE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Without referees organised sport couldn't be played, and tens of thousands of people have been able to take to the rugby field because of Peter Cooke. Peter has notched up an

incredible 1000 games, as well as 40 years of continuous service to the Newcastle Rugby Union Referees Association. He first got into rugby as an 11-year-old in Queanbeyan and obtained his NSW Referees Badge while he was in high school, staying involved through university and while moving around NSW, Tasmania and the ACT. It was in 1981 that Peter settled in the Hunter where he not only made a massive contribution on-field, but has served in various committee positions and also been the head medical officer at international test matches. Peter is Newcastle's most-capped referee and he is showing no sign of slowing down.

GRANDFRIENDS PROGRAM

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Prior to the stay-at-home orders affecting regional NSW in July, a program entitled "Grand Friends" gave Harbison aged care residents the chance to spend time with primary students from the nearby Oxley College in Burradoo. From Kindergarten through to Year 2, students shared classes with their more senior friends, who assisted them in various learning activities. It allowed many of the Harbison residents to pass on their wisdom and for the children to share the simple joys of childhood with their affectionately named "Grand Friends". Recent restrictions have curtailed the visits, but not the friendships forged. The kindergarten students showed that their grandfriends were still firmly in their minds when they painted kindness rocks and created a video filled with heart-warming messages. On so many fronts, this is a positive program. I truly hope it can be fully resumed once it becomes COVID-Safe to do so. I commend the management and staff at Harbison for the creative way they keep their residents engaged in community life and the teachers at Oxley for integrating the program into their student's learning.

BOWRAL HELPS CAMPBELLTOWN RESIDENTS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Without fail, when tough times fall upon Australians, it acts as a catalyst for incredible kindness, generosity and courage. Lucy Forbes, the owner of Bowral's Active Therapies, was moved by the nightly news of Campbelltown residents doing it tough during the height of the lockdown restrictions. It gave her the inspiration to do something positive and send a little love and support their way. Teaming up with Destination Southern Highlands, a plan was conceived to pack and send hampers of local Highlands produce to those in need. With assistance from generous donors, 206 hampers were eventually packed and delivered to grateful Campbelltown families during September. Deliveries reportedly left many recipients overwhelmed with emotion beyond words. Some said that they had been at breaking point, and the hampers were a lifesaver. I want to recognise the incredible staff at Active Therapies and the Mittagong Information Centre for giving their time and energy to make the lives of others that little bit better. Special thanks are made to Lucy Forbes for her vision and those who kindly donated towards the hampers.

'A FIRE INSIDE'

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Villagers in Wollondilly that were hit by the 2019/20 Summer bushfires have had a chance to share their experiences in a new film entitled, A Fire Inside. The film was produced by the independent production company FINCH, and highlights the dedication of Rural Fire Service volunteers protecting their villages, dealing with the loss of homes, and the ongoing toll the blaze had on those it touched. The film is at times emotionally poignant, but does reveal the power of kindness and the good 'ole Aussie spirit. Brendon O'Connor, a firefighter of more than two decades, has captained his local Balmoral Brigade for the past eleven years. His story is one of many told in the documentary detailing how firefighters risk their lives again and again, and the effects this has on them. Most of us will never experience the dangers these brave men and women face protecting our communities. This film, however, provides enormous insight and is highly recommended viewing for all members and those interested in learning more about our firefighting heroes. A Fire Inside is now showing at Bowral's Empire Cinema.

THE JUNCTION WORKS – YOUTH & CHILDREN'S SERVICES ART AND SOUL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to recognise The Junction Works who recently started Art and Soul, a free online wellbeing arts and craft program for local young people. The weekly sessions are offered via zoom and invite young people to enjoy different sessions focusing on mindfulness and gratitude. They learn helpful tips and strategies on how to deal with feelings of anxiety or stress through the form of art and craft. These 40 minute afternoon sessions are offered to 5 to 25 year olds and offer different types of art. It's a great way to join in an activity for those who are nervous getting back out after COVID, or who may be immunocompromised, or who just want to try something different. They can also engage in some self-care during what has been such a challenging time, especially for young people. The online sessions are facilitated by certified counsellors and the attendees are able to receive wellbeing counselling sessions through completing the arts and craft work. Once again I would like to commend The Junction Works for implementing this incredible program which will benefit many young people.

RESOURCEFUL AUSTRALIAN INDIAN NETWORK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I acknowledge one of my favourite community organisations, the Resourceful Australian Indian Network in Penshurst. Throughout the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the team has worked tirelessly to provide social, spiritual and emotional support to those in need. Of particular mention is their shopping assistance and meal delivery programs which have been critical to the elderly and vulnerable during this difficult period. It is for these reasons that Dr Sudha Natarajan and the team were awarded with a Community Group Achievement Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards in 2020. These awards honour some of the many individuals, groups and businesses that go above and beyond to make our community even stronger. Their ability to keep people connected and engaged during the past 12 months has been outstanding and for that our entire community is very grateful. I would again like to thank the entire team at the Resourceful Australian Indian Network for their ongoing support for our community and particularly those in need.

ST GEORGE SWIM CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I acknowledge the St George Swim Club, as well as their President and Principal Coach, Robby Cox, for their excellent year in 2020. The St George Swim Club teaches beginners, right through to elite swimmers who compete on a national level. It is a fun and family friendly organisation that focuses on the enjoyment of swimming and it drives individuals to be the best that they can be. It is for these reasons that the team was nominated in 2020 with a Community Group Achievement Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards honour some of the many individuals, businesses and community groups who go above and beyond each and every day to make our community even stronger. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic with swimmers unable to be in the pool, Robby organised a number of land exercises to keep the team fit and healthy. This was a fantastic initiative and a testament to Robby's commitment to his students and I know that they will achieve some outstanding results in 2021.

FOODBANK VISIT

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today, I wish to talk about one of my favourite events on the calendar, my annual visit to Foodbank Australia in Glendenning. For the past five years, my staff and I have travelled to the Foodbank headquarters to volunteer our time to help those less fortunate during the holiday period. This year we partnered with Jihad Dib, Member for Lakemba and his staff and we were able to pack 365 food hampers which were distributed to bushfire affected communities in Northern NSW. This is an outstanding achievement and it was great to put politics aside and partner with Jihad Dib and his team for this worthy cause. Foodbank Australia has been critical in supporting the community throughout the recent pandemic, producing 75 million meals for their 2400 charity partners in 2020 alone. I cannot wait to do it again later this year and I encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved, to get in touch with their team today.

3BRIDGES YOUTHZONE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today, I acknowledge two outstanding members of the 3Bridges Youthzone team at South Hurstville, Louis Causer and Pablo Ortega. Last year I had the privilege of visiting the centre to unveil their brand new mural which Louis and Pablo painted. What was even more of a privilege is the fact that they let me officially finish the design by writing the Youthzone initials onto the wall. The overall design features three dimensional block writing to spell out Youth Zone and the combination of background colours in a gradient flow really makes the artwork stand out. This was a fantastic afternoon and it was a great opportunity to meet with some of the friendly and inspiring people who attend the centre. This is always a fun and relaxing place to visit and that is a testament to the amazing staff and volunteers at 3Bridges, with people like Vanessa Gauci and Raj Nair at the helm. I would again like to congratulate Pablo and Louis on painting this fantastic mural. I cannot wait to see where your artistic brilliance takes you.

ANNABEL PICKLES AND NEISHA DAVIDSON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Miss Annabel Pickles and Miss Neisha Davidson of Echuca/Moama for their great contributions to helping those in need. Miss Pickles and Miss Davidson are both passionate about the issue of clothing waste in landfill and were also inspired to take part in St Mary's Parish annual Coat and Blanket Drive. The two girls put together an event within their school, Moama Anglican Grammar, to encourage their classmates to donate clothes for the drive. Miss Pickles and Miss Davidson, with the help of their school, gathered over 200 kilograms of clothing to donate to people in need within the local community. I recognise and commend Miss Pickles and Miss Davidson for their incredible charitable motivations and outstanding contribution to the drive.

DRAGOS MARCU

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Mr Dragos Marcu of Deniliquin for his dedication to raising awareness and support for mental health. This year, Mr Marcu took part in the annual charity initiative, The Push-Up Challenge. Mr Marcu surpassed the challenge goal of 3318 push ups, setting a new goal of 4000 push ups by the end of the month. Completing the challenge at home and at his workplace, Deniliquin North Public School, where he is a general assistant, Mr Marcu provided an inspiration to the school's students who both encouraged and joined him in his challenge. Through the Push-Up Challenge, the students of Deniliquin North Public School were able to engage with their community, have fun with their fitness and gain an insight into this worthy cause. Mr Marcu also raised \$100 for the charity. I commend Mr Marcu for his commitment to raising awareness of mental health and bringing his community together in a common cause.

NARELLE WHITHAM

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Narelle Whitham of Moulamein for her work in providing mental relief for people struggling with drought. In 2018, Ms Whitham founded the Art Relief Program aimed at reducing stress for members of the community impacted by drought. Ms Whitham's Program provides free art classes for adults and children, allowing them a break from the daily struggles associated with drought and drought recovery, whilst avoiding any additional financial impact on families. The Art Relief Program teaches the importance of using recycled materials for the benefit of the environment, at the same time as providing a creative outlet for the community. The Program also promotes mental wellness, helping to reduce stress and anxiety, whilst also creating a sense of belonging in an environment that is free from judgment or discrimination. Since its inception, the Program has expanded to several other towns across the region. I commend Ms Whitham for her community spirit and initiative.

SOPHIE PEARN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to congratulate Sophie Pearn of Deniliquin who represented her school and achieved first-place in both dressage and handy mount at Elmore Interschool Equestrian Competition. Sophie has been riding horses since she was four and her recent accomplishments are a credit to her hard work and training with her horse, Seashell. Sophie is a nine-year old member of the Deniliquin Pony Club and has aspirations to improve her equestrian skills as she matures. I commend Sophie on her commitment to her sport and encourage her to keep working at her aspirations in the equestrian field.

CAMPBELLTOWN SCHOOLS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The past four to five months have really tested the entire state of NSW. However, there is no doubt that areas in Western and South Western Sydney – including Campbelltown – have felt that brunt of restrictions more than most. Residents, businesses and organisations in Campbelltown have all had to adapt to the changing goal posts. Teachers and staff at our local schools in particular have done a tremendous job ensuring students continue to receive the best education and care possible despite the barriers in place. We are blessed in Campbelltown to have so many dedicated teachers and staff at our local schools. It's not the pay cheque that drives those staff and teachers, it is the passion, dedication and the drive to help shape the futures of our youngest generations. The last four to five months of remote learning have certainly presented a number of challenges for teachers and staff to overcome. But from all reports, they did so with flying colours. To every staff member and teacher at our local schools, I say a huge thank for your efforts over the recent months. It's certainly appreciated by myself, every student and their parents and carers.

HANNAH DARLINGTON

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The Campbelltown-Camden Ghosts have a long proud history. The club's reputation is respected not just locally, but far and wide. The club's ability to produce and nurture talent has been one of its most famous attributes and that trend has continued with Ghosts player, Hannah Darlington being named the interim captain of the Sydney Thunder. To simply make the Thunder squad is an achievement many players can only dream of. To lead the team though, that is an honour reserved for a precious few. Being a leader of the team comes with a host of extra responsibilities. As a leader, you don't have the luxury of wandering onto the pitch and worrying just about your own game. To be able to lead and still perform at the highest level is not something everyone can do. But there is no doubt that Hannah's time at the Ghosts has prepared her for such an important task. Congratulations again Hannah on a wonderful achievement and congratulations to the Ghosts for helping shape Hannah into the leader she is today. On behalf of the entire Campbelltown community, we wish Hannah and the Thunder good luck this season.

LISA AND ZOE PAISLEY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Arcadia twins, Zoe and Lisa Paisley who have been helping farmers in Fiji through their business Aggie Global. The girls who attended Galston High School, both studied Agricultural Science at University. They then travelled to Laos and Fiji to understand the agricultural system in developing countries. In 2018, they started Aggie Global which helped farmers in Fiji help streamline their production and help identify opportunities to sell to new markets. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, the girls came back home to Arcadia but have continued to run Aggie Global. A combination of COVID destroying tourism and three deadly cyclones has greatly impacted the farmers of Fiji. Through their business, Zoe and Lisa have been able to co-ordinate contactless pick-ups and deliveries to support farmers and families in need. They have started a crowdfunding campaign which allows a monthly subscription to Aggie Global which will support their business as they train farmers and help them continue to grow their business. Congratulations Zoe and Lisa on the success of Aggie Business and helping assist Fijian farmers as they come back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHRISTINE RICHARDS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—I was pleased to hear and would like to acknowledge and congratulate Ulladulla resident Christine Richards, who was recently awarded the South Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year. Christine is a long-time member of the Milton Ulladulla United Hospital Auxiliary and has helped many people over the years, starting her journey back in 2001. She has held the Social Secretary position for 11 years with the Auxiliary, and is also a member of the Auxiliary's visitation team. A dedicated volunteer, Christine is also part of many other charitable organisations View Club's Smith Family Learning for Life Program, Sarah Claydon Op Shop and Martins Church. Christine Roberts is a much deserving recipient of the South Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year Award and it is great to see she has been recognised for her assistance and dedication to the local community.

DALLAS RODNEY LOCK

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—For more than two decades, Dallas Rodney Lock from Bolton Point has been engaged in a labour of love to create and maintain one of the most picturesque sites on Lake Macquarie. The Myuna Bay Scout Camp is widely regarded as being home to some of the prettiest walks around our region, but it wasn't always so. Twenty-three years ago the site was dominated by weeds and lantana which in some places was seven metres high. As a scout leader Dallas saw the potential of what the site could become and began the long process of turning it into a scout camp which now attracts troops from across the state. He continues to coordinate and lead scouts to maintain and upgrade the site as part of their Queen's Scout Award. The site is an invaluable and highly regarded bush camp where scouts learn about the environment. Dallas also runs bush tucker tours with 80 varieties of bush tucker located at the site. I congratulate Dallas on his never-ending dedication to not just maintaining the site but also on his dedication to teaching younger generations about the importance of our natural environment.

KEVIN STOKES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to congratulate Kevin Stokes from Toronto who was named the 2021 Senior Hunter Volunteer of the Year at the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Kevin was recognised for his tireless efforts over 36 years to the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. The gardens are maintained and managed by volunteers for the enjoyment and education of people from across Australia and overseas. It should be noted that Kevin is not only one of the gardens' founding members, but also its longest continual serving volunteer. Under Kevin's guidance the gardens have flourished and he is credited with helping the gardens overcome numerous difficulties including financial hardships, drought and COVID-19 restrictions. He is also known for his vast knowledge of Australian native plants and is well regarded for his genuine love of sharing that knowledge. Back in 1981, Kevin was instrumental in ensuring that the mere idea of a botanic garden became reality and spent years working with volunteers to establish the gardens before they were opened to the public in 1986. I thank Kevin for his efforts at the award winning gardens and encourage him to keep up his fantastic work.

ALSTONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I congratulate the Year 5 and 6 Alstonville Public School students who recently competed in the Tournament of Minds competition. I especially acknowledge the Social Science team, who won the State Finals title. The members of the Social Science team who have now gone on to compete in the international competition are: Kiara O'Brien, Ursula Kniha, Cambria King, Sonia Jaszewski, Jess O'Brien, Mackenzie Flynn and Lael Haydec. Congratulations to the STEM group who won at the regional competition level: Ozzie Ayling, Tom Gallagher, Sam Green, Madi Glass, Kane Priivald, Edward Schaffer-Thompson and Rani Shepherd. The Language/Literature group also deserves a mention for achieving honours at

the regional level. Tournament of the Minds is an international educational program challenging school students to develop the skills to find innovative solutions to real world problems. The Alstonville Public School Social Science team chose "Achieving Equality" as their challenge, and selected four activists from the past to represent their cause: Eddie Mabo, Rosa Parks, Frances Perkins and Native American Sitting Bull. I congratulate Alstonville Public School and teacher David Hutchins for their project-based learning approach that supported students in this wonderful endeavour.

BALLINA COAST HIGH SCHOOL INTERACT CLUB

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I congratulate members of the Ballina Coast High School Interact Club – a "junior version" of the Rotary Club, for their service to the local community. In a year in which both studying and community service were dominated and interrupted by COVID-19, the first batch of Interactors focused on raising awareness of domestic violence, supporting homeless people with care packs, and writing personalised cards for those attending the Ballina Hot Meal Centre. The club, supported by the local Rotary clubs, introduced students to the benefits and joy of serving in the broader community. Hand-made cards presented to Ballina Hot Meal Centre patrons recently were a highlight, their heartfelt messages receiving some wonderful feedback from people who are doing it tough and who very much appreciated the encouragement. I congratulate the teachers and the students involved in the Ballina Coast High School Interact Club and look forward to hearing about their great work in the future.

FRANK MILLS OAM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I recognise and celebrate the life of Frank Mills OAM, farmer, fire services officer, Byron Shire councillor, local historian, family man and community stalwart, who passed away on October 3 at the age of 93. My condolences go to Frank's family and friends on his passing. Francis Leo Mills was born in Murwillumbah in 1928, one of 13 children. He lived in the Northern Rivers all his life, working on his parents' dairy farms and banana plantations at Main Arm, and as a timber and sleeper cutter. He sold the farm in the early 70s to open a business in Mullumbimby, and in 1989, he became the joint Fire Control Officer of Tweed and Byron shires. He was also president of the Bushfire Prevention Association of Northern NSW for 14 years and later received an OAM for his service. At aged 63, Frank retired and devoted himself to recording the history of the people of the Brunswick Valley. A dedicated community member, Frank gave generously of his time to the Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc., St Vincent De Paul, Rotary, the RSL, Old and Gold and countless other community organisations.

MIA THOM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I congratulate Mia Thom, a young Bundjalung woman selected for the NSW Educational Standards Authority's annual Young Writers' Showcase. Mia's semi-autobiographical short fiction piece, *Balun Budjarhm* explores culture and identity in post-colonial times. It was inspired by the oral narratives that sustain her culture and the Indigenous authors who challenge Western discourse. Beginning in 2018, Mia helped organise the Byron Shire Youth for Climate school strikes that attracted thousands of community members. She joined Bob Brown's Stop Adani convoy in Mullumbimby where she spoke to an estimated 5000 people, calling for urgent action to address climate change. Mia's Bundjalung heritage and commitment to Indigenous rights has seen Mia adopt an intersectional approach to climate change, promoting Indigenous knowledge as a core solution. Mia's dedication to community and mobilisation of youth won her the ADF Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Award, and the Byron Shire's 2020 Young Australian of the Year honour. She has a glittering future ahead of her and I applaud her integrity, intelligence, talent and commitment to the big issues.

SHOALHAVEN HEADS RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I commend the Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Brigade for their outstanding contribution and dedicated service to our local community. Recently the Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Brigade have applied for funding through the NSW Government Community Building Partnership program and I am delighted to support their request. Specifically, the Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Brigade are seeking funding to purchase thermal imaging cameras. I'd like to thank the Secretary of the Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Brigade Mr Geoff Parker for his hard work in preparing this application. I will be doing everything I can to support this application to help our Rural Fire Service volunteers better respond to fire and keep our community safe. As the local MP, I have enjoyed working with the Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Service over many years including securing a grant to extend their Fire Station to provide for an expanded and more modern facility. Shoalhaven Heads Rural Fire Service volunteers were not only significant contributors to fighting bushfires in 2019/20 but have consistently supported bushfire fighting efforts around our region, state, nation, and even overseas. On behalf of a grateful community, I thank every single volunteer and their families for their dedication and service.

FRONTLINE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STAFF

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—The words 'thank you' are so easily said but all too often we forget to acknowledge and thank the people we see working hard in the service of our community every single day. Put simply, sometimes we just take this service for granted. It's in this vein that I want to thank and commend the outstanding work of our doctors, nurses, pathologists, pharmacists' epidemiologists, allied health and all medical professionals and their support staff that have worked so hard throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Your tireless commitment and service is acknowledged and your skill and expertise is highly regarded. You have worked incredible hours and gone over and above to ensure the health and well-being of our community and we as a community are grateful for your lifesaving efforts. You have responded to an ever-changing crisis with professionalism and care which has been critical to keeping our community safe. On behalf of our community, I also want to thank the Social Services Sector who have been critical in supporting the vulnerable who are even more exposed during a global pandemic. Like medical professionals, your service is rarely acknowledged but deserves every commendation for your professionalism and dedication.

NOWRA VELO CLUB

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I want to acknowledge all the wonderful members of the Nowra Velo Club. Recently I received a funding application from the Nowra Velo Club for a refabricated modular wheelchair compatible amenities building, as part of the evolving Multi-Sport Criterium Track Facility at the Berry Sport and Recreation Centre. I want to commend and thank the Nowra Velo Club Criterium Subcommittee Chair Doctor Frank Neri, who is also a former University Lecturer, for his hard work and dedication to the Club and this project. I strongly support this application and I want to thank Dr Neri and all members of this great Shoalhaven organisation for their efforts to promote cycling in our community. The Nowra Velo Club is the home of cycle racing in the Shoalhaven district. New members are always welcome and regular rides are run that cater for most levels of interest. Coaching is available by contacting the Club. The Shoalhaven area provides a great choice of roads from the farm flats along the Shoalhaven River to the numerous beaches along the coast to Jervis Bay. The Club conducts regular road race events including handicaps, graded scratch races and criterion events.

SAINT PAUL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, ALBION PARK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work Saint Paul's Catholic Church at Albion Park. Specifically, I want to acknowledge that the Church is seeking funding for the supply and installation of solar panels on the Church and Presbytery which is a wonderful demonstration of the Church's commitment to renewable energy and using God's wonderful gift of sun shine to our world. I would like to formally acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Mrs Linda O'Rourke who worked hard to compile and complete a Community Building Partnerships application and I would like it noted that I strongly support this request. I would also like to acknowledge the extraordinary service and commitment of Mrs Mary Jennings who has been the Parish Secretary since late 2002. I also acknowledge Parish Priest Fri Leo Duck. The history of the Parish of St Paul's at Albion Park is uniquely linked to the first Mass celebrated in the Illawarra by Fr John Joseph Therry on Wednesday 17 April, 1833. On that occasion Fr Therry celebrated Mass at a military barracks in Wollongong. I pray that St Paul's application for funding will be successful.

TRIBUTE TO OLIVE RODWELL

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong)—Community-minded. Passionate. Selfless. Stubborn. Determined. Respected. Just some of the sentiments in tributes to describe the late Olive Rodwell of Port Kembla following her passing last week. Anyone who knew or dealt with Olive could never doubt her passion. After moving to Wollongong to take up a teaching position, spending a career changing the lives of her students, she set about changing her local community. She came to prominence as part of the campaign to improve the air quality in Port Kembla. Along with Helen Hamilton and the local group known as IRATE she campaigned against the reopening of the Port Kembla copper smelter – known most famously for its 200 metre high stack. The stack was demolished in 2014 – perhaps the most powerful visual demonstration of the change to the quality of life in Port Kembla. Although she fought against what the stack produced for decades, Olive noted at the time, "Don't hold it against the chimney. It's a wonderful structure." The lasting legacy Olive Rodwell helped to deliver are the legislative and regulatory changes that have improved air quality in the Illawarra. It's a legacy that benefits all Illawarra residents equally and daily and forever.

BORDERLINE EXHIBITION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Today, I acknowledge the incredible work of the Borderline Regional Arts Association and their wonderful exhibition Borderline which is being held at the Tenterfield Artists Collective Studio from October 2nd until November 1st. The Association is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation which connects artists from across our border communities in the New England, Northern Tablelands

and the Granite Belt, QLD. It's inspiring that the association has persisted with the exhibition despite the border closure. Michael Wish, who joined in 1994 as a founding member has commended the artists for using a wide range of mediums to reflect border life. I would like to acknowledge artists Anni Washington, Gail Wilson, Gay Lendeta, Janet White, Jayne Barrett, Kerry Cannon, Krishna Heffernan, Linda Clutterbuck, Liz Powell, Louise Jenkins, Maggie Brockie, Margaret Oban Dowe, Mary-Ann Svenson, Nola Sindel, Nola Taylor, Pam Docherty, Raylee Delaney and Sue Jurd. Works of the collective can be found in Tenterfield at the Artists' Collective Studio, Carpe Diem Guesthouse, Deloraine, Royal Hotel, Tenterfield Library, Tenterfield Information Centre, Make-It Tenterfield and also many locations in Stanthorpe, QLD. I thank the association for their work and look forward to coming together in person for the next exhibition.

VALE RAY SIMPSON

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Ray (Alan Raymond) Simpson, aged 96 peacefully passed away at Mareeba Aged Care recently. In WWII Ray was in the army reserves but was unable to deploy as he was in a protected industry at the Port Kembla Steelworks. Post war he ran successful electrical contracting businesses on the Illawarra/South Coast and Southern Highlands, then he and wife Bonnie followed their dreams by running successful properties near Wagga, Coonabarabran, Inverell and South-West WA. He was president of Apex in Bowral in the 1960's. A skilled sportsman, he excelled in boxing, hockey, cycling, cricket, and rugby league. He was captain of a newly reconstituted Dapto team. Ray and Bonnie came to live in Iluka where we met. I already knew his son and legal colleague Tony Simpson. Ray was a dedicated fisherman, who until recently, to the consternation of many, regularly put his runabout into the sea at Woody Heads. Ray will be remembered for his forthright, friendly open manner, quick cheeky wit, competitive nature, generosity and support for the Labor Party. Seven years ago, Ray lost his much loved and respected wife Bonnie. He is survived by his loving family of sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CLUNES STORE AND CELLARS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Clunes Store and Cellars have recently completed a large renovation of their café space on Bangalow Road in Clunes. The Clunes Store and Cellar has long been loved as not just a store, but a community place for Clunes locals and people from across the region. Karen and Bryan Dixon bought the store a few years ago after living on the Sunshine Coast for over 30 years running a successful timber business. Bryan and Karen took on the challenge of the store and decided to expand the business and renovate. Karen talks about having had enough after 2 weeks and wanting to go back to the Sunshine Coast. However they pushed on with the renovations and did an incredible job. The renovations have caused a buzz in the community. With a wooden finish, a stunning mural painted by local artist Kate Stroud and a space that takes in natural light. The new and enhanced café space is sure to be a hub of activity with a focus on local produce and community. Clunes is one of our wonderful eclectic villages in the Northern Rivers and I wish the team well in this exciting new addition.

LISMORE LANEWAYS ARTWORKS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Lismore Laneways are coming to life with many amazing artworks providing a burst of colour and vibrancy. Lismore has long been known for our back-alley gallery and the latest instalment in Eggins Lane continues that legacy. At the centre of the laneways is a wall-mounted corten-steel panel work by Bundjalung weaver and designer Tania Marlowe. It's based on a weaving story around cultural continuation and is lit up by solar powered LED lights. Her artwork reflects and acknowledges Bundjalung culture which has been in the heart of Lismore for more than 65,000 years. It's fitting this work is central. The Antechinus Family by Andrew Cullen, features a series of wire sculptures of this endangered marsupial that is native to Lismore and its villages. Locals are encouraged to follow the Antechinus family down the laneway as it scurries along the buildings telling a story of this marvellous creature. In the Heart by Lismore artists Holly Ahern and Eden Crawford-Harriman is inspired by the come to heart theme of Lismore and features two large vibrant pink arms embracing a pulsating heart with "YOU ARE HERE" in bright neon. It's located on the corner of Magellan and Carrington streets.

INTERNATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—October is International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Friday 15th of October was International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. Sadly, hundreds of thousands of Australians experience the devastating loss of a baby each year. Every year. It's more common than many think. In fact, each week Australians experience more than 2,100 miscarriages. More than 40 babies are stillborn each week, and in that same week, every week, more than 11 babies will perish before they have lived 28 days, leaving parents and families shattered. This year the Red Nose organisation asked people to break the silence that surrounds pregnancy and infant loss. This silence includes our experience when we try to find the words to offer support and we just cannot find those words. But we want to so very much. During this awareness

month I want to recognise and express a deep thanks to the committed perinatal professionals and community members and family members in the broader Maitland community who are providing support and caring for those individuals and families who have experienced miscarriage or the loss of an infant.

FINALISTS IN THE ACSA AGED CARE AWARDS 2021

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The Aged and Community Services Australia: Aged Care Awards 2021 provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase the individuals, teams and organisations that are making important and unique contributions to the provision of critical, engaging and connective Aged Care services. The ongoing social and in-home care, and the many linked contributions they make to our community, are valued and appreciated by all of us. Novacare is an agency that has been providing support for the aged across the Lower Hunter for 30 years. They are proud to declare their admiration for their dedicated team of over 230 local professionals and volunteers who work in our community every day. NovaCare has been nominated as finalists in two categories: 1. Regional, Rural Remote Provider of the Year and 2. Aged Care Provider of the Year. Two of the NovaCare team are also individual finalists and I congratulate them each on their commitment and efforts: 1. Ms Robyn Pooley: Volunteer of the Year, 2. Ms Teresa Brown: Employee of the Year. I congratulate NovaCare, their staff and volunteers on their efforts, energy and excellence which have been recognised by the acknowledgement as finalists in these awards.

HUNTER TRADE COLLEGE STUDENTS IMPRESS AT NSW TRAINING AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The opportunity to learn a trade whilst completing high school is just one of the pathways students can prepare themselves for the transition from high school to the workforce. Today, I would like to acknowledge three students of the Hunter Trade College in my electorate who were recognised for all the hard work that goes into this pathway at the NSW Training Awards in June. Congratulations, Vanessa Grimmond, on being awarded School Based Trainee of the Year for the Hunter & Central Coast regions and year 12 students Harrison Robb and Kade Windon, who were also finalists in this year's awards. Unfortunately due to COVID restrictions the main awards presentation event was cancelled, but that does not take away from the significance of their achievements. To be acknowledged for all their hard work and dedication at a state level demonstrates the aptitude of these young people for applying themselves and doing their very best. I wish them all the best with their future endeavours and careers in their chosen trade.

MAITLAND BUSINESS CHAMBER NEW COMMITTEE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I'd like to extend my congratulations and thanks to the newly appointed 2021-2022 Executive Committee of the Maitland Business Chamber. The new Committee was announced on 30 September at the Chamber's Annual General Meeting, and welcomed aboard two new Executive Members Jonathan Poynter of Nimbler Digital & StreamingHouse and Victor Prasad of Hume Community Housing. All Members of the Chamber's Executive Committee are volunteers, who take time out of their own businesses to ensure that the over 200 active members of the Chamber, have the resources and information they need to feel informed on matters critical to running a business - no matter the circumstances. In line with COVID the Annual General Meeting was held via Zoom. As always it was professionally run and a credit to the Chamber's dedication to being the voice of business in Maitland. It was great to hear about the many innovating ideas that Maitland Businesses have adopted and implemented to overcome the recent lockdown. This reflects the strength and quality of the Maitland Business community. I am looking forward to seeing all businesses in Maitland rebuild and thrive as the state emerges once again from Lockdown.

PINK ELEPHANTS SUPPORT NETWORK

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—With October marking International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, I highlight the Pink Elephants Support Network (Pink Elephants), which provides early intervention support to women and their families through digital-based peer support, education and resources. In my electorate, Sarah lost twins to miscarriage at 11 weeks. It was her first pregnancy, and after several months struggling alone, a friend reached out to Pink Elephants. With support, she overcame her grief, and recently welcomed a baby girl into the world. Jessie and her husband battled infertility for over 3 years, losing two pregnancies. Pink Elephants supported her during this difficult time, as well as throughout her third pregnancy, which has given her a beautiful son Levi. I commend the work of Pink Elephants and their CEO Samantha Payne.

ENDEAVOUR FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—On 15 June I had the pleasure of celebrating Endeavour Foundation's 70 years of operation. Endeavour Foundation operates disability services across Australia, and has four sites in Sydney. Locally, Endeavour has supported employment facilities at Castle Hill, Mount Druitt and Seven Hills and a learning and lifestyle facility at Castle Hill. At Seven Hills, Endeavour supports employment services to those living locally with a disability who partake in industrial services, such as general packaging, food

packaging, pharmaceutical packaging and warehousing. Over my time as the proud representative of Seven Hills in this place, I have secured funding to support on-going and enhanced employment services to those with a disability who work at Endeavour Seven Hills. I thank the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and in particular the former Disability Services Minister, Ray Williams, for their visits and support of Endeavour Foundation at Seven Hills over the years. Congratulation to Endeavour Foundation for 70 years of services to those with a disability across Australia. I thank Endeavour for providing great employment for those with a disability across the Seven Hills Electorate.

THE HILLS-KELLYVILLE ROTARY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—On 10 May I was fortunate to join the Member for Baulkham Hills, David Elliott MP, at the annual Pride of Workmanship and Community Awards night for The Hills-Kellyville Rotary. Both the Member and I represent parts of Baulkham Hills and we both know the incredible work of The Hills-Kellyville Rotary across the electorates of Baulkham Hills and Seven Hills. The awards recognised a number of employees from the local area for displaying exceptional diligence and dedication in their employment. The awards also recognised a number of individuals for the dedication they show in their service to the community. It is to recognise and acknowledge the terrific work done by our local people in order to make our world a better place. The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club has done an outstanding job throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in supporting the local and international community. I thank President John van den Berg and Secretary Wilf van Emmerik for their continued hard work in serving communities within my electorate and around the world. I look forward to hearing of their great work again in the future, and can't wait to join them again soon.

WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORTS AT THE OLYMPICS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—It brings me great privilege to recognise and congratulate the many athletes from the Western Sydney region who are representing Australia at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. It is always fantastic to see so many athletes from the Seven Hills Electorate, and Western Sydney more broadly, represent their communities across a wide range of sports. I would like to recognise, in particular, the work of the Western Sydney Academy of Sports who do a terrific job to ensure our athletes train in excellent facilities and compete at the highest level. I would like to acknowledge the Chairman Rod Glover, and Community Directors Julie Fitzgerald AM and Peter Threlkeld OAM, for their outstanding work in ensuring Western Sydney develops world-class athletes for the future. I look forward to watching the many representatives from Western Sydney compete at the Tokyo Olympics, and I congratulate them and their families on such a remarkable achievement. I also want to recognise the work of various Western Sydney organisations in support local Seven Hills Electorate paralympians, including cyclist Gordon Allan of Lalor Park and swimmer Tim Hodge of Kings Langley.

NORTH SHORE'S TOP YOUNG ACHIEVERS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—In my electorate of North Shore, we have plenty of talent among our young constituents. Today I want to acknowledge George, Harry, and Gracie Scammell, Laura Williams, and Amelia Soh, who the Mosman Daily recognised as the North Shore's top young achievers. I have spoken about the extraordinary achievements of George, Harry, and Gracie Scammell. They founded Thank You Project Australia last year to express their gratitude by sending thank you letters to our frontline workers. Laura Williams decided to help students struggling with loneliness during lockdown by creating an online space for young people to keep in touch and connected. Laura is also an active member of the Mosman Youth Service and has volunteered for programs such as Green Thumbs and the View Finders environmental group. Amelia Soh was still able to compete during the lockdown in one of the most prestigious competitions for young ballet dancers, The Fonteyn. Amelia placed third, putting her among the most talented dancers, and she has high ambitions to be accepted into the Royal School of Ballet. Congratulations to George, Harry, Gracie, Laura, and Amelia on these incredible achievements.

SIMS EARTHSHOT PROJECT

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to acknowledge the Sydney Institute of Marine Science and their Living Seawalls project. This project was nominated as a finalist in the world's most prestigious environmental prize known as 'Earthshot' that the Duke of Cambridge created. An all-female team of scientists from Macquarie University and UNSW have worked with SIMS on the project to create more habitats for local marine life. By installing specially made panels along Sydney Harbour, local marine life can find nooks and crevices to live in and encourage more seaweed and animal species to return. The team from SIMS competed in the 'Revive Our Oceans' category and was only one of five finalists in this particular category. The Earthshot prize is an urgent call to action to the world. It aims to turn the current pessimism surrounding environmental issues into optimism by championing inspiring leadership and helping to scale cutting edge solutions. I congratulate the team at SIMS on being nominated for the 2021 Earthshot Prize and recognise their incredible efforts and achievements accomplished to date.

NEUTRAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL COLOUR DAY FUN RUN

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate Neutral Bay Public School P & C for their fantastic Colour Day Fun Run held in June this year. Loads of fun was had by students, teachers and volunteers. Money raised will help support student learning facilities at the school, including a new range of Smart Boards and upgrades to the Visual Arts Room. The fun run was held on the school grounds and left the students looking very colourful as well as the playground. Thank you to Victor Tan, the acting principal, for allowing the students to publicly soak and paint him at the end of the day. The photos taken on the day clearly show that all that participated had a blast and it was smiles all round. The Colour Fun Run was a great day for the school and the community. Thank you to P&C President Liz Henry, members of the P&C, dedicated teachers and participating students for bringing so much joy and energy to the event.

MINI-MOS STILL UNSTOPPABLE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—The Mini-Mos Community Fun Run is in its 39th year and is Australia's longest-running, consecutively held volunteer-run. As one of Sydney's much-loved community fun runs, it traditionally consists of 2km, 5km, and 10km courses through the streets of Mosman. The event also raises money for Mosman Public Schools nominated charity, Take 3 that aims to clean up our local beaches by encouraging everyone to take 3 pieces of rubbish with them. Last year COVID-19 forced a change to the traditional running of the event and instead opened the event over the month of November and had over 1,000 registrations. This year again, the Mini-Mos will be held in the same format. Participants will have the opportunity to complete the course at any stage over November. I want to acknowledge the work of the Mini-Mos team, John McDonald, Manny Petros, John Boardman, Amanda Scammell, Tara Boris, Sarah Angus, Luke Berry, Emily Bird, Chris Sherlock, Nicki L'Green, Amy Palis, Tova Gordon. And I also want to acknowledge Mosman Public School Principal Steve Connelly and P&C President Marc Havercroft for their involvement in the event.

JORJA O'BRIEN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am thrilled to announce Hennessy Catholic College student Jorja O'Brien of Young as a winner of the 2021 Country to Canberra Leadership competition. Jorja was one of two women from regional NSW chosen on her excellent response to 'COURAGE TO CHALLENGE: what is the role of rural women in driving change in their communities?' Country to Canberra is empowering young rural women to reach their leadership potential. The award winning not-for-profit program was founded in 2014, giving young women a voice in rural communities. The lucky winners will take part in a three day virtual program including Leadership and Empowerment Training, Networking Opportunities and Careers Coaching. I have personally read Jorja's competition entry and can see why she was chosen as a winner. Well done Jorja, on winning this prestigious award that will have lifelong benefits.

JUNEE COMMUNITY CENTRE SUPPORTING THE JUNEE COMMUNITY GET PROOF OF COVID-19 VACCINE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge the Junee Community Centre for providing support to those who need assistance gaining proof of their COVID-19 vaccines. The Junee Community Centre is offering to help set up a MyGov account to those who are unable to, to give access to their proof of vaccination. Additionally, they are offering their support to print off this documentation for residents. As well as this, the Junee Community Centre is offering to teach residents how to download their proof of vaccination to their smart phones, should they own one. This is a great initiative delivered by the Junee Community Centre, adding to the inclusive environment the Centre already holds, providing each resident in Junee the opportunity to prove they have received the COVID-19 vaccine. Well done to the Junee Community Centre for offering their support to the Junee community. Keep up the good work.

GET CHRIS TO COWRA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I commend Cowra Tourism Corporation on the launch of their 'Get Chris to Cowra' campaign, complete with a very clever video highlighting everything Chris Hemsworth and his family – in fact, any potential visitors - may like to do when they visit the Cowra region, including: the Cowra Nature Based Adventure Playground, Cowra Japanese Gardens and the POW Camp. I'm told the campaign is a team effort for Cowra Tourism including Glenn Daley, Kurt Overzet and Karen Beaumont. Your efforts have generated a great buzz about the town and the timing is spot on as the state starts to open back up. I'm sure the 'Hemsworth effect' will make for a very welcome boost to tourism across the area. Well done to all who feature in the clip including representatives from the Cowra Youth Council, Cowra Rugby Club, Wagambirra Dance Group, Cowra Rural Fire Service and Cowra Netball Association. Thank you also to many local businesses for jumping on board to lend their support. Although Chris now seems to be popping up all over town, the Cowra community will always be the real superstars of the show!

TEMORA LADIES WALKING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Well done to the ladies who have banded together to walk as part of the Black Dog Institute's 'One Foot Forward' fundraiser. Kacey Durham, Gemma Garner and Malika Durham have banded together to walk 100km as a team throughout the month of October with aim to raise funds and awareness for the Black Dog Institute. The Temora Dragons League Taggers are additionally taking part in the 'One Foot Forward' challenge. The team decided to support the cause with their competition as a way to keep their fitness up and have the goal of reaching 200km. These ladies, being excited to support the cause, show how great it is that so many young people, especially in regional areas, are stepping out and aiming to help remove the stigma around mental health. All funds raised by the ladies will go to the Black Dog Institute. Well done to these ladies for taking the initiative to take part in this fundraiser and I wish you the best in meeting your distance and fundraising goals.

CONGRATULATIONS BELLINGEN FOOTBALL'S PHIL LYNCH

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing)—Phil Lynch from Bellingen FC was recently announced as North Coast Football's Newcastle Permanent Community Coach of the Year for 2021. Nominated for his commitment and service to the club and to football, Phil has coached at Bellingen FC for over 20 years, and spent the better part of 50 years teaching the finer points of the game. He is the club's 'floating' coach at the moment, offering other local coaches sessions on skills, tactics and specific player roles. Phil has been described as an "invaluable resource" for the club's coaches and is a great supporter of players and teams. Coaching is one of the most crucial factors in the football experience for players and it is important that coaches like Phil maintain the great work they are doing at Bellingen FC so that their players develop a fondness for the game and continue to have the best football experience possible. Coaches like Phil also play a vital role in developing the skills and attitudes of young players. I'd like to congratulate Phil on becoming the recipient of the North Coast Football Newcastle Permanent Community Coach of the Year Award.

RETURN OF SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I want to recognise the schools right across the Seven Hills Electorate that yesterday welcomed Kindergarten, Year 1 and Higher School Certificate students to their classrooms for face-to-face learning. During the recent Delta outbreak of COVID-19, local students have been impacted by not being able to go to school and many have been further impacted by additional restrictions in Blacktown and Parramatta local government areas. I am so pleased to see children back at school and learning. I know teachers will be happy to see the faces of their students and provide the face-to-face learning students need. Notably, I want to mention Northmead Public School and Blacktown North Public School that had many pictures on Facebook celebrating the return of their Kindergarten and Year 1 students. I know our local high schools are eager to focus in on their HSC students as they move quickly towards their external examinations at Blacktown Boys and Girls High Schools, Catherine McAuley Westmead, Model Farms High School, Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School, Parramatta Marist High School, Pendle Hill High School, The Hills Sports High School and Toongabbie Christian College.

SUP ALASANA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I commend Cronulla resident Alison Morris who operates a hypnotherapy business and has recently launched SUP ALASANA. SUP ALASANA, which aligns with her hypnotherapy business, is an outdoor paddle boarding club which operates Sunday mornings at Gunnamatta Bay. Alison has teamed up with Cronulla Stand-up Paddleboard Shop and School which provided the boards at a discounted rate. The idea behind SUP ALASANA is to encourage people to go outside their comfort zones in an activity that is challenging for most people. The club is also a great opportunity for people to meet new friends at a time where lockdown has severely limited social activity. Club members managed to spend around three hours on the water last Sunday socialising and enjoying exercise in an activity that's out of everyone's comfort zones.

ALEX AGUILAR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I commend Cronulla resident Alex Aguilar who has committed to swim 50km in memory of his late mother, Cathy. Cathy tragically passed away in 2017 following a series of strokes, leaving behind her husband, Carlos, and three sons, Alex, Adrian and Andrew. Swimming was an activity that Alex and his mother bonded over since he began competing at the age of 10, and it was Cathy that would wake up with Alex at 4:30am for training. Alex had planned to swim 50km however COVID-19 restrictions forced the swim to be postponed and scheduled for a later date. Through this swim, Alex also aims to raise awareness surrounding strokes and how they can happen to anyone regardless of age or physical health. Strokes cause around 2,900 deaths each year in

NSW and around 13,600 hospitalisations. Apart from being physically demanding, Alex's swim takes courage and bravery to complete and I commend him on this challenge.

CRONULLA ROTARY CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I commend the Cronulla Rotary Club which recently has been organising and participating in beach clean ups. The moment groups of 5 were permitted to gather outdoors, the Cronulla Rotary Club were quick to organise a Plastic Free Oceans Beach Clean Up at Wanda Beach. This was the first clean up Cronulla Rotary Club conducted in 4 months due to COVID-19 restrictions. Pleasingly, Cronulla Rotary Club reported that there was very little amounts of rubbish along the beach, however there was plenty of micro plastics found which were then collected. Micro plastics are extremely dangerous to sea creatures as they can be mistaken for food and easily ingested, often causing death. Beach clean ups are a great way to get some exercise, socialise with friends and help the environment in a COVID Safe manner. I commend all those Cronulla Rotary Club members who attended.

TRANS PRIDE AUSTRALIA

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate I would like to commend Trans Pride Australia for being awarded the 2021 Mental Health Matters Rainbow Inclusion Award. Every year, the Mental Health Matters Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals, groups and organisations that have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the mental health of communities in NSW. WayAhead, the Mental Health Association NSW uses the awards to showcase innovation and good practice in mental health. I've previously congratulated Trans Pride Australia for their online spaces, groups and events that foster community connection and support for trans and gender diverse people and their families, friends and colleagues. This award reinforces the importance of this support. Trans Pride is a growing national network of organisations that promote the visibility and rights of trans and gender diverse people as equal citizens and valued community members. Congratulations to Trans Pride for this award recognising their ongoing support for the extended trans and gender diverse community, and their promotion of safety and inclusion for all people.

SCOUTS NSW

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—"Be prepared". So goes the famous motto of the scouts. Like all of us, our young Scouts have faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have been prepared to show resilience, innovation and resourcefulness during adversity. Scouts Australia recently partnered with Resilient Youth Australia to conduct the Scouts Australia Resilience Survey; the results show that Scouts have an overall better life satisfaction than their non-Scouting peers and, the longer in Scouts, the more resilient you are likely to become. Earlier this year I visited the Camp Kurrajong Scout centre just outside Wagga Wagga. Activities were resuming after lockdown and there was a real air of excitement. I was hosted by Riverina Region Commissioner, Ian Petty and Deputy Region Commissioner Damian Reeves. I wish to commend them and their colleagues on their work, energy and commitment to the scout movement and their community. Unfortunately we have since gone back into a lockdown. Nevertheless I am sure Scouts are now looking forward once again to resuming their activities. I imagine many young people and their parents will be looking forward to getting outdoors, having fun, and getting away from screen time.

RIVERINA GROUP OF CWA

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The Country Women's Association Riverina group has highlighted the need for more social and affordable housing in regional and rural areas, especially for women over the age of 55, who are the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia. As part of its annual awareness week, members of the Uranquinty branch organised a webinar, entitled A Roof Over Her Head, to raise awareness of this important issue. More than 80 people joined the webinar and heard from guest speakers Lynne Graham of Carevan Wagga Wagga Inc, Wendy Middleton from Argyle Housing, Belinda McMahon from Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc and myself. Hosted by Rachel Whiting of the Uranquinty evening branch of the CWA, webinar heard of the plight of those affected and discussed what more might be done to help. Suggested actions included building additional housing stock and reforms to the planning system to allow this; improving maintenance of existing properties; superannuation reforms; improvements to the rental assistance scheme that would assist low-income earners, particularly financially vulnerable older women; greater support from the government for community housing. I commend the CWA Riverina members who worked to increase awareness of this often-hidden issue to our community.

THE PARKS COMMUNITY NETWORK

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Wednesday 15th September and Monday 20th September 2021, I was pleased to visit The Parks Community Network, Wetherill Park, to help pack essential food hampers

for people affected by COVID-19 and restrictions. Since the beginning of the Greater Sydney lockdown, The Parks Community Network have packed and delivered essential goods, including grocery staples, frozen meals, clothing and PPE to thousands of vulnerable families throughout Western Sydney. The Parks Community Network have been supported by organisations such as OzHarvest, Turbans 4 Australia, Good360 Australia and Fairfield City Council who have generously donated goods and frozen food. In addition to help provided by the NSW Police Force and Australia Defence Force who go out and deliver the essential packs to people in need. I would like to thank Tairyn Vergara, CEO, Matthew Dillon, Operations Manager, and all of the wonderful volunteers at The Parks Community Network who have generously donated their time to support vulnerable people in our community. I would also like to thank all the organisations who have supported The Parks Community Network. It is a difficult time for us all. However, it is great to see our community step up to support one another.

ELOUERA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the extraordinary members from Elouera Surf Life Saving Club (Elouera) who have been a loved and familiar presence on our beaches for over 50 years. Since 1966, Elouera members have excelled in surf lifesaving competitions and last season, patrolled nearly 11,000 hours including a major rescue at Wanda. Elouera is equally proud of their Surf Awareness Clinic, which runs over 5 days as almost 500 children descend on the beach to learn about surf survival and awareness. Elouera continues to support community causes, raising more than \$11,000 for breast cancer research this year and hosting the 'Can Too' fundraiser for the 9th year in a row. Of course, none of this could be possible without the wonderful leadership of Elouera. I acknowledge the 2021/2022 club committee including David Kowald, Cameron Simpson, Amber Garcia, Rory Gillespie, Ron Hegarty, Dean Morris, Isaac Byrnes, Stephen Urquhart, Andrew McKellar, Sophie Burns, Alyson Scott, Mark Summers and Paul Ingram for their ongoing dedication to our beachgoers. I thank the members from Elouera Surf Life Saving Club for serving our community and keeping our beaches safe this summer.

DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR NEIL HALLINAN APM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Detective Chief Inspector Neil Hallinan, who was awarded an Australian Police Medal for his distinguished career with the NSW Police Force for more than 35 years. By way of background, Detective Hallinan has protected our community since 1986 and in 1990, began working in criminal investigation with the Bankstown District Anti-Theft Unit. Here he received a Commissioners Unit Citation for his involvement in Strike Force 'Honey Pot' – one of the first Pawn Shop operations of its kind in New South Wales. Detective Hallinan later performed crucial investigations with the South West Major Crime Squad before becoming a Detective in 1995. In 1996, he was transferred to the Special Branch to perform personal protection duties to individuals such as the Australian Prime Minister, NSW Premier and visiting dignitaries. Detective Hallinan was seconded to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Police Security Command in 2007 due to his expertise, and continues to lead investigations into serious organised criminal groups today with the State Crime Command, Middle Eastern Organised Crime Squad. Detective Chief Inspector Hallinan is a worthy recipient of the Australian Police Medal and I thank him for his ongoing service to our community.

SUTHERLAND HOCKEY CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the 40th anniversary of women in hockey which is being celebrated at Sutherland Hockey Club. Founded in 1965, Sutherland Hockey Club has proudly grown to be the largest junior club in both Sydney and NSW. In 1980 the club opened their teams to women and have since nurtured girls as young as 5 through the minkey program to become fierce Olympians in their Hockeyroo debut. Over the last 40 years, women have been at the heart of Sutherland Hockey Club and achieved much of the club's success. Whilst COVID-19 has delayed both the season and 40th anniversary plans, Sutherland Hockey Club are keen to mark this milestone as soon as possible. As they work towards commemorating this significant occasion, I acknowledge the club's committee including John Mulcair, David Krepp, Sarah Dredge, Luke Domrow, Margaret Noy, Joanne Momsen, Ruth Sannes, David Richardson, Kevin Margaretson, Kristen Agius, Andrew Hoy, Steve Harvey, Frank Rowling and Garry Thomas and thank them for their contribution to our local sporting community. I extend my best wishes to the members of Sutherland Hockey Club as they celebrate 40 years of women in their organisation.

GYMEA COMMUNITY AID AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the wonderful team at Gymea Community Aid and Information Service [GCAIS] who recently won a major award for demonstrating initiative during the recent COVID-19 lockdown. GCAIS is a not-for-profit association who provide support services to keep community members of all ages engaged, connected and active. In order to operate in accordance with the stay-at-home orders, GCAIS moved many of their services online during and created programs to keep seniors active and social. This

included exercise classes and other weekly activities such as lunch and connect, bingo and trivia. GCAIS was recognised for these outstanding programs with the Leading Aged Services Australia Excellence in Age Services Award in the NSW/ACT Team category during a virtual presentation on 7 August. None of this would be possible without the outstanding individuals who spearheaded these digital initiatives. I commend Kalpna Patel, Jenny Koutsonicolis, Rita Napolitano, Joanne Cracknell and Brent Collier for their wonderful work on these projects which are essential for the connectivity of our vulnerable community members. I commend the team at Gymea Community Aid and Information Service for their ongoing dedication to our community.

MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I am pleased to acknowledge the work of Mahboba's Promise, an Australian charity dedicated to raising funds for projects in Afghanistan. The daily tumult over several months does not diminish the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The fall of Kabul in August 2021 adds urgency to our collective duty to peoples displaced by this crisis. The work of Mahboba Rawi, herself an Afghan refugee and Australian citizen is an inspiring example of local generosity and multicultural contribution – working with Afghan widows and children to improve education and primary health care. On September 10 my family and I camped in our backyard to raise money for Mahboba's Promise. Shortly thereafter, 17 Afghan refugees were granted a visa to be settled in southwest Sydney. Working with Mahboba's Promise I put a call out to the community for assistance in helping these families settle into their new homes. In spite of all the lockdown-imposed challenges my office was inundated with donations – food, clothes, toiletries, linen, kitchenware and gift cards. I commend Mahboba Rawi and Mahboba's Promise for not letting one crisis be overwhelmed by another. I thank my community for their generosity. This is who we are.

ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—In hard times, it is important to remember there is much goodness in the world. I am pleased to recognise the many community groups and individuals from across the electorate of Lakemba who stepped up to offer their support for those in need. During the recent state-wide lockdown I had the opportunity to witness the amazing difference groups like Lighthouse Community Support, Sydney Community Connect, Addi Road Community Organisation, Riverwood Community Centre, Turbans 4 Australia, Foodbank, The Greater Western Sydney Giants, The Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs, made to the many families who were left destitute and in need. These organisation helped to feed and support entire families affected by COVID-19. I had the opportunity to join volunteers from all walks of life in packing and distributing meals. Knowing that people had at least one meal made me realise just how much these organisations are needed. It was an absolute privilege to be a part of this caring and supportive community. They all do an amazing job, volunteering their time and resources to help those in our community who need it the most. On behalf of my community I offer my deep thanks.

LOCAL VACCINATION HUBS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I commend local community centres and places of worship for facilitating the rapid vaccination in western and south-western Sydney. This year has been like no other and I am blessed by ample community courage and resilience that was tested by the COVID Delta variant. My community knew that the safest way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 was and still is through vaccination. We owe a debt of gratitude to community centres and places of worship that facilitated and encouraged mass vaccination. Localised vaccination clinics were and still are the best way to make vaccines accessible to communities. I am extremely proud of the thousands of people who came out to keep our community safe and get us out of lockdown as safe and soon as possible. I want to thank the Lebanese Muslim Association, St Charbel's Monastery in Punchbowl, All Saints Church Belmore, Riverwood Community Centre, Greenacre Community Centre, Morris Iemma Indoor Sports Centre, Acre Club, Bankstown PCYC, Bankstown Sports Club and many other health clinics, pharmacies and hospitals that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

FRONTLINE WORKERS AT BANKSTOWN & CANTERBURY HOSPITALS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I would like to offer my deepest thanks to frontline healthcare workers at Canterbury and Bankstown Hospitals on behalf of my community. In the past eighteen months nurses, doctors, midwives, paramedics, aged care, transportation workers, cleaners, vaccine and testing staff and many more have worked to exhaustion, providing quality professional care and protecting the community from COVID-19. Many frontline workers made personal sacrifices, risking their lives and enduring immense pressure during the most recent lockdown. There were additional pressures associated with supporting less privileged and vulnerable aged groups, many of them from a non-English speaking background. Our frontline healthcare workers faced an added stigma perpetuated by a tale of two cities. The caseload in the proximate community coupled with multiple onsite COVID outbreaks is evidence of the scale of the challenge. This deepens the depth of the thanks owed. No stigma

nor setback deterred frontline healthcare workers from providing assistance. When the community locked down, frontline workers stepped up. Their resilience, their bravery and their generosity cannot and will not be forgotten.

MERCIA BUCK

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Freeman of the City is an honour bestowed by a city upon a valued member of the community, or a visiting celebrity or dignitary. Mercia Buck is that person. Mercia Buck OAM has been recognised as Lake Macquarie Freeman of the City for her lifetime of commitment and service to performing arts. In July, Lake Macquarie Mayor, Cr Kay Fraser nominated Mercia to be recognised as Freeman of the City as a part of a Mayoral Minute, and the nomination was passed unanimously. Mercia has dedicated herself to performance, teaching, lecturing and arts administration. She founded Lake Macquarie Music Society in 1980 and has led it since it was founded, Opera Hunter in 1986, overseeing its growth and success as president, and the Lake Macquarie Eisteddfod. Between 1991 and 2008, Mercia was a Lake Macquarie City Councillor. During her time as a councillor, she was on many Council Committees and lead the development of the City's art industry. Mercia has been praised for her passion and tireless advocate for the Lake Macquarie community, especially in her support for the performing arts. Congratulations, Mercia, on being named Freeman of the City.

CHARLIE MURPHY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Charlie Murphy was in pre-school when his love of dress up, dance, musical instruments and signing was first recognised. For his schools book week parade in 2016, Charlie took on the persona of Mrs Trunchbull from 'Matilda'. Because of his, he was encouraged to enrol in drama lessons. After embracing the character of Mrs Trunchbull, Charlie has been attending drama and musical theatre classes at Hunter Drama and High Street Productions. He has also been attending tap dancing and acrobatics at Renae Perry Dance, and singing lessons with Maddie Watts. High Street Productions works with students primarily who attend St Phillip's Christian College, where Charlie was attending school. Charlie performed in Hunter Drama's 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' in 2018, and 'Peter Pan' in 2019, his first lead role was Jo in High Street Productions 2020 production of Seussical Kids. Charlie is currently enrolled with Manchester Musical Youth, and is currently playing the role of Michael Banks in West End Productions 2021 production of 'Mary Poppins'. Well done Charlie, your love of drama and theatre has taken you far! Best wishes for a fantastic show.

HUNTER VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Volunteering is a selfless act that many individuals undertake across the community, freely giving their time, energy, experience and service without expecting anything in return. The Centre for Volunteering promotes and supports volunteering and community participation through leadership and experience in delivering services such as volunteer referral and management, advice, training, research and policy development. Each year, they hold the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Volunteers are recognised across four different award categories: Senior Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer of the Year, Adult Volunteer of the Year, Volunteer Team of the Year. The winner of the Adult Volunteer of the Year was Wallsend electorate's Leanne Pitt-Barile of Black Hill. Leanne is the volunteer NSW Team Leader with national charity Share the Dignity, which supports people who may be experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, or suffering financial hardship. Leanne co-ordinates three campaign drives and events each year, as well as supporting the Share the Dignity Vending Machines, which allow women and children to receive personal health care products without having to ask. Congratulations Leanne and thank you for all that you do in for vulnerable people in the community.

MARK HUGHES FOUNDATION – BRAIN CANCER RESEARCH DONATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Earlier this year, the University of Newcastle received a philanthropic commitment of \$7.5m over five years from the Mark Hughes Foundation to establish a dedicated brain cancer team in Newcastle. The gift will allow the College of Health Medicine and Wellbeing to take brain cancer research to the next level. The Foundation was established by Mark and his wife Kirralee in 2014 after Mark was diagnosed with high grade brain cancer. In less than 8 years they have raised more than \$20m to support Mark and many others in their fight against brain cancer. Their decision to partner with the University of Newcastle will bring help and hope to people with brain cancer. The University will recruit a Chair in Brain Cancer, who will be both a cutting-edge researcher and committed and active clinician. Research will cover the breadth of prevention, early detection, recovery and rehabilitation, and treatments and models of care for all stages of brain cancer. The research will span all ages, but the team will seek to fill a recognised gap in adult brain cancer. Thank you to Mark and the Foundation for this incredible donation.

WESTERN SYDNEY BUSINESS CENTRE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)—I acknowledge and thank John Todd and his team of advisors at the Western

Sydney Business Centre for their ongoing support to local businesses. Of note is the support they provided to the Glenbrook Rotary Markets which, like many businesses and markets were unfortunately unable to operate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. John and his team stepped up to get the Glenbrook Rotary Markets online so that their stallholders could continue to promote and sell their goods. Fantastic work Western Sydney Business Centre.

LAURA CARTER - EMMAVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Emmaville Central School Year 11 student Laura Carter for her extraordinary contribution to school and community activities. Laura has been a high achiever scholastically and taken on leadership roles as an SRC Representative, Sports Captain and School Captain. She has been active in community fund raising, preparing and applying for the Active Australia Innovation Challenge to provide free access to fitness equipment for local members of the community. Laura has developed and delivered a Girls Empowerment Day and has generally been supportive of students with their social, emotional and physical health, actively promoting different holistic health activities to encourage wellbeing and provide opportunities for physical activity. I congratulate Laura on her many achievements seeking opportunities to contribute to the development, health, and wellbeing of her school community. I commend Laura for using exceptional initiative and commitment in all her undertakings and as such, a natural role model and mentor for other students and her community.

MOREE RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Captain Rhonda Gallagher and the crew of the Moree Rural Fire Service Brigade for extraordinary service over the past few years helping with fire, drought relief and floods. Recent flooding left a massive need for recovery assistance and the Moree RFS was on hand to clean out sheds and collect debris that had shifted with flood waters. Their trucks pumped water from residential blocks, an important job to avoid a mosquito outbreak and water-borne diseases. Crews helped home owners who were unable to do the clean-up themselves and inspected houses for out of town residents. It seemed that no request was denied by these remarkable volunteers. As the rain continues Moree and District residents have the confidence that the Moree Rural Fire Service is on hand. I congratulate Captain Rhonda Gallagher and the Moree Rural Fire Service volunteers for an outstanding service. I commend the Captain and her team for their commitment and service, attending local events in the Moree District and available in crises throughout NSW.

ADELE CHAPMAN-BURGESS – ABORIGINAL ARTIST

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Glen Innes Aboriginal artist and educator Adele Chapman-Burgess as a successful contemporary artist melding traditional culture with new art forms, keeping connection to country as the inherent focus of her work. Adele is well known in the Northern Tablelands for her many contributions in Aboriginal education and artistic expression. She has recently created a significant work for the Glen Innes Fire and Rescue NSW [FRNSW] firefighting pumper, an original artwork on the prestigious new appliance depicting her interpretation of the regions's rich cultural heritage. I congratulate Adele on the many accolades she has received for her Aboriginal Creative Workshops for schools and communities, for her Aboriginal art, photography and authentic weaving and most recently the artwork on the Glen Innes Fire and Rescue firefighting appliance. I commend Adele for sharing her craft and her insights into the authenticity of Aboriginal art.

BEN JACKSON – TRIBUTE TO HIS AUNT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Guyra farmer Ben Jackson for his unique ingenuity in overcoming COVID-19 border restrictions. Too many of us have had to forego important family events, but Ben couldn't let his late aunt's funeral pass without connecting in some way. As a farmer his tribute to his beloved aunt came in the way of sheep and only his sense of love and family could make the connection he created - an aerial video of a herd of sheep across the plains, slowly flocking into a beautiful heart shape made possible by a creative means of feeding. We find the means to overcome our limitations in the Northern Tablelands but only a very special sentiment could produce a tribute so beautiful. I thank Ben for sharing his tribute to his aunt as a symbol of how we all can overcome the necessary restrictions that have kept us from our loved ones. I commend Ben for his creative spirit.

MR GRAHAM SOUTHWELL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I congratulate Mr Graham Southwell who is a constituent of the Goulburn electorate. Mr Graham Southwell, a resident of Rye Park NSW, was recently recognised by the Australian Wool Industry's Honour Roll of 50 years as a Wool Classer. Mr Speaker, a registered 'AW' wool classer is recognised as being competent to class any wool in Australia to the Code of Practice. The national award recognises Mr Baines' career in wool handling and preparation. Wool is a prestigious and esteemed industry across

NSW. The trade of wool is the reason that many of our regional communities were established and continue to be prosperous today. Mr Graham Southwell is a part of the class of 1971 of Wool Classers and I thank him for his continued commitment and valued contribution to the Australian wool industry. Mr Speaker, I want to acknowledge the dedication to the Australian wool industry of Mr Graham Southwell, AW, of Rye Park

YEAR 12 OF TRINITY CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to congratulate Year 12 of Trinity Catholic College. Year 12 of Trinity Catholic College is a wonderful school within the Goulburn electorate. The completion of classes and graduation of the class of 2021 is a proud achievement for the entire community. Mr Speaker, students in the class of 2021 have faced one of the most difficult years in memory. I hope that whatever choice the students make for the next phase of their life - whether it be an apprenticeship, university, TAFE, a gap year or straight into their chosen field of employment – that it is not nearly as challenging as their last year of schooling. To each student part of the class of 2021 at Trinity Catholic College. I thank you for your continued commitment to your education and the valued contribution you have made to your school and the community. Mr Speaker, I congratulate the class of Year 12 of Trinity Catholic College in 2021.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks on behalf of the Fairfield Electorate to all the dedicated frontline health care workers in the Fairfield Electorate and across the Fairfield Local Government area. The June 2021 lockdown was a particularly challenging time for the community with constant high case numbers, making Fairfield a local government area of concern very early on. I wish to thank hospital staff, nurses, doctors, local general practitioners, pharmacists, COVID-testing staff and COVID vaccination clinic staff who dedicated themselves to caring for the community in a bid to stop the spread of the virus. I commend them for their efforts during this challenging time and for their continued efforts to care for the community.

BISHOP MAR AWA ROYEL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On 13th September 2021, the Assyrian Church of the East Metropolitan See of Sydney celebrated the Patriarchal Consecration of His Grace Bishop Mar Awa Royel. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this event was livestreamed and parishioners here in Sydney were thus able to take part virtually in this momentous event. I extend my congratulations to His Grace Bishop Mar Awa Royel on his appointment as Patriarch of the East and I look forward to joining the congregation at a time in the near future to celebrate this important event.

CANLEY HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I commend the efforts of Mr Neil Bourke, Relieving Principal and the staff of Canley Heights Public School for their efforts in maintaining a productive learning environment for their students throughout the June 2021 lockdown period. During this time when most students were participating in the online learning program, the teachers and staff worked hard to ensure students, parents and the school community stayed connected and supported. Teachers and staff made sure each and every student was supported with learning from home packs sent to students on a weekly basis. The school staff also made themselves available to parents to offer them the support they needed to assist their children with learning from home. Teachers and staff also focused on the maintaining the mental health of the school community throughout the lockdown period, with fun activities such as the Family Friday Olympics.

CNA –MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I commend the efforts of CNA–Multicultural Services in keeping the Italian community connected throughout the June 2021 lockdown period, in particular through the print newspaper Allora! CNA–Multicultural Services offers services targeted to the needs of the Italian community in the Liverpool-Fairfield area and in the wider Italian community in NSW, in order that they may be able to participate fully in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse society in Australia. President Mr Giovanni Testa and his team and Editor of Allora! Newspaper Mr Franco Baldi worked particularly hard during the June 2021 lockdown to bring the community updates about the evolving COVID-19 situation. Readers of Allora! were kept well-informed with comprehensive information about the Public Health Orders; as well as information about the vaccination program, and tips for maintaining mental health throughout the lockdown. I thank Mr Giovanni Testa and the team at CNA – Multicultural Services; and Mr Franco Baldi and his team at Allora! Newspaper for supporting the Italian community throughout this challenging time and for their continued efforts to provide much needed services for the community.

DAMIAN DACZKO

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Damian Daczko. Damian became President of the Forster Tuncurry Dolphins Rugby Club and was at the helm for a decade. Damian is now standing down from the position, so I would like to congratulate him for his success at the club. Damian is a former first grade second rower for Hawkesbury Valley Rugby Club and helped with the construction of the clubhouse and its financing. During his term, the club won a quartet of premierships between 2013-14, 15-16 with an unbeaten winter capping off his presidency in 2019. The club made the Grand Final again this year only for the game to be abandoned due to the pandemic. Once again, thank you Damian for your commitment to the Forster Tuncurry Dolphins which is undoubtedly in a better place thanks to your leadership.

LUCY GREEN MANNING RIVER RATZ

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Lucy Green. Lucy plays for the Manning River Ratz Rugby Club and has competed at three 7s State Championships for the Mid-Coast, being named captain for three years running. In 2021 Lucy joined the Hunter Junior Rugby Union team who went on to win the 2021 Country Championships. Lucy also attended the State Championships with Hunter Junior Rugby Union and was selected in the NSW Country U18 Girls team. Lucy started playing rugby at 11 years-old and was selected into her first XV's team in 2019, playing for the Mid North Coast at the Country Championships in Crescent Head. From there she gained selection into the U15 NSW County team and played in the City vs County as the scrum half for the Mahalia Murphy Shield. I congratulate Lucy for her success with the sport and for representing the Manning River Ratz so proudly and I wish her all the best with her future sporting endeavours.

FORSTER TUNCURRY LIONS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise volunteers at the Forster Tuncurry Lions Club. The Lions Club volunteers play a huge role in the Myall Lakes community, maintaining assets they built, including viewing platforms, picnic tables, and Rotundas. The Lions Club mow, weed, varnish and paint structures, keeping our region looking beautiful. I congratulate Vice-President Bernard Pearson for looking after maintenance, grants, and organising Christmas cakes. I also thank all the other dedicated volunteers who make our community a brilliant, and beautiful place to be.

SUE AND GERRY HOBBS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I recognise Sue and Gerry Hobbs of the Forster Tuncurry Dolphins. Gerry and Sue Hobbs joined the Dolphins in 2004 with Gerry taking on the role of Secretary in 2004 and 2005. From 2013 till 2019 Gerry and Sue took on the Secretary role. Sue has been the Secretary from 2019 until now. Sue is now standing down from her position, having been an outstanding secretary from the Dolphins first days to its most recent winter. I pass on my thanks to the Hobbs family for their contribution to the club over the years. They have been a true driving force for the Dolphins and a big part of the Dolphins success for nearly two decades.

HUNDRED'S UP AT HENTY - HENTY BOWLING CLUB CELEBRATES ITS CENTENARY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Congratulations are in order for the Henty Bowling Club which is celebrating its 100 year anniversary. I would like to acknowledge the work of the club's volunteers such as Peter & Lynne Forck, Bruce Diffey, Kim Maher and many others, whose efforts support the club and the sport they love. As Bruce is quoted as saying "We're very proud of our town and we're very proud of our greens". Like many regional communities, looking after local institutions like the Bowls Club is not without its challenges – such as management and the costly task of upkeep of the greens. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Henty Bowling Club continues to be a vibrant focus and source of pride for the community. As the President of the men's section, Gary Kern, and President Allison Scott of the ladies section say: Clubs like Henty Bowling Club are so important to locals in regional areas as they play a role in keeping the community together and healthy. Well done on reaching your centenary.

KEEPING FARMING COMMUNITIES FIT

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—The importance of bringing together the members of our community and focusing on our farmers was the message from Jindera –based personal trainer Alanna Hayes. For the last four years Alana has been running weekly fitness classes – called Active Farmers - at Burrumbuttock and has recently commenced classes at Table Top. These classes provide an opportunity to get out of the house or off the farm and to spend time that is both active and reflective. They also provide an invaluable opportunity to talk and to share on matters that are worrying them. Alanna has rightly emphasised how physical activity is so important for our mental health - especially in rural and remote areas where isolation and stress can impact so much.

Thankyou Alana for taking such a proactive path in your life and providing health and wellbeing opportunities for our local communities.

HYLETTE EVANS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter Hylette Evans who has been name Hornsby Westfield's Local Hero for 2021. Hylette, who is a qualified nurse and counsellor, has spent her career saving women in crisis. Not just ensuring they have the necessities like accommodation and food but she goes that extra mile to provide emotional assistance and ensure their confidence is restored. She has helped hundreds of women fleeing domestic violence situations who have sought assistance from the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. As we faced the COVID-19 pandemic Hylette was able to keep the shelter open to ensure women continued to have somewhere to go when they were in need. For many women, by the time they get to the shelter they have no confidence in themselves and it is Hylette who works to restore their faith in themselves and trust in other people. I would like to congratulate Hylette for this well-deserved award and I know she will be able to put the \$10,000 prize money towards helping more women in need.

STEVE RALPH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to congratulate my friend Steve Ralph who has received the Hornsby Westfield Local Hero Award for 2021. Following a spinal cord injury in an accident in 2017 he has been focused on helping people living with a disability. He has founded the Maslow app which allows someone to coordinate their therapy regimes to ensure they stay on top of everything. Giving them back time they can spend on living. The app can also be shared with support workers or family along with being voice-enabled. Steve was active and adventurous prior to his accident which has motivated his desire to help people and break down barriers. As part of the award Maslow will receive \$10,000 which they will use to support professional development and commission customer stories to share across the platform. I want to congratulate Steve on this award and for everything he has done for people living with a disability. He truly is an inspiration.

BELMONT MASS VACCINATION HUB NURSES AND STAFF

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge the efforts of the hard working nurses and staff at the Belmont Mass Vaccination Hub. These nurses and staff have played an integral part in the region's vaccine roll out, with a number of residents from both the Hunter and Central Coast visiting the Hub for their vaccination appointments. The Hub's nurses and staff work hard to make sure that patients are inoculated in a timely manner and are treated with a great level of customer service and care whilst attending their appointments. On a number of occasions the people of Swansea have informed me of the exceptional job the nurses and staff are doing at the Belmont Mass Vaccination Hub. I thank the Belmont Hub nurses and staff for all the effort they have put into looking after the people of Swansea and protecting them against the COVID-19 virus.

BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Riley Stobbs, Zara Eeles, Joshua Taylor and Ava Thomson, who have been elected as the school captains and vice captains of Belmont High School for 2022. Riley, Zara, Joshua and Ava are all hard working students that that have been heavily involved in the Belmont High School community throughout their time at the school. Each of these students continuously strive to do their best in their studies and in acting as role models for their peers. Being elected as the leaders of Belmont High School for 2022 is a testament to each of these students, considering the challenges they have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sure these students will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I congratulate Riley, Zara, Joshua and Ava on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year ahead.

MARK HUGHES FOUNDATION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge the Mark Hughes Foundation, which recently committed \$7.5 million over five years to the University of Newcastle, to help them establish a dedicated brain cancer team in the city. The Foundation was established in 2014 by Mark and his wife Kirralee when Mark was diagnosed with high grade brain cancer. Since then the Foundation has raised over \$20 million to support those fighting brain cancer. By partnering with the University of Newcastle, they are enabling them to conduct work that will improve the lives of people living with brain cancer and their families. The University of Newcastle have demonstrated a commitment to changing the outcomes for brain cancer patients. The \$7.5 million donation by the Mark Hughes Foundation will help them to achieve this. I thank the Mark Hughes Foundation for their generous donation and commend them for the great work they do in raising awareness on brain cancer.

SAN REMO EPICENTRE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge the San Remo Epicentre for all the work they have been doing to ensure the health and welfare of the people of Swansea during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Epicentre is a not-for-profit organisation that prides itself in supporting the local community and addressing social issues. They achieve this through providing a number of services and educational programs. Throughout the lockdown period The Epicentre continued to conduct several of these services and programs in a COVID safe format. In addition, they have also been facilitating COVID-19 vaccination appointments in an effort to protect the local community against coronavirus. These efforts to continue to support the people of Swansea throughout such a difficult period demonstrates The Epicentre's commitment and dedication to ensuring the welfare of the local community. I thank the San Remo Epicentre for continuously working to support Swansea residents with their health and wellbeing needs throughout the pandemic.

RETURN TO FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I was heartened to see the enthusiasm and excitement with which schools and teachers welcomed students back to the classroom this week. I saw that some schools even displayed colourful "welcome back" banners and balloons to greet returning students. The return to face-to-face learning for Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 12 students commenced yesterday. As a parent myself, I know that for many of us it signals a return to 'normal life' more than any other easing of restrictions. Being a parliamentarian, it is a little easier to plan my day so I can support my children's learning. That is not the case for most parents who have had to juggle the competing demands of their employer, technology and their children's home learning needs. Some have managed it better than others, but everyone has been challenged to some degree in the last few months. And I am sure that many parents, like me, will now appreciate their teacher's efforts even more. I do wish the returning students and their teachers a great week back. Moreover, I thank the parents for their patience, hard work and perseverance during the lockdown in supporting the learning of their children under difficult circumstances.

The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 20:45 until Wednesday 20 October 2021 at 09:30.