

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 21 October 2021**

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

**The Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## *Announcements*

### **LOUD SHIRT DAY**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that tomorrow is Loud Shirt Day. I was asked to wear a loudish shirt today, and I have probably associated my tie with my shirt.

## *Bills*

### **CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Melanie Gibbons, on behalf of Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (09:32):** Via video link: On behalf of Mr Mark Speakman: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill introduces seven largely procedural proposals to amend six criminal laws to strengthen our community by improving criminal investigation, enforcement and penalties, and police response. These amendments were developed through consultation with agencies and stakeholders as part of the Government's regular program of legislative reviews and improvements.

The first proposal would make amendments to improve the investigation of computer offences. The proposed amendment to the Crimes Act 1900 under schedule 1.1 to the bill would extend the time limit for commencing proceedings for the offence of unauthorised access to or modification of restricted data held in a computer in section 308H. The limit would be increased from 12 months to three years from the date on which the offence was alleged to have been committed. The current time limit to commence prosecutions for this offence does not account for the fact that cybercrime investigations can be protracted, including because of technical requirements and the geographic location of offenders. These investigations often involve requests for information from foreign jurisdictions, which is a time intensive process.

The nature of such cybercrime offences can mean that it may be some time before an offence is detected. For example, a hacking event resulting in the theft of personal information may not leave any record to the end user that the information has been stolen. The hack may only be detected when that information is discovered in an unauthorised environment or when a more detailed audit or review is later undertaken. That means a significant part of the current 12-month window for commencing a prosecution may lapse before a victim becomes aware that unauthorised access or modification of restricted data has occurred. This amendment to extend the window to three years will ensure this delay does not act as a barrier to investigation and prosecution.

A further proposed amendment under schedule 1.3 [1] to [3] to the bill amends the definition of "searchable offence" under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to include computer offences contained in part 6 of the Crimes Act 1900. A searchable offence is an offence for which a search warrant can be obtained under part 5 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, and the term is defined by section 46A. Section 46A currently prescribes offence categories including firearms offences and drug offences, as well as indictable offences generally, as searchable offences for which a warrant can be obtained. As most computer offences contained in part 6 of the Crimes Act 1900 are indictable offences, search warrants can already be obtained for their investigation. However, the offences under section 308H of unauthorised access to or modification of restricted data held in a computer and section 308I of unauthorised impairment of data held in

a computer disk, credit card or other device, are summary offences, for which search warrants cannot currently be obtained.

Amending section 46A to include all computer offences under part 6 of the Crimes Act 1900 as searchable offences will ensure that search warrants may be sought for offences under sections 308H and 308I. Offences under sections 308H and 308I are already included in the definition of "serious offence" in the Commonwealth Telecommunication (Interception and Access) Act 1979, which makes telecommunication interception warrants available for their investigation. Telecommunication interception warrants allow private telecommunications to be intercepted or accessed by law enforcement agencies without the target's knowledge, and potentially for a protracted period. These may be regarded as greater intrusions on a person's privacy than conventional search warrants. As a result, their availability under Commonwealth legislation is generally limited to more serious offences than the offences for which search warrants may be obtained under New South Wales legislation. It may therefore be considered incongruous that telecommunications interception warrants are available for the investigation of offences under sections 308H and 308I but not traditional search warrants.

It is appropriate for police to be able to apply for a warrant in relation to an offence against sections 308H or 308I of the Crimes Act 1900 given the nature of the offences. These offences can have serious consequences for victims and may be the only option available to prosecutors depending on the circumstances of the offence. This might be because, as an example, the mental elements of the more serious computer offences under the Crimes Act 1900 cannot be met. The offence under section 308H of the Crimes Act 1900 is not limited to hackers. It can also extend to employees who have been granted access to their employer's databases and have accessed information for an unauthorised purpose. It is therefore important that police can obtain a warrant in connection with the investigation of these offences. These amendments will support a more effective law enforcement response to victim reports of cybercrime and ensure legal action can be taken in appropriate circumstances.

The second proposal, under schedule 1.3 [4] to the bill, would insert a new section 60A into the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to allow non-urgent warrant applications to be made by email or in any other way prescribed by the regulations for a two-year period. Section 60 of that Act currently requires that applications for warrants must be made in person, with an exception under section 61 to allow applications to be made by telephone when a warrant is required urgently and it is not practical for the application to be made in person.

A difficulty has arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic with warrants which are not required urgently, as these warrants can only be issued in person. This may not be desirable or practical, depending on the COVID-19 restrictions in place at that time. To provide courts and law enforcement agencies flexibility to navigate warrant applications in an appropriate manner during the pandemic, proposed section 60A will allow an application for a warrant to also be made by email or any other way prescribed by the regulations. Existing requirements for the information to be included in an application, and for such information to be verified by affidavit or on oath or affirmation, will remain.

Where information is to be verified on oath or affirmation, new section 60A (3) provides that this may be done via telephone or audiovisual link. New section 60A (4) provides that a signed warrant and occupier's notice, which informs the occupier of the premises that are the subject of the warrant of the nature of the warrant and the powers it confers, may be emailed by the issuing officer to the applicant. New section 60A (5) provides that requirements under the Act for the occupier's notice to be served on the occupier and for the warrant to be produced at the request of the occupier may be fulfilled by serving or producing a copy of the document as emailed to the applicant under subsection 60A (4).

It is not a requirement that a warrant and occupier's notice issued in response to an email application must be emailed to the applicant. There may be circumstances where it is preferable for these documents to be provided in person despite the application having been made by email, and this option will remain open. New section 60A (9) provides that the section will sunset two years after the commencement of the section. It is intended that the use of email warrant applications will operate as a 12-month pilot and will be subsequently evaluated. The two-year sunset period will allow email warrant applications to continue while their use is evaluated. Given the uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that warrant applications can continue to be made flexibly while COVID-19 restrictions apply. This amendment will ensure that this essential justice-related service can be safely provided, regardless of the nature of the warrant application. The third proposal under schedule 1.4 to the bill would amend the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 to streamline the application process for a surveillance device warrant by allowing an application to be made with a single document that includes all the required information.

Section 17 (3) of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 currently requires an application for a surveillance device warrant to include four pieces of information: first, information required to complete the prescribed contents of a warrant such as the name of the applicant and the alleged offence for which the warrant is being

issued; second, details of any other alternative means of obtaining the evidence or information sought under the warrant, and the extent to which those means may assist or prejudice the investigation; third, whether an attempt has been made to use an alternative means and, if so, the result of the attempts; and fourth, details of any previous warrant or emergency authorisation sought or issued in connection with the same relevant offence. New section 17 (3A) requires the application to be accompanied by an affidavit that does three things: first, supports the application and sets out the grounds on which the warrant is sought; second, as far as reasonably practicable identifies persons who may be incidentally recorded by the surveillance device; and third, includes any information known to the applicant that may be adverse to the warrant application or, if no adverse information is known, a statement to that effect.

Stakeholders have advised that the need for an application to be supported by an affidavit, with potential overlap between the information required in each document, has led to inconsistent warrant applications being submitted by law enforcement agencies. To address this, the bill will combine the requirements of new sections 17 (3) and (3A) so that an application for a surveillance device warrant is to be made in a single document, in the form of an affidavit, which includes all the information currently required by the Act. The bill also includes consequential amendments to the way urgent surveillance device applications are made. Section 17 (4) of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 currently provides that where the immediate use of a surveillance device is necessary and it is impracticable for an affidavit to be sworn before an application is made, an application may be made before the supporting affidavit is sworn. As the amendments in this bill mean that the application itself will now be in the form of an affidavit, the bill includes changes to the language of section 17 (4) in order to allow urgent warrant applications to be made in a form other than an affidavit.

The fourth and fifth proposals would make amendments relating to high-risk offenders. The changes proposed under schedule 1.2 to the bill would amend the definitions of "serious sex offence" and "offence of a sexual nature" in the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to include new Commonwealth offences. The Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 provides important mechanisms to protect the community by providing for the extended supervision or continuing detention of certain high-risk offenders with a history of imprisonment for serious violence offences and serious sex offences. The Act specifically targets serious sex offenders serving New South Wales and Commonwealth prison sentences for serious sex offences or offences of a sexual nature in custody or on parole in New South Wales. Offenders serving prison sentences for offences of a sexual nature are eligible for orders under the Act if they have previously served a prison sentence for a serious sex offence or a serious violence offence. Offenders serving prison sentences for serious sex offences are automatically eligible for orders under the Act.

Section 5 of that Act defines "serious sex offence" and "offence of a sexual nature" by reference to offences in New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation. The current definitions of "serious sex offence" and "offence of a sexual nature" do not include the new Commonwealth sex offences that have recently been enacted. The bill will update the Act to enable orders to be made against offenders who receive custodial sentences for those new Commonwealth offences and pose an unacceptable risk of further serious offending. The bill will add two new Commonwealth offences to the definition of "offence of a sexual nature": first, possession of childlike sex dolls and making such dolls under section 273A.1 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code; second, possessing or controlling child sexual abuse material obtained or accessed using a carriage service under section 474.22A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code.

The bill will also add four new Commonwealth offences to the definition of "serious sex offence": first, grooming a person to make it easier to engage in sexual activity with a child outside Australia under section 272.15A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code; second, using a postal service to groom another person to make it easier to procure persons under 16 years of age under section 471.25A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code; third, using a carriage service to groom another person to make it easier to procure persons under 16 years of age under section 474.27AA of the Commonwealth Criminal Code; and fourth, provision of electronic service for the purposes of child abuse material under section 474.23A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code. These high-risk additions will ensure appropriate orders under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 can be sought against people who have committed sexual offences that are no less serious than offences for which these orders are already available.

The fifth proposal under schedule 1.2 [3] and schedule 1.5 to the bill would amend the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 and the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 to provide that the minutes and deliberations of the High Risk Offender Assessment Committee and its subcommittees cannot be compelled or admitted as evidence in any proceedings. The primary function of the High Risk Offender Assessment Committee is to review the risk assessments of offenders and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW as to whether a continuing detention order or extended supervision order should be sought in respect of the offender under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 or the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders)

Act 2017. Applications for such orders are made by the Attorney General, informed by reports from the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW.

The minutes of the committee record the ultimate decisions and recommendations made and the points of view of committee members. Recommendations of the committee are provided to the court and the offender's legal representative in applications for continuing detention or extended supervision orders, but the minutes or deliberations of the committee are not currently provided. The amendment will expressly protect such documents from disclosure in any proceedings. Disclosure of the committee's minutes and deliberations in legal proceedings and other forums could impact on the candour and frankness of members of the committee, and potentially impact on the quality of advice they can provide. Disclosure of the minutes could also compromise the personal safety of members and persons attending in an advisory capacity, as all attendees are identified in the minutes. The amendment ensures the committee can fulfil its duties without fear of adverse consequences from the disclosure of its deliberations. The amendment is consistent with schedule 1 to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, which provides there is a conclusive presumption that there is an overriding public interest against the disclosure of information contained in any document prepared for the purposes of the committee.

The sixth proposal under schedule 1.3 [5] to the bill would amend section 99 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to allow a police officer other than the arresting officer to take a person arrested under the section before an authorised officer to be dealt with according to law. New section 99 permits a police officer to arrest a person without a warrant where they suspect on reasonable grounds that the person is committing or has committed an offence, and the police officer is satisfied that the arrest is reasonably necessary for one or more prescribed reasons, including to stop the person committing or repeating the offence or to stop the person fleeing from a police officer. New section 99 (3) states that a police officer who arrests a person under the section must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, take the person before an authorised officer to be dealt with according to law.

The amendment has been proposed because it is not always possible or appropriate for the arresting officer to take the person before an authorised officer. For example, if an officer is assaulted during an arrest and becomes an alleged victim of the person who has been arrested, it may not be appropriate for that officer to be involved in charging the person. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for specialist officers with expertise in specific matters to take over an investigation once a person has been arrested. In other cases, an arresting officer may be injured and require medical treatment, resulting in a delay in taking the person who has been arrested before an authorised officer. That could result in the person spending more time in custody than would otherwise be required. The amendment to section 99 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 will make it clear that a police officer other than the arresting officer may discharge the requirement for the arrested person to be taken before an authorised officer. No other changes to the requirements around the arrest of a person without a warrant are proposed.

The final proposal, under schedule 1.6 to the bill, would amend the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 to extend the operation of preventative detention orders and prohibited contact orders until 16 December 2023. Under part 2A of that Act, upon application by the police, the Supreme Court has the power to make preventative detention orders to prevent terrorist acts occurring and preserve evidence of terrorist acts that have occurred. Part 2A also provides the Supreme Court with discretion to make prohibited contact orders where such an order is sought by police either during an application for a preventative detention order, or when a preventative detention order is already in force.

Section 26ZS of that Act provides that any preventative detention order and prohibited contact order in force at the end of 16 December 2021 ceases to be in force at that time. Preventative detention orders and prohibited contact orders cannot be applied for or made after 16 December 2021. Section 26ZO of that Act requires the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission to keep under scrutiny the exercise of powers conferred on police officers or correctional officers under part 2A, and prepare reports for the Attorney General and police Minister every three years. Section 36 of the Act requires a statutory review to be completed every three years, as soon as possible after the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission under section 26ZO has been completed.

A review by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission under section 26ZO is currently underway. If the provisions relating to preventative detention orders and prohibited contact orders are allowed to sunset before the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission can complete its report, and before the subsequent statutory review can consider that report, it may pre-empt findings or recommendations about the preventative detention order regime. The amendment will uphold community safety and protection while the reviews are completed by ensuring that the preventative detention order scheme under the Act continues to be an available tool to prevent the commission of terrorist acts. It will also allow any decision about the future of the preventative detention order regime to be informed by the findings of the pending reviews. In conclusion, the amendments in the bill remove unnecessary obstacles to the investigation of computer offences, provide greater clarity in surveillance device warrant

applications and flexibility in other warrant applications during the pandemic, and ensure criminal justice legislation remains responsive to the needs of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Budget*

**BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022**

**Debate resumed from 20 October 2021.**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (09:57):** When I last contributed to debate on the budget I made reference to Tuggerah railway station. I refer now to Josephine Johnston, who epitomises community outrage about the lack of lifts at Tuggerah station and support for the railway station accessibility campaign. When I was elected in 2015 she was one of the community members who came to me and said, "We need lifts at Tuggerah station. I cannot use that station, even though it has ramps. I cannot navigate those ramps and lots of people in the community cannot navigate those ramps. I have to get a taxi to a more distant railway station to access public transport."

Josephine helped me with a petition that was circulated in the community that was hugely supported. Josephine and her friends turned up to every rally at Tuggerah railway station and she and the community in my electorate were outraged by the response from Andrew Constance, the transport Minister at the time. The Minister gave us a black-and-white response: "Tuggerah station is accessible." According to the Government, no lifts were to be built at Tuggerah station as it had accessibility ramps. That was not good enough for my community, the campaign continued and it was pleasing to see the Government match Labor's promise to build lifts at the station at the 2019 election. I welcome the money allocated in this year's budget to commence those works. But they have not proceeded with a huge amount of urgency, and that is disappointing. The Government's planning has gone down a number of rabbit holes about what the project will look like at the end of the day. The community simply wants lifts.

I know the Government has all sorts of developers banging on its door, talking about other development they want in the area and how that is to be integrated with the railway station. That is all well and good, but the community expects the installation of those lifts to be started sooner rather than later. It was an election promise in 2019, and we are now more than halfway through the parliamentary term. The money is there to do the planning, but the community has not seen any design for public comment. I call on the Government to get that design out to my community sooner rather than later so they can start saying what they think about the Government's design rather than the developers' design, which are the preferred clients of the Government in my electorate.

Overall, progress on railway station accessibility has been fantastic in The Entrance electorate. I conclude this part of my contribution to the take-note debate by once again thanking my community for supporting me every step of the way when I have raised those issues. They backed me to get those transport access projects delivered in the priority order that the community deserved. In the early years of the program, Government electorates were favoured and railway stations like Hawkesbury station were delivered lifts even though they had a fraction of the station patronage of stations on the wider Central Coast. I thank my community for that support.

I welcome the money allocated to continue planning for stage four of the Pacific Highway upgrade project. However, I sound a note of warning from my community to the Government that we will not settle for endless planning of stage four of the project from Lisarow to Gosford in the same way this Government has planned and planned the Pacific Highway through Wyong more than it needed to. It is a simple road-widening project. It should be well within the ability of Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services—the old Department of Main Roads—to do that job.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Bills*

**ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION OF U-TURNS AND 3-POINT TURNS IN SCHOOL ZONES) BILL 2021**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Dr Hugh McDermott, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:03):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Accidents involving motor vehicles are the leading cause of death and injury in New South Wales, with over 18,000 deaths or serious injuries costing the community over \$7 billion, of which \$3.5 billion involves the hospitalisation of almost 12,000 people. This does not begin to count the emotional and mental trauma of the loved ones or those undergoing rehabilitation due to serious injury. These deaths and injuries are unacceptable and preventable.

Children are the most particularly vulnerable pedestrians. Children are smaller, difficult to see and, at times, can act unpredictably. Every year children are killed or seriously injured by being struck by a moving vehicle. While the majority of these accidents occur on major roads, a significant number occur at low speed at suburban homes or in non-traffic locations, like a shopping centre car park, and slow roads, such as schools zones or in near proximity to schools. According to data from Transport for NSW, from 2016 to 2020 two children were killed and 112 injured, with 36 serious injuries, while walking in active school zones. That is two deaths, 36 serious injuries and 76 additional injuries too many. The safety of our children must remain a top priority, and more needs to be done to improve the safety of our children.

On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I am pleased to introduce the Road Transport Amendment (Prohibition of U-turns and 3-point Turns in School Zones) Bill 2021. The bill makes an amendment to the Road Rules 2014 by inserting rule 42-1. The object of the bill is to prohibit a driver from performing a U-turn or a three-point turn on a road in a school zone during school times of 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. For the purpose of the bill, a three-point turn is defined as a driving manoeuvre performed to turn a vehicle around within the boundaries of a road if the road is not wide enough to make a U-turn. A U-turn is defined as the turning of a vehicle in a U-shaped course so as to face the opposite direction. A school zone has the same meaning given by rule 23 (2) of the Road Rules 2014, which is the section of road between a school zone sign and an end school zone sign. As the road rules currently stand, there is no offence specially relating to three-point turns, nor do any of the U-turn offences in part 4, division 4 of the Road Rules 2014 refer to school zones. This is a significant safety oversight in the Road Rules 2014, which must be amended.

As the Road Rules 2014 currently stand, there are rules as to the circumstances in which a driver may or may not perform a U-turn. However, these circumstances do not cover all situations involving a school zone. In the Road Rules 2014, there is also ambiguity as to whether a three-point turn could be covered in the definition of a U-turn. For example, U-turns are prohibited when a driver crosses two parallel continuous lines. This is outlined in rule 132 (2A) of the Road Rules 2014, which states:

A driver on a road ... with a single continuous dividing line to the left of a broken dividing line, or 2 parallel continuous dividing lines must not drive across the dividing lines to perform a U-turn.

This means that if a motor vehicle crosses two continuous parallel lines to perform a U-turn in a school zone, then that driver would commit an offence under rule 132 (2A). This would most likely cover the situation where a motor vehicle driver does a three-point turn in front of a school. It is reasonable to view a three-point turn as falling within the definition of a U-turn. This is suggested by there being no separate definition or reference to a three-point turn in the Road Rules 2014. However, it is possible to argue that a three-point turn is not a U-turn because it takes two turns rather than "a turn" or "the turn" for a driver's vehicle to face "in approximately the opposite direction from which it was facing, immediately before the turn was made".

Alternatively, a person crossing two continuous parallel lines and using a driveway to perform a three-point turn in front of a school commits an offence under rule 132 (2). It requires a driver on a road with a dividing line to drive to the left of the dividing line except as permitted under rule 132 (2), which enables a driver to cross two continuous parallel lines to leave a road by driving on to or entering it in any way. The circumstances in which a driver can perform a U-turn are covered in rule 134. A driver may drive to the right of the dividing line to overtake another vehicle to enter or leave a road or to move from one part of the road to another. Rule 139 (2) deals with driving to the right of the dividing line to avoid an obstruction. Drivers are also permitted to cross a single dividing line to enter or leave a road.

The situations I have just mentioned where a driver is permitted to make a U-turn could apply in school zones and, therefore, make it currently legal to perform dangerous manoeuvres during school times in some circumstances. It is very confusing to drivers, police officers and local council traffic enforcement officers when the rules relating to three-point turns are ambiguous. To understand whether a particular manoeuvre is legal, a driver, a police officer, or a local council traffic enforcement officer should not have to analyse and interpret the road rules to understand if a three-point turn is covered under the definition of a U-turn. Therefore, it is necessary to insert a new road rule which provides clarity on all of the comments I have just discussed.

Conducting U-turns and three-point turns should not be permitted during school times in school zones. The Road Transport Amendment (Prohibition of U-Turns and 3-Point Turns in School Zones) Bill 2021 creates a clear set of rules that make sense to drivers and law enforcement officers and is the safest option for schoolchildren,

parents, drivers and our community. To provide a fair leniency towards drivers, the bill provides several exemptions. Subrule (1) states that the requirement that a driver must not make a U-turn or perform a three-point turn on a road in a school zone during the times indicated on the school zone sign does not apply:

- (a) if complying with the rule is unsafe or impractical, or
- (b) if there is a school traffic management plan for the school zone—in the circumstances under which making U-turns and performing 3-point turns are permitted in the school traffic management plan ...

For the purposes of the bill, a school traffic management plan for a school zone is defined as a document describing how traffic is to be controlled on public roads in the school zone to provide for the safe flow of traffic approved by the school administration authority for the school. The maximum penalty outlined in the bill is 20 penalty units, which is in line with similar traffic offences. The introduction of the bill is a commonsense safeguard which protects schoolchildren during peak pedestrian traffic hours of the day. Although the bill will be at no cost to the taxpayer to implement, it removes several highly dangerous situations that can occur in school zones during school times. There is a significant amount of evidence and statistical data which suggests that those safeguards must be implemented. I will use the majority of my time available today to explain those factors thoroughly. Vital details cannot be missed when dealing with the safety of our children, and all pedestrians for that matter.

I will now discuss the origins of the bill. I thank shadow Minister for Roads, the Hon. John Graham, MLC, for his consultation, advice and support in the drafting of the bill. I also thank other shadow Ministers for their input and support for the bill. I was originally approached by New South Wales police local area commands, public and independent school staff and parents, who raised concerns regarding drivers performing dangerous three-point turns and U-turns in school zones during school pick-up and drop-off times. In particular, I mention Senior Constable Matthew Green from the Fairfield Local Area Command who first brought those concerns to my attention in a very detailed manner. Senior Constable Green has been integral to the drafting of the bill.

New South Wales police have found a number of motorists conducting three-point turns and U-turns in school zones. Police officers are concerned that in many school zones roads are relatively narrow and usually heavily trafficked. When a driver conducts a three-point turn or U-turn they often reverse back into heavy traffic, or they are waiting to reverse and cannot see behind them. Other vehicles pass around and often need to cross over unbroken or broken lines. The combination of limited visibility and partially crossing to the other side of the road increases the chances of collision. All this causes traffic issues and is highly dangerous for pedestrians and other motor vehicle drivers and passengers. Additionally, there is concern regarding three-point turns where the manoeuvre of pulling into a driveway is used.

Police officers are concerned because while entering a driveway, or waiting to reverse, drivers often cross onto footpaths, and there have been numerous near misses and pedestrians have been injured. Alternatively, while drivers are waiting to reverse their vehicles, pedestrians are unable to pass by, causing pedestrians to walk onto the road to avoid the vehicle. The main concern and the most urgent reason for introducing the bill is because some drivers turn into driveways directly next to a children's school crossing. Often the driver will then reverse directly onto the crossing while children are crossing with the guard. Police have seen this occur on several occasions and it is extremely dangerous.

I have held discussions with a number of stakeholders who were integral in the drafting of the bill and will be important when implementing and enforcing the bill. The Police Association of New South Wales believes that the reforms introduced by the bill will enable their members to better perform their work and help to ensure safety. There is no reference to school zones in any of the rules pertaining to U-turns and three-point turns in the Road Rules 2014. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for the NSW Police Force to enforce compliance to stop drivers making questionable manoeuvres and dangerous U-turns and three-point turns in school zones. I have consulted with police officers from the Blacktown, Cumberland, Fairfield and Parramatta police area commands, who have raised this serious concern.

Further to my discussion with the NSW Police Force I have consulted with the education sector. Members of the NSW Teachers Federation are supportive of the bill, particularly since teachers supervise children as they leave school and the bill will ensure that they can keep the children safe. Members of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales believe that measures proposed in the bill will improve safety around school zones, especially along narrow secondary roads. Many of the roads in question are local government roads and not under the jurisdiction of the State Government. I have held discussions with the Local Government Association, which has offered its support for the bill. Finally, I have consulted with the key non-government stakeholder, the NRMA, which is supportive of the proposal and would like to be involved in an education campaign once the legislation has passed.

On a more personal note, and to further reiterate the dangers that exist in school zones, I tell the heartbreaking story of a child who lost his life due to a circumstance that the bill could have helped to avoid.

Although this story may be confronting, I believe it is important to explain the real tangible value behind amending the Road Rules 2014. In December 2013 a driver fatally struck several pedestrians outside a local primary school while performing a three-point turn. The driver, a mother, had her two daughters in the car when she pulled into the school's driveway and hit a woman and three children. A six-year-old boy was pinned between the car and a fence and, tragically, he died. His mother, who was walking with him, sustained leg injuries. A four-year-old cousin had her pelvis fractured in two places. This story is traumatic for all involved and it is especially tragic to have occurred outside a primary school. A young life was lost and several people experienced severe injuries.

However, conducting a three-point turn that day was not illegal. Until the time of collision no-one had broken any law. I cannot imagine the shock or trauma experienced by the driver, a young mother, who would never have intended to harm anyone. If the New South Wales road rules had prohibited U-turns and three-point turns at that time, there would have been no ambiguity in the road rules and this tragic accident may not have occurred. Therefore, making a three-point turn or a U-turn within a school zone should be prohibited. It is a simple safeguard that is not controversial and it makes sense. It could make the difference in preventing an awful incident like that one from occurring. Although it may seem safe at times to make a three-point turn or a U-turn, we all need to take extra care looking out for children when driving and parking around schools.

The Road Transport Amendment (Prohibition of U-Turns and 3-Point Turns in School Zones) Bill 2021 creates a simple addition to the Road Rules 2014. The amendment is succinct, easy to understand and does not contradict any rules that already exist. It creates clarity about what is allowed and not allowed in school zones during school times, making one clear rule for all school zones in New South Wales. By prohibiting U-turns and three-point turns in school zones at school times, drivers can easily understand the road rules and law enforcement can enforce the rules without ambiguity.

Substantial evidence reveals that conducting U-turns and three-point turns in school zones is not safe, with many parents, teachers and police officers expressing it as a major concern. Dangerous situations can be caused by performing a U-turns and three-point turns in school zones, which can lead to serious injury or death. Those circumstances have been sighted firsthand by parents, teachers and police officers. Important government stakeholders, such as the NSW Police Force, the education sector and local government, in addition to private stakeholders, like the NRMA, all support the implementation of the bill.

Also, important evidence has been provided through a number of studies, including fatality statistics provided by Transport for NSW, New South Wales road progress safety reports and Parliament of New South Wales joint standing committee inquiries, which all reveal elevated risks in school zones and that more needs to be done to prevent those risks. As the demand for new schools increases, so does the number of children and drivers using school zones. We must look at new and arising issues caused by the increased use of school zones and adapt the road rules accordingly. I am sure that members of the House all wish to make our roads safer and would support any legislation that helps to prevent injury and death. Like all parents in New South Wales, I want to know that the roads are safer for my children as they enter and leave school. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Announcements*

#### **PHOTOGRAPHER IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I inform members that there is a photographer in the gallery who has been authorised by the Speaker. As is the convention, any photography will be of the member speaking and not of the Chamber in general.

*Bills*

#### **PROPERTY SERVICES COUNCIL BILL 2021**

##### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:21):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I contribute to debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021 on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in this place. The bill was introduced by my colleague the Hon. Mark Banasiak, and it passed through the other place earlier this year. The object of the bill is to establish and confer functions on the real estate services council for New South Wales. I correct the record on statements made by the Hon. Scott Farlow, who led for the Government in debate on the bill in the Legislative Council on 17 March 2021. Many of his statements were simply incorrect. He stated:



The bill proposes to establish a new government agency, the Real Estate Services Council led by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, to take over some of the current regulatory functions of the Commissioner for Fair Trading and advise on matters relevant to the property and real estate services industry. The risks associated with the bill are significant. It seeks to essentially allow partial self-regulation of the industry by its own members. The risks that come with going down that path are at the core of the Government's concerns with the bill.

It is incorrect that the bill creates a new government agency led by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales or, for that matter, any other industry representative body. The bill does not grant any regulatory functions to the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales or any other industry representative body. The principal legislative instrument for the regulation of the property services industry, the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, remains unchanged, save for the Commissioner for Fair Trading being replaced with the Property Services Commissioner. That is it. The industry has not usurped any regulatory functions whatsoever, and for this to be suggested otherwise is patently misleading and wrong. I put that on record beyond any doubt and allow all members to form a view based on the facts. Proposed section 6, Ministerial control, states:

The Council is subject to the control and direction of the Minister in the exercise of its functions, except in relation to the contents of any advice, report or recommendation given to the Minister.

I note that the Minister is now present in the Chamber. The Hon. Scott Farlow said that those two issues are at the core of the Government's concerns. Clearly, the Government's core concerns are based on an erroneous interpretation of the bill. Now that the misunderstanding is corrected and the Government's core concerns no longer exist, it appears logical to me that the Government would now support the bill. The Hon. Scott Farlow says the industry's call for a property services commissioner comes exclusively from the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. That is incorrect.

A cohort comprising the entire property services representative bodies has repeatedly called for the establishment of a property services commissioner. The cohort comprises the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents, the Estate Agents Co-operative, the Owners Corporation Network, the Property Owners Association, the Strata Community Association and the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. Importantly, those entities have made repeated requests, alongside the entire property industry, for a property services commissioner and have stated that they have no confidence in Fair Trading. Surely the industry cannot be ignored. I ask rhetorically, how can Fair Trading be an effective industry regulator when the entire industry has no respect for it?

The Hon. Scott Farlow draws to our attention the Real Estate Reference Group established by the Government. The Real Estate Reference Group was established by the then Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Minister Dominello, in response to the industry's plea to establish a property services commissioner. The industry was promised that things would be different under the new structure. The industry had a very clear agenda: improvement in the education and training of agents. It was an agenda that one would reasonably expect the Government to support. Unfortunately, the Government resisted the industry every step of the way—as is evidenced by the five-year journey, which should have taken five months. The irony is that after five long years of industry bludgeoning its way forward, the education and training reforms were introduced, and Fair Trading took credit for it all.

In relation to the reforms, the Hon. Scott Farlow said that the Real Estate Reference Group "served its purpose," inferring that it was disbanded, which is again incorrect. The industry saw the Real Estate Reference Group as an opportunity for industry and the regulator to work together. Fair Trading saw the Real Estate Reference Group as a place to house the industry and keep it quiet. As for the Real Estate Reference Group being disbanded, the industry walked away from the Real Estate Reference Group disillusioned and disgusted. Minister Anderson seems incapable of publishing a media release without the use of the word "dodgy". The title of his media release dated 15 June is, "The dodgy agent crackdown continues." It goes on to say that Fair Trading conducted a two-week "blitz", which is another inflammatory term. Finally the Minister says, "New South Wales is the only State in Australia to carry out regular real estate compliance blitzes." Does the Minister really expect us to believe that Fair Trading is the only regulatory authority in Australia to undertake compliance activities? I am sure that will come as a shock to the other States.

I encourage members to look at the Fair Trading Facebook page, where it refers to the industry as "dodgy". For the industry's regulatory authority to publish such a statement clearly demonstrates its attitude toward the industry and sums up the problem nicely. Minister Anderson is now suggesting his property services expert panel will be the panacea for all that ails the relationship that industry has with Fair Trading. That is clearly ridiculous. Taking the same people from the Real Estate Reference Group and rebadging them as the "expert panel" is not going to solve anything. The Minister knows that, or he should know it. The expert panel meets for two hours every two months. Its purpose is to demonstrate industry engagement. It can tick that box.

Entertainingly, the Minister started out by saying that the Government will simply oppose the bill, but there is no need. He and his colleagues started to feel heat from their electorates and the Minister did a 180-degree turn and decided there was a need for a property services commissioner. The Minister announced that the commissioner will be at Fair Trading—with the same people that call the industry "dodgy"—and everything will be fine. The Minister's commissioner will be selected by Fair Trading to ensure an adversarial culture is maintained. Much was made of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales' three representatives on the panel as opposed to one from other councils. This is easily explained. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales represents a proportionally larger number of areas of practice, including residential sales agents, residential property managers, commercial sales agents, commercial property managers, strata managers, buyer's agents, valuers, rural property transactions, auctioneers and industry support. The other representatives on the council are from single-industry activity representative bodies. It is clearly important that all facets of the property services industry contribute to the work of the council.

The importance of the property industry to the social fabric and economic health of New South Wales cannot be overstated. While the Government has argued against applying a focus to the property industry, it has made no complaint about the \$9.4 billion it has received this year in stamp duty. That is over \$1 billion greater than in the same period last year. It gets better. Next year the Government's budget will receive \$11.4 billion from the industry. Let us also not forget land tax. Earlier this year the Treasurer announced that the budget will be back in the black in four years. He did not mention that it is the property industry that is expected to deliver on that promise. It is impossible to take a ride in a taxi, get a haircut, watch the news or host a dinner party with friends without people talking about real estate. The residential real estate industry generates \$108 billion annually. That makes it bigger than the mining industry, at \$21 billion; the retail industry, at \$22.8 billion; and the tourism industry, at \$38.1 billion combined.

It will not have eluded anyone that the property industry is leading the State out of COVID-19. The median sale price of a house in Sydney is over \$1 million. Therefore, it is not surprising that, for the overwhelming majority of us, purchasing a home will be the single biggest transaction we ever make. That makes it a very stressful experience. Consumers need the confidence of market hygiene, transactional transparency, and quality information and support from competent and experienced service providers. If those conditions exist and are patently obvious, we will all enjoy a prosperous market. With direct consumer contact, the property services industry clearly has a pivotal role to play in ensuring market confidence. It is therefore essential that the industry responds to consumers' expectations with ethical, experienced and appropriately educated service providers.

Industry, however, cannot do this alone. It needs the support and cooperation of Government. With a constructive and cooperative relationship between Government and industry, consumer protection and quality outcomes will flow. Unfortunately, that does not exist today, and it needs to be fixed. Does the property services industry have unethical and dishonest people within its ranks? Yes, it does—just like every other industry. But just like every other industry, it battles to rid itself of these people. To do that it once again requires the assistance of government. Sadly, the Government's response has been to publicly promote the unethical and dishonest stereotype with inflammatory media releases. It does so in the misguided belief that denigrating the industry somehow elevates its own status in the eyes of the consumer. Premier Mike Baird once said, "When industry wants to improve itself, why would Government get in the way?" Indeed, why would Government get in the way? I will go further: Why would Government not assist when industry wants to improve itself?

Unfortunately, not only does Fair Trading not assist industry, it actively campaigns against it. Before embarking on any legislative intervention, members of Parliament should always ask themselves: What is the problem that requires our attention and what is the best available remedial activity? I have considered both of these issues carefully. Fair Trading currently regulates the property services industry. It also regulates over 40 other industries, including hairdressers, tow truck drivers, retailers, second-hand dealers and tattooists. Whilst those industries are critical to our economy, they comprise high-volume transactional businesses, involving comparatively small sums of money, and are legally relatively simple. Property transactions are the complete opposite. They are low volume, always involve significant sums of money and are, by their very nature, legally complex. Fair Trading is a high-volume transactional regulatory authority. Property transactions sit well outside the remit of Fair Trading's competencies and experience. Strata issues also add a level of complexity.

Having dealt with what the bill will not do and the importance of the industry, I now turn to what the bill will do and why it is important. The bill will deliver three critical remedies: first, the establishment of a Property Services Commissioner, who will have extensive industry knowledge and experience and will focus exclusively on the industry; and, secondly, the creation of a Property Services Council. This forum will include broad industry representatives who will be tasked with investigating industry and consumer needs, and will make recommendations to the Minister. It will be refreshing to have industry's input rather than having it filtered out by Fair Trading. Thirdly—and arguably the most important remedy—the bill will deliver an environment of mutual respect and common purpose between government and industry.

The case for a Property Services Commissioner is demonstrated repeatedly by Fair Trading's decisions and misguided market interventions. Those activities have adversely affected the industry and, more importantly, undermined consumer protection and confidence. As I have already pointed out, Fair Trading is a high-volume regulatory authority. When it applies its suite of competencies to the complexities associated with property transactions, it is left wanting. Without the required experience and education, Fair Trading is incapable of adequately supporting the industry and providing the necessary consumer protection. It is unrealistic to expect a regulatory authority, which a consumer runs to when their newly acquired toaster fails, to also understand and resolve disputes about a property transaction. Property transactions are complex. Servicing the regulatory architecture, resolving disputes, supporting the industry and protecting consumers requires an exclusive focus from an industry-experienced commissioner.

I will not list exhaustively the demonstrated inadequacies of Fair Trading. However, I will provide some examples of Fair Trading's high-volume transactional experience being applied to the property industry. Prior to Fair Trading acquiring the regulatory responsibility for the property services industry, a person seeking to practise as a real estate agent was required to complete a three-year course at TAFE. Fair Trading changed this requirement. A person seeking a career in real estate could acquire the necessary qualification in a week or less, depending on the training provider. That resulted in immediate adverse consumer outcomes and failed to adequately prepare the person seeking a career in real estate with the skills to respond to the challenges of practice. That is evidenced by 80 per cent of new entrants to the industry leaving it in the first 12 months.

Why did Fair Trading do this? The answer is competition. Fair Trading is of the view that increased competition is the only market consideration. Anything that interferes with that is termed a "barrier to entry" and is to be removed. That philosophy may work for toasters and kettles but it does not work for the property services industry. Yes, competition is important; however, it must be between competent and experienced providers. Following the beacon of competition exclusively led to Fair Trading's recent attempt to de-license auctioneers. It clearly believes anyone with a degree of bravado and a loud voice is qualified to be an auctioneer. Fair Trading identified the theatre of the craft. However, the making of a contract for a very expensive piece of property within a complex legal environment obviously eluded it.

The media has reported a number of trust account frauds. Fair Trading has portrayed itself as a consumer watchdog. Unfortunately, once again, in its endeavours to remove costs and by doing so increase competition, Fair Trading removed an agent's obligation to lodge the trust account audit with Fair Trading. An agent was still required to have the audit; however, they only had to lodge the audit with Fair Trading if there was a problem. For the small number of agents who were doing the wrong thing, all they needed to do to avoid detection was cease having their trust account audited. In one case, the trust account fraud amounted to \$3.7 million. Having learned its lesson, Fair Trading has now reinstated the requirement for all agents to lodge their trust account audits with Fair Trading.

It took industry eight years of continuous lobbying to have professional indemnity insurance mandated. I acknowledge the then Minister for Fair Trading, Anthony Roberts, who pushed that insurance mandate through. Due to the work of industry and Minister Roberts, the consumer now has a guaranteed fund from which to seek compensation for a loss. In a media release entitled "Agents under the hammer" Minister Anderson again used an inflammatory term. Is that about the Minister's attempt to elevate his community standing or to elevate consumer protection? That is an interesting question. The media release informed the community that teams of Fair Trading inspectors would be at open homes protecting buyers from under quoting. Are there instances of under quoting in the market? Yes, however what we also know is that the allegations of under quoting rise in proportion to a rising market. Predicting the sale price in today's hot market is very difficult, if not impossible. There is an industry saying that is particularly relevant in today's hot property market: There is nothing like a good auction to stuff up a valuation.

If we accept that underquoting is at the epidemic proportions that the Minister suggests in his media release and, given that Fair Trading has failed to solve the problem despite having the past 19 years to do so, how can the community have any confidence that Fair Trading will adequately address the issue in the next 19 years? The bill will install an industry experienced regulator who will utilise that knowledge and experience to maintain and improve the regulatory environment to protect consumers and support ethical industry behaviour. I am sure members will agree that I have made the case for a property services commissioner to replace the Commissioner for Fair Trading. I now examine the real estate services council. The council will consist of industry service providers, consumers, educators and the property services commissioner. Within that forum, contemporary consumer protection challenges and initiatives will be socialised along with the resources required by industry to continue its journey of continuous improvement. The council will make recommendations to the Minister on its findings and the Minister will have broad stakeholder input and experience at their disposal.

How does that differ from today's model? Currently, Fair Trading is the sole adviser to the Minister; it reluctantly engages with industry and does so as a perfunctory step only. Fair Trading filters from the Minister any stakeholder input that conflicts with its own position. That is clearly ridiculous and thankfully the bill will remedy it. Finally, and as I have already said, arguably the most important part of the bill is that it will create an environment where experienced and passionate industry stakeholders can contribute equally with mutual respect. Compare that with today where despite industry's determined efforts to establish a cooperative and constructive relationship with Fair Trading, the relationship between the two can at best be described as adversarial. Clearly, that is unproductive, with all stakeholders suffering.

It is prudent to consider what the bill will create and whether or not it is an adventure into uncharted waters. Does the model proposed by the bill have proven positive outcomes? I will examine those questions in order. The bill replicates the existing regulatory structures in several Australian States and New Zealand for the property services industry. The bill has also been heavily influenced by the regulatory architecture of the New South Wales Office of the Legal Services Commissioner and surveyors. Therefore, what is proposed is not a legislative adventure into the wilderness. Parliament would simply be following a well-trodden path. Additional comfort can be taken from the knowledge that the bill will return the industry to the regulatory regime established by the now repealed Real Estate Services Council Act 1990.

In conclusion, I invite members to exclude all the noise surrounding the debate and focus on the fundamentals. It is not in dispute that the property services industry is the State's biggest industry; it is not in dispute that everyone in New South Wales has in one way or another a connection to property; and it is not in dispute that the property industry contributes over \$10 billion in taxation. It should not be in dispute that the property services industry demands special attention. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

#### **Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (10:44):**

I oppose the Property Services Council Bill 2021. The bill proposes to establish a new quasi-government agency, the property services council, which will take over most of the current regulatory and advisory functions of Fair Trading relating to the real estate and property sector. The primary concern the Government has with the bill is that it allows for regulation to be steered by people who have a vested interest in how the industry should operate. Recent events, such as the discovery of building defects, reinforce the many fundamental problems with allowing industries to self-regulate. Those cases highlight the danger of leaving industry regulation to the hands of those who are themselves being regulated.

The real estate industry has had cases of agent misconduct and trust account fraud worth millions that have put too many New South Wales consumers at risk, and the regulator has dealt with that appropriately. I highlight that since November 2019, NSW Fair Trading has taken action against 12 real estate agents responsible for misappropriating \$6 million from agency trust accounts. Over the same period, Fair Trading issued 376 penalty notices and over \$502,000 in fines to licensed professionals under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 for breaches of the law. Simply, it is not appropriate for the industry to self-regulate.

Real estate agents are the first point of contact for buyers of residential property. There are many great real estate agents in New South Wales doing an excellent job and helping the people of the State to realise the great Australian dream. For many people, buying a home is the most expensive purchase of their entire lives. Agents have the power to influence purchase decisions and can drive up competition among buyers. It is paramount that agents are required to be properly licensed with Fair Trading, that their compliance is monitored and that the independent regulator can pursue them with vigour when they do the wrong thing.

The bill is an attempt by representatives of the real estate industry to claim a greater direct say on the regulation of their members, which they have sought to justify by characterising Fair Trading as incompetent and failing to protect consumers. While it is all too easy to pin the blame on Fair Trading as the regulator, it is difficult to imagine that the industry will investigate its own members with the same rigour and scrutiny as an independent regulator. Without the current level of independence, the potential risk of harm to the public interest is unreasonably high. The member for Orange clearly stated that he has a significant problem with Fair Trading full stop. He does not like it and does not accept its authority. His answer is to cut them out and self-regulate, set up his own kingdom, walk away and turn his back on the thousands of agents across New South Wales. He would rather isolate them than communicate with them. Rather than work through the issues like an adult, he wants to throw his toys out of the cot and set up an independent regime.

My aim is to foster better engagement with the industry, and it can be done and will be done. The Government is already working hard to address that need. In December 2020 I established the new Property Services Expert Panel to ensure that there is a constructive and direct consultative forum for clear and open two-way communication between the Government and industry. The expert panel was also established to be the

single source of advice and policy input regarding compliance, education, licensing, continuing professional development and other obligations under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002.

The expert panel's value-adding was demonstrated most recently through the COVID Delta lockdown when industry needed quick assistance in translating the public health orders and what they meant for real estate professionals. The feedback I have received is that the collaboration between the property services industry and the Government during COVID was very positive. I commend all panel members for their questions and assistance in getting the message out about how businesses could continue to operate through the lockdown period.

The Property Services Expert Panel is chaired by Chris Duggan, the president of Strata Community Association (NSW), and panel members reflect the width and breadth of the property services sector. They come from groups including real estate industry partners, two major real estate business groups, the Real Estate Employers Federation, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association, the Estate Agents Co-operative, the Australian Institute of Business Brokers, the Australian Resident Accommodation Managers' Association and the Property Owners Association NSW. The panel also includes a representative of a registered real estate training organisation. The breadth of representation and experience on the panel is vast.

I note the representative for the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales resigned from the panel earlier this year, and that is regretful. Following some productive engagement with the CEO, president and president-elect of the Real Estate Institute over the past few weeks, I remain confident that it will reconsider its position. Moving forward, I sincerely hope that the Real Estate Institute rejoins the panel as an important voice in the real estate industry. The panel has been established to get the policy and operational settings right for this critically important sector of our economy, and it would be detrimental to the Real Estate Institute membership if the group continued to have no voice in this critical forum and remain the only organisation that does not want to be part of a vast group of expert industry representatives on the expert panel.

Crucially, the Property Services Expert Panel does not carry the risks of an industry-dominated council proposed by the bill because it channels diverse industry perspectives and does not give preferential treatment to a single industry member. The Government has further concerns with the bill's intention to allocate three of the 11 seats on the proposed new council to the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, as outlined by the member for Orange in his second reading speech. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales wants three seats on an 11-member council, according to the member. That is clearly an inequitable distribution of interests, and it reinforces the Government's fundamental concern that the council would be dominated by the agenda of a single player.

The proposed composition of the council is particularly problematic following the Opposition's amendment to the bill in the upper House to expand the council's remit to include administration of the laws governing strata and community schemes. In the second reading debate on the bill in the other place, the Hon. Mark Banasiak suggested that the council warranted three representatives from the Real Estate Institute due to the multiple facets of the real estate industry, including commercial, strata, rural and property management. Representation for each of those sectors already exists on the Property Services Expert Panel. Real estate agents undertake a wide range of functions; however, that is not to say that strata managing agents and stock and station agents do any less than real estate agents. In fact, it is important that equal consideration is given to each sector in developing regulation such as the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, which governs all three streams.

The amendments passed in the other place to expand the membership of the council to include representatives from the Strata Community Association and Tenants' Union do little to address the inequity. The bill, and its subsequent amendments, show a lack of understanding about how the property services industry operates. That is unsurprising, given those amendments were inserted at the last minute without proper consultation with the industry, that knew nothing about those amendments that were suddenly super important to the industry, or with the relevant stakeholders or the wider public.

I want the property services sector to have a strong working relationship with government. I am aware that the relationship between the industry and the regulator must be improved to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of property services professionals and that the highest compliance and professional standards are in place for the benefit of consumers. I have met with local real estate agents right across New South Wales, and they want that strong relationship with Fair Trading. They want that strong relationship with the regulator. They know work needs to be done, and we are addressing that work. With that in mind, the Liberal-Nationals Government will be establishing a new position of a Property Services Commissioner to support the New South Wales real estate industry and its consumers.

The Property Services Commissioner will be given a mandate to improve the customer experience of property services professionals and to be an advocate for delivery of services and regulation by and to the industry. The commissioner will be an independent industry expert to ensure the Government is getting the very best advice

on how to work with this important sector of the New South Wales economy. We are taking the same successful approach of the appointment of a Building Commissioner in the construction sector, Mr David Chandler. I am confident we can achieve the same positive outcomes for the property industry as we have done with the building industry. It is the same model. Given I have already announced and established the Property Services Expert Panel, I intend for the commissioner to join the expert panel and work in collaboration with the panel chair and members, who welcome the imminent appointment of a Property Services Commissioner. This will ensure the panel's industry expert advice continues to have a direct link with me as the Minister responsible for the property services sector.

At a Property Services Expert Panel meeting in June, panel chair Chris Duggan tabled a letter from me to the panel signalling my intention of establishing a commissioner for the industry. The proposal received resounding support from panel members present at that meeting. Securing this position will be a massive step forward in delivering for consumers, organisations and employees who make up this critical part of the New South Wales economy. We are in the final stages of interviews for a preferred candidate and will be in a position to announce the appointment in the coming weeks. I have had discussions with the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales and invited its support, comment and input into suggestions for who might be the best Property Services Commissioner. I have continued to offer the olive branch and work with the Real Estate Institute to find a way forward that would benefit every agent, every consumer and every person who interacts with the real estate sector. I will continue to invite the Real Estate Institute to the table, and I will continue to work with it because I appreciate the group's importance to the real estate industry.

Finally, it has been just over a year since extensive regulatory changes were put in place by the Government. Together with the newly established Property Services Expert Panel and the appointment of a Property Services Commissioner around the corner, we look forward to seeing positive changes in the property sector. I am excited for the future of the real estate industry. I look forward to working with the regulator and Fair Trading for the benefit of consumers. It can happen, it will happen and it will be great to see everybody back at the table. It is clear that now is not the time to be investing taxpayers' money towards creating a completely separate entity called the Property Services Council that will sit outside of what we are trying to achieve. Let us stay together. Let us work together for the benefit of the people in New South Wales. For those reasons, the Government opposes the bill.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:58):** On behalf of the Labor Opposition I contribute to debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021. From the outset, I state that the Opposition supports this sensible bill that will deliver crucial oversight of the property services industry, including the establishment of a real estate services commissioner. In my former roles as the shadow Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and shadow Minister for Building Reform and Property, over and over again I spoke passionately in this House about the need for reform in this sector. I note that Labor took a policy to the last election to establish a strata commissioner to support those living in strata complexes. It is disappointing that the Government has not adopted this policy and has instead simply abandoned strata owners.

The need for a real estate services commissioner has only grown in the past two years. Every year tens of thousands of people move into strata apartments for the first time in their lives. They have no idea that they have rights, let alone what those rights are. This is the fastest growing sector of housing in the State, but the laws are so complicated, and vested interests are always ready to confuse the issues. It is time strata owners had someone in power who is focused on their needs. We have seen residents buy into apartment buildings that suffer building defects and residents have been left to pick up the bill. Many of these residents find themselves at the mercy of complex legislation and are overwhelmed when attempting to navigate the system. We have seen this right across New South Wales, with the issue cast into full public view by the cases of the Opal and Mascot towers along with the Landmark building in Charlestown. I am pleased to see cross-party legislation to address this issue come before the House. I thank the member for Orange for all the work he has done putting this important bill forward.

Before I move on to the content of the bill, I first address the Government's record on reforming the property and building industry. I acknowledge that the member for Tamworth, and Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, works very hard in this space. Building defects were recently thrown back into the media spotlight with the Vicinity Apartments in Canterbury. The owners' corporation commissioned an engineering report that showed serious structural defects that may put the building at risk of collapse. This story has become too familiar, with apartment owners being left to pick up the pieces and left tens of thousands of dollars—in some instances, millions of dollars—out of pocket. I note the efforts of the Minister in working with the Opposition to pass the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2021 earlier this week. It will go some way to addressing this issue. I know the Minister is genuine in addressing it. I urge him and the Government to support this bill, which will provide important support for the people of New South Wales.

Part 2 of the Property Services Council Bill 2021 outlines the establishment of the Property Services Council and the appointment of the Property Services Commissioner. The Property Services Council will be made up of an 11-person board, including one person appointed by the Minister as chairperson. The Minister will have final say on each member appointed to the board from nominees put forward by different stakeholder groups. This includes one member selected from three nominees put forward by the Owners Corporation Network of Australia Ltd, three members selected from five persons nominated by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales Limited, one person appointed from three nominees of the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association Ltd, along with a member selected from three persons nominated by the University of Technology Sydney. Both the Tenants' Union of NSW and the Strata Community Association NSW will have a member selected from three nominees. Finally, the Property Services Commissioner will serve as a member of the board. This will ensure the board is representative of the stakeholders within the sector and can best support the community.

Under proposed section 8 the board will have the power to establish other committees to assist with its functions. The members of those committees do not need to be members of the board. Importantly, proposed section 9 establishes the role of the Property Services Commissioner. The commissioner will be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Property Services Council. The commissioner will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the council in line with the policies and general directives of the board. Part 3 of the bill outlines the objects and functions of the Property Services Council. Proposed section 11 establishes the objects of the council, which include promoting appropriate standards of conduct and competency for real estate agents, protecting the interests of people who deal with agents and facilitating the resolution of disputes between agents and persons who deal with them.

Proposed section 12 outlines the functions of the Property Services Council. The council serves to provide advice, reports and recommendations to the Minister relating to the business of real estate agents, along with the education, training and continuing professional development of those agents. The council will also make recommendations regarding consumer protection and the management of strata properties and community schemes, along with the education, training and continuing professional development of strata managing agents. Further, the council will provide public information and guidance programs. This is an important function of the council to support those attempting to navigate the strata system for the first time. Schedule 4 to the bill makes various amendments to other Acts to include the Property Services Council. As such, the whole of the Community Land Management Act 1989, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002, and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 will be amended to omit the words "secretary" and "secretary's" and replace them with "Council" and "Council's".

Contrary to what the Minister stated in his contribution to this debate, the bill has strong stakeholder support. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales has urged support for the bill, as change to the industry is desperately needed. The property industry is a significant economic pillar of the New South Wales economy, and I have long believed that this sector requires its own commission. Currently NSW Fair Trading has oversight over the property services industry. It has become blatantly clear that, in order to deliver the best outcomes for consumers and agents, a regularity authority with industry knowledge that can work with stakeholders in the industry must be established.

The Property Services Council and Property Services Commissioner can restore trust not just in the industry but also between consumers and agents. As I am sure is the experience of other members during the current housing crisis, particularly within the rental market, constituents have come to me with concerns about the conduct of agents and the current regulatory framework. It is clear that not only agents but also consumers have lost confidence in the current system. The Labor Opposition supports the bill. We supported a strata commissioner at the 2019 election and we support this bill today. It is time the Government stepped up to deliver the regulatory framework that the industry and consumers demand. This legislation delivers exactly that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:06):** I oppose the Property Services Council Bill 2021. As it should be generally, the focus of the Government in this field is to serve the public interest. The public interest is to protect consumers, for whom real estate is often the largest investment they will ever make in their lives, and to protect the legitimate interests of decent, hardworking, honest participants in the industry, which is the vast majority of them. Those are both focal points of the public interest, yet I doubt there would be a member in this place who has not had complaints made to them at some time or other about the conduct of the minority of participants in the industry.

Unfortunate interactions with somebody of lesser repute in one aspect or another of the property services industry has cost people potentially thousands of dollars, great stress, lost time and had other detrimental effects. It is the protection of the honest players and their reputations, and the protection of consumers, that this Government puts first and foremost. That is why the Government stands firm in recommending and supporting a

model of regulation that is at arm's length from the industry, with an honest and impartial broker that can be an effective regulator when necessary and can still work with the participants and stakeholders in the industry who are prepared to engage with government—which we hope would be all of them.

This bill proposes to establish a new government agency in a separate model, the Property Services Council, influenced largely by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales—given the membership proposed—to take over some of the current regulatory functions of the Commissioner for NSW Fair Trading and advise on matters relevant to the property and real estate services industry. Essentially, the bill is seeking to allow partial self-regulation of the industry by its own members. The Government sees serious risks to the community in going down that path, and these are the fundamental concerns that the Government has with the bill. The bill risks abandoning the vital role Fair Trading plays in regulating and supporting the property industry and consumers. Further, the Government recently delivered major reforms that address the concerns underpinning the bill, and we have a substantial record of reform in recent years. To allow even partial self-regulation would jeopardise the progress made to date to improve regulation of the industry.

With thousands of consumer complaints being made every year to Fair Trading about property agents and ongoing prosecutions of agents who defraud trust accounts, sadly this is an industry that is not ready for self-regulation. That is not an indictment on the thousands of honest, hardworking, decent people trying to earn a living and to provide a decent service within the industry. Nonetheless, it is a fact of life. The property services industry already has a clear and effective structure for oversight and regulation of the industry, that is, NSW Fair Trading. It is clear from speeches in the other place that the proposed council has largely been driven by a view that Fair Trading is not effectively regulating the property services industry. It is a view that the Government simply does not accept. On the contrary, Fair Trading continues to assist with the resolution of thousands of property-related consumer complaints every year from tenants, landlords, prospective purchasers and homeowners.

NSW Fair Trading has also demonstrated its value as a robust, skilled enforcement agency when more serious breaches of the law have been found. In the past 16 months Fair Trading has successfully prosecuted 12 real estate licensees for misappropriating trust funds to the value of \$6 million. It is a small number perhaps, but it is a significant problem. From 1 January 2020 to last month, Fair Trading issued 484 penalty notices to licensed professionals under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 for breaches of the law, with the total value of those fines being over \$568,000. The message is clear: Fair Trading's role as a regulator ensures that acts of dishonesty, which are totally unacceptable to others in the industry and to the broader community, are met with substantial penalties for convicted offenders, including jail time. Such robust enforcement action in the public interest could be watered down if an industry-dominated council were in charge of regulation.

Fair Trading's expertise is accompanied by regular and quality engagement with all sections of the real estate and property industry beyond just real estate agents. It is sometimes overlooked that there are other important professions regulated under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 apart from real estate sales and leasing agents. They include business brokers, stock and station agents, onsite residential property managers and strata managing agents. The claim that Fair Trading has refused to participate in industry consultation with these groups of professionals is just wrong. On the contrary, since coming to office a decade ago the Government has redoubled efforts to listen to the voices of both industry representatives and consumers to ensure a balanced and effective approach to regulation of the sector.

Up until recently, sector engagement was primarily managed through the Real Estate Reference Group, which was established in 2015. The reference group consisted of representatives from various industry organisations, including the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association, and for its first three years the Real Estate Institute, both of whom the bill proposes as members of the Property Services Council. The reference group has now been replaced by a new Property Services Expert Panel. The panel consists of a broader and more diverse range of stakeholders, compared with the previous reference group, to enable clear, open, two-way communication between the Government and key players in the property services industry. The panel met for the first time in March this year. It is the key consultative forum for industry input to government and, crucially, does not carry the types of risks that the statutory industry council proposed by the bill does.

The bill proposes an outdated regulatory model. It is a back-to-the-future proposition. The model proposed in the bill also runs counter to the direction of regulatory policy and consumer protection over recent years. Fair Trading is an economy-wide regulator and consumer protection agency that is independent of all of the industries it regulates, which is vital to its credibility and accountability to act in the public interest. The real estate and property sector consistently accounts for around 10 per cent of the 43,000 consumer complaints handled by Fair Trading every year. [*Extension of time*]

These include complaints about serious misconduct, such as trust account defalcations, strongly suggesting this industry is not ready for self-regulation. There is a general trend towards consolidation of functions into



generalist regulators, with industry-specific bodies generally avoided, to avoid the risk of capture. Too often the industry-specific bodies carry the risk of regulatory capture, which happens when a regulatory agency becomes dominated by or too intimate with an industry it regulates. This is exactly what happened decades ago when Fair Trading's predecessors were regulating some of the industries now under its remit, and it will happen again if members make the mistake of voting in favour of the bill.

The bill provides for the Real Estate Institute to have three members on the council, while all other organisations have only one. Previous similar councils to the one proposed in the bill were abandoned for lack of tangible return on investment of public money. The bill proposes a similar statutory authority to that established under the repealed Real Estate Services Council Act 1990—as the member introducing the bill to the House has acknowledged—which was abandoned with the creation of the former Department of Fair Trading in the mid-1990s. The private member's bill would have us return to those older regulatory models, which have been abandoned over the decades at both State and Commonwealth levels due to the lack of rigour and prosecuting misconduct and a lack of rigour in protecting consumers and pursuing the public interest.

The high risks involved for consumers in property transactions highlight the ongoing need for independence in regulating this very important industry. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in March that the total value of residential dwellings in Australia increased by \$257 billion to more than \$7.7 trillion, with a substantial part of that value within New South Wales. There were over 150,000 property transfers in New South Wales in 2020 alone. Put simply, the property sector is too big and too important for its regulation to be handed over to an industry-dominated council. It is also important to note that the Government recently delivered significant reforms that already address many of the concerns that underpin the bill.

As noted by the Hon. Mark Banasiak in the other place, the property services industry for too long has been marked by inadequate education and training standards. That is why in 2020 the Government's suite of reforms was introduced with the commencement of the Property Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Act 2018. Alongside the reform Act, amended regulations, a new ministerial qualifications order, overhauled continuing professional development requirements and new supervision guidelines also commenced on 23 March 2020. These reforms delivered the 2016 Government's commitment to improve standards and professionalism in the property and real estate services industry.

The reforms streamline the licensing framework for agents, increase the qualification requirements and tighten governance and accountability within agencies, especially in relation to trust accounts and overall supervision. For example, certification of registration holders now requires them to complete an approved Certificate IV qualification in property services as part of their continuing professional development and to obtain a licence within four years of registration. These changes require agents to continuously upskill and build on their expertise so that vendors, buyers and renters can have confidence in the professionalism and reliability of the agents they deal with. Ultimately the Government is driving better compliance and consumer protection outcomes in a better functioning New South Wales property market.

In developing the reforms, the Government undertook extensive consultation with the former Real Estate Reference Group. The reforms were also based on recommendations from an independent review of agents' training and educational requirements that was undertaken in 2015. This was followed by a public consultation process on a range of supporting instruments to the amendment Act, including the regulations, a qualifications order and enhanced continuing professional development requirements. With the reforms having just passed their first-year anniversary, what we need now is to support the industry in understanding and complying with their obligations. The Government is concerned that any sudden effort to change the status quo will cause significant confusion in the industry and seriously undermine the momentum and benefits of those recent reform efforts.

Property agents act on behalf of consumers on the biggest transactions of most people's lives—the sale, purchase or leasing of a residential dwelling, rural property or commercial business. Agents deal with large sums of money and are entrusted to manage valuable rental properties and strata schemes. It must be acknowledged that historically the reputation of property agents as a whole has been plagued by unacceptable conduct by a few in the industry. It has included misrepresentations, undisclosed commissions and benefits, unfair contract terms, an unresponsive attitude to complaints from vulnerable consumers, defalcation of money held in trust, and other forms of fraud and deception. Those are the fundamental reasons why we have a detailed, specific regulatory regime for real estate and property agents in New South Wales and in every other State of Australia.

The regulatory regime protects the interests of legitimate players in the industry and the reputation of those who do the right thing and, to the extent possible, inhibits the unfair advantage that crooked and dodgy players would get through those sorts of practices. The Government is committed to ensuring that regulation of the real estate and property services industry is reasonable and responsive to the needs of consumers in New South Wales. The Government is not convinced that re-establishing a Property Services Council would assist in this endeavour. Therefore, the Government opposes the bill.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:20):** I will speak to the Property Services Council Bill 2021. The Opposition supports the original intention of the Property Services Council Bill and the amendments moved by Labor and supported in the other place. The objects of the bill are to establish and confer functions on the Property Services Council to improve the regulation of real estate, strata schemes and community land schemes in New South Wales. Currently the real estate industry is regulated by the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002. This will not change, except that the role undertaken by the Commissioner for Fair Trading will be replaced by the Property Services Commissioner. The 2016 census shows there are 37,703 agents in New South Wales and that the average agent is most likely a woman in her thirties, working in the city and earning about \$58,468.

New South Wales real estate is a \$107 billion industry annually, based on the value of residential property sales each year. Property transfer duty alone will contribute over \$11.4 billion in 2021-22 to the State's tax revenue. On issues such as continuing professional development, regulatory requirements have been wound back over time and it is clear that many in the industry no longer believe the industry is being adequately supported. It is abundantly clear that senior officials at NSW Fair Trading do not understand the industry. It is clear that Fair Trading has failed to adequately protect consumers, failed to investigate inappropriate behaviour perpetrated by a minority and failed to support the industry. During previous budget estimates Labor exposed that it is clear that many stakeholders do not have faith in the capacity of this Government or NSW Fair Trading to properly regulate and support the industry.

The Property Services Council will have 10 members drawn from industry, consumers and academia. Labor was able to improve and expand the make-up of the membership of the council to include representatives from the Tenants' Union of NSW and Strata Community Association (NSW). The Opposition successfully amended proposed section 12 to extend the functions to also include, "the management of strata properties and community schemes, and the education, training and continuing professional development of strata managing agents." NSW Labor has previously supported the establishment of a strata and community schemes commissioner. The commissioner would oversee all strata and community schemes issues, with particular focus on newly constructed buildings.

Every year tens of thousands of people are moving into strata apartments for the first time in their lives. They have little understanding of their rights. Strata is the fastest growing sector of housing in the State but the laws are complicated, and various interests are always ready to confuse the issues. It is time strata owners had someone in power who is focused on their needs. Currently strata is overseen by Fair Trading, which is also supposed to look after consumer issues such as residential tenancies and real estate agent licensing. Fair Trading oversees complaints about broken or dangerous toys and appliances and complaints against motor mechanics, paintball centres and tattoo parlours. Often new home owners are reluctant to make too much fuss over their problems because they are worried that adverse publicity would expose issues to prospective buyers and affect the value of their homes.

Many are tied into long-term, overpriced contracts for maintenance of common areas, stormwater and the like that were entered into by the developer. We know that some apartment owners are being bullied into silence and have to risk their homes just to get what they paid for. It may include hiring lawyers at considerable financial risk. The Owners Corporation Network [OCN] has long argued that a commissioner for strata living would restore confidence to the strata sector. The OCN believes the commissioner could promote and protect the reputation, value and standards of residential strata schemes, ensure consumer protection for residential lot owners and residents and promote social cohesion and better living in strata. There is nobody in government who is focused on their needs. This bill delivers on those aims by ensuring a new regulatory body is responsible for property services in New South Wales.

The new commissioner will be empowered to better regulate real estate agents and the management of strata and community schemes. The new body will make a real difference to the lives of people involved in the property services sector. Disappointingly, in the other place the Government opposed the bill. I note that one of the complaints from the Government was that the peak professional body for strata managing agents in New South Wales, the Strata Community Association, is conspicuously absent in the bill from membership of the Real Estate Services Council. However, this very issue was addressed through Labor's amendments, and the Government voted against it.

The Government said that the new commissioner will be empowered to better regulate real estate agents and manage strata and community schemes. The new body will make a real difference to the lives of people involved in the property services sector. Those are the fundamental reasons why we have a detailed and specific regulatory regime for real estate and property agents in New South Wales, and in every other State in Australia. Importantly, those laws are backed by the compliance, enforcement and consumer assistance resources of NSW Fair Trading. At budget estimates we heard about widespread problems with the compliance, enforcement

and consumer assistance resources of NSW Fair Trading, as well as the training and professional development in the property services sector. The Hon. Scott Farlow said in the other House:

The bill proposes to establish a new government agency, the Real Estate Services Council led by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, to take over some of the current regulatory functions of the Commissioner for Fair Trading ...

It seeks to essentially allow partial self-regulation of the industry by its members. The risks that come with going down that path are at the core of the Government's concerns with the bill.

That is clearly wrong. The bill does not bestow any regulatory powers on the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales or any other industry body. To the contrary, proposed section 6 of the bill makes it clear that the Minister has complete control. The Minister has erroneously represented in correspondence that the industry is seeking self-regulation. What it is actually seeking is regulation. NSW Fair Trading is not doing the job. It would be very interesting to know who made this erroneous interpretation of the bill and the reason why the agency advised that this was the case. The Minister wilfully misrepresented the situation in letters and emails to Government members and claimed that the industry is seeking self-regulation.

Enforcement by NSW Fair Trading has been lax, so we need to ensure that the Property Services Council's responsibility includes specific oversight of training in the strata sector. There is a need for better and more effective regulation of the bad apples in the industry. Most agents are professionals who build relationships over years with buyers, sellers, tenants and landlords. There are bad apples who give agents a bad name and make life difficult for people purchasing a home—what is often to the biggest investment of their life. Agents can be fined up to \$22,000 and lose their commission if convicted of underquoting. This has never happened, ever. The typical fines are \$2,200 on-the-spot fines—10 per cent of the maximum and a fraction of the commission on a median Sydney \$1.4 million house price. There are not enough inspectors and they are directed away from effective enforcement. Fair Trading NSW demonstrably lacks the capacity to do the job effectively. [*Extension of time*]

At budget estimates we also heard about the concern of industry that without proper training any fly-by-night, corner-cutting, profit-seeking urger can turn up and get paid by getting a commission in this field, as real estate is booming. What sort of licence would Daryl Maguire have required when he did something like this? The enforcement of licensing requirements in the industry is a very real issue. Mr Maguire is not the only example of somebody who has sought to earn a commission by finding a buyer and seller of the property without proper licensing. In one of his text messages to the former Premier, Daryl Maguire —

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Granville will resume her seat while I hear the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The member is straying well away from the bill. The member is now referencing community individuals and dealing with material that is being considered in other places.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Yes, it is budget estimates.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It should not be allowed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for his point of order. The member for Granville is sailing close to the wind, but I do not uphold the point of order at this stage. I bring to the attention of the member for Granville that this area of debate is fraught. The member will continue.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** It was discussed in budget estimates, including the full transcript of Mr Maguire's discussion about the sale of a motel that he was involved in when he sought a \$5,000 commission. At the time, the Minister was asked what sort of licence he would have required and he said he was not aware and took the question on notice. In answering a similar question, the Deputy Secretary of the Better Regulation Division said, "We would have to take that on notice and get some legal advice about interpreting the real estate agents Act, but we can do that." The department is supposed to know all about and issue real estate licences but it did not know whether you can earn a commission without holding one. It is extraordinary that a basic question about the administration—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The member for Granville is now impugning public servants in this State who simply took—

**Dr Joe McGirr:** Via video link: Mr Temporary Speaker, I cannot hear the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** —the question on notice so they could be careful about the answer they gave. That is a completely outrageous attack on careful public servants in a budget estimates hearing who were merely doing their job by saying that they would take the matter under advisement so they did not mislead the budget estimates process of the other place. It is a completely outrageous imputation to make about the professional standards and

competency of those departmental officers. It is contrary to standing orders and the member ought to withdraw that unwarranted and unfair attack on public servants of this State. The member should be called to order.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for that explanation of his point of order. I believe the member for Wagga Wagga sought to speak to the point of order.

**Dr Joe McGirr:** Via video link: I could not hear the member for Ku-ring-gai. I do not know whether he was speaking into the microphone.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** If the member is asking the member for Ku-ring-gai to repeat his point of order, I am not inclined to allow that nor am I willing to paraphrase it. I understand the point of order, but I cannot relate it entirely to the comments of the member for Granville. I warn the member for Granville to be careful; the subject is somewhat fraught. At this stage, I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** In short, the Office of Fair Trading should be able to answer a simple question about whether you are required to hold a real estate licence in order to earn a commission on the sale of a property.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: I stand again because despite—

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I am sorry, we do not need a third point of order about the same issue. It is a simple question. I was in the room and the member for Ku-ring-gai was not.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Granville will resume her seat. The member for Ku-ring-gai is taking another point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I apologise to the member for Wagga Wagga for not standing at the lectern so that he could hear my previous point of order. Mr Temporary Speaker, you directed the member for Granville to be careful about what she was saying in terms of impugning public servants and their competency, and then she continued on the same point, completely ignoring your warning. It is unacceptable. The opinion of the member for Granville about what the department should know is entirely beyond the point. As I said previously, the officers were clearly being careful to research a matter that had, I assume, been asked seriously of them in the budget estimates process of the other place, and they simply said in a responsible—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I have heard enough on the point of order. The member for Granville will continue, but I will listen carefully to her comments. I was distracted, as in tag team wrestling, because I was speaking to the Deputy Speaker and I missed the member's comments. The member for Granville will continue.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** What I said was absolutely relevant. I will not go any further because three pointless, groundless points of order have been taken. The only thing I am talking about that is not relevant to the bill are your stupid points of order. Previously, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I ask the member for Granville to withdraw her comment about stupid points of order.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I withdraw the comment.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I have a further point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The member should direct her remarks through the Chair and not make offensive comments across the table of the oldest Parliament in Australia. The member ought to behave in a parliamentary manner instead of in a vituperative, puerile fashion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member's point of order is about vituperative behaviour. The member for Granville will direct her remarks through the Chair. I uphold that part of the point of order. The member will continue.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Previously the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation said repeatedly that there is no need for a commissioner. He repeated that this morning. Despite that long-held view, he recently announced that he would establish a commissioner. It appears that the policy change of heart has its genesis in the wide community support for this bill. *[Time expired.]*

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:36):** Via video link: I speak on behalf of the Government in opposition to the Property Services Council Bill 2021. The purpose of the bill is to constitute and confer functions

on a new government agency, the Real Estate Services Council, which would regulate the real estate and property services industry, with the council taking over the functions and powers of the Fair Trading Commissioner under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002. The New South Wales Opposition moved amendments to the bill to expand its remit to also include administration of the laws governing strata and community schemes. It would provide advice, reports and recommendations to the Minister in relation to matters relevant to the real estate industry, including the business of agents, the education, training and continuing professional development of agents and consumer protection, and provide public information and guidance programs.

The bill provides that the council would be managed by a board comprising nine members, with seven nominated by certain non-government organisations, including the Real Estate Institute of NSW [REINSW] and the Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association [ALPA]. The board would be dominated by the REINSW, which would have three members, while all other groups would have only one. The statutory commissioner and council would be remunerated. The bill will introduce partial self-regulation for the real estate and property services industry by its own members. As my fellow members have argued, that is an undesirable pathway for New South Wales to be heading down. There is no need for such a fundamental change, and it also carries substantial risks.

The functions of the council and the commissioner as proposed by the bill would take over some of the existing regulatory functions of the Fair Trading commissioner. Specifically, the bill would allow the industry council to carry out the following functions: licensing and accreditation of real estate professionals, including decisions about the suitability of applicants; disciplinary action against licence holders for failing to meet licensing standards; compliance and enforcement action, including dealing with complaints from members of the public, issuing penalties and taking disciplinary action against licensees; and maintaining and approving expenditure of money from the Property Services Statutory Interest Account, which currently funds tenancy advocacy programs to help protect vulnerable consumers.

The council would also replace the existing forums and processes for industry consultation, including the Minister's new Property Services Expert Panel, which has only just been formed. The new Property Services Expert Panel is now up and running, with panel members and a chair representing all aspects of the industry—from real estate agents, to stock and station agents, business agents, buyer's agents, strata managers, onsite residential property managers and approved training providers—having been appointed by the Minister. The establishment of the Property Services Expert Panel was announced in December 2020 by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and held its first meeting in March 2021. The panel's terms of reference have been endorsed and panel members are already channelling industry feedback to the Government in accordance with their work plan for the year ahead.

The panel's work plan includes the following priority areas: design and agree to a communications and engagement plan for the property services sector and government; secure feedback from the industry about the first year of operation of the major real estate reforms that commenced on 23 March 2020; develop options for compulsory continuing professional development [CPD] topics for 2021-22; develop policy input into the 2021-22 remake of the Property and Stock Agents Regulation 2014 to ensure that the regulation is fit for purpose and operating as intended; and explore additional data sources held by industry that could assist the Government's decision-making processes.

The panel is the key consultative forum for industry input to the Government on key policies and issues such as the current project to remake the Property and Stock Agents Regulation 2014. In fact, NSW Fair Trading has already begun consulting with industry representatives on the panel about how the drafting of the regulation can be improved to better support the industry and consumers to ensure that the project is informed by industry from the very start. The Property Services Expert Panel has developed a very productive relationship with NSW Fair Trading in communicating and understanding the various public health orders. Together they have worked out what they mean for the property services sector and helped real estate professionals comply with the laws as they unfolded. I commend Chris Duggan, Chair of the Property Services Expert Panel, for leading that important working relationship through a challenging time for us all.

It is the Government's view that the current regulatory arrangements already ensure effective industry oversight and regulation and high-quality engagement with the industry. The Government recently delivered significant reforms that already address many of the concerns that underpin the Property Services Council Bill. In March 2020 it introduced a suite of reforms, with the commencement of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Act 2018. Amended regulations, a new ministerial qualifications order, overhauled continuing professional development requirements and new supervision guidelines also commenced on 23 March 2021.

The reforms delivered on the Government's 2016 commitment to improve standards and professionalism in the property and real estate services industry. They streamline the licensing framework for agents, increase the

qualification requirements and tighten governance and accountability within agencies, especially in relation to trust accounts and overall supervision. For example, certificate of registration holders are now required to complete an approved certificate IV qualification in property services as part of their continuing professional development and obtain a licence within four years of registration. Those changes require agents to continuously upskill and build on their expertise so that vendors, buyers and renters can have confidence in the professionalism and reliability of the agents they deal with. Ultimately, the Government is driving greater compliance and consumer protection outcomes in a better functioning New South Wales property market.

Fair Trading has extensive experience and knowledge of the property industry. It assists with the resolution of thousands of property-related consumer complaints every year from tenants, landlords, prospective purchasers and home owners. It is also a robust and skilled enforcement agency where more serious breaches of the law have been found. For example, in the past 16 months alone Fair Trading has successfully prosecuted 12 real estate licensees for misappropriating trust funds to the value of \$6 million. In the past 15 months Fair Trading has also issued 484 penalty notices for breaches of the law, totalling more than \$568,000 in fines, to licensed professionals under the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002. With the need for such enforcement action, it would be risky to trust an industry-dominated council, such as the one proposed in the bill, to take action against members of its own industry. The Government is not at all convinced that such a council would always act in the public interest. Only a regulator that is truly independent of the industries it regulates can protect consumers and prosecute misconduct in the industry with the vigour that the New South Wales public expects.

During the second reading debate in the other place, some members of the Legislative Council had the mistaken impression that the real estate and property services industry is under-regulated. I regret to say that they have fallen into the trap of believing that the industry is, in fact, crying out for more oversight and that the bill would increase consumer protection from agents who breach the law. The regulatory model proposed in the bill will do no such thing. Members should be wary of any industry that complains of having a regulator like Fair Trading looking over its shoulders and monitoring compliance. An industry that wants to be responsible for its own regulation with a solemn promise that it only has the best interests of consumers at heart needs a second look and should be questioned.

The bill will take regulation of the real estate and property industry down a pathway that is unnecessary and risks stalling the improvements that Fair Trading has delivered by working with problematic real estate agents. I acknowledge the comments made by members in support of the bill, who say the relationship between Fair Trading and the property services industry can certainly be improved. I encourage increased transparent communication and relationship building and engagement with the existing regulation and oversight frameworks so that ultimately the professionalism of the real estate and property services industry can be maintained and that members of the public can have increased faith in these professional services.

Fair Trading's expertise is supported by regular and quality engagement with all sections of the real estate and property industry, beyond just real estate sales and leasing agents. In the past these industry consultations have mainly occurred through the Real Estate Reference Group, which was established five years ago. As members have already discussed, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation established the Property Services Expert Panel to represent a more diverse range of stakeholders compared to the previous Real Estate Reference Group. That is in line with the Government's commitment to ensuring clear and open two-way communication between itself and the key players in the property services industry. The Government's vision for the panel is for it to channel diverse industry perspectives to assist with policy development and provide expert feedback so it can better respond to industry trends. [*Extension of time*].

**Debate interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ROUTINE OF BUSINESS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (11:47):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended this day to permit:

- (1) The resumption, after the formalities following Question Time, of the second reading debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021.
- (2) For debate to continue until concluded and the question is put on the second reading of the Property Services Council Bill 2021.
- (3) The interruption of the debate at 4.00 p.m. for the debate on the 20,000 signature petition.
- (4) The House to resume debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021, if required, after the conclusion of the debate on the 20,000 signature petition.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:48):** I take it the suspension of standing orders is in the terms that the Leader of the House discussed with me a short time ago.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** It is in the terms that were circulated.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I have not had a chance to read them.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I warrant and represent that they conform with our discussion.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The Opposition supports the motion and would support any motion to give additional time to members of the Legislative Assembly on private members' day to contribute to bills before the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **PROPERTY SERVICES COUNCIL BILL 2021**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Business resumed.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:49):** The Government's vision for the Property Services Expert Panel contrasts with the Property Services Council proposed by the bill, which is led and dominated by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. We all want the property services sector to have a strong working relationship with government. As the Minister said in his speech during the second reading debate, the relationship between the industry and the regulator needs to be improved to ensure it is responsive to the needs of property services professionals. With that in mind, the Liberal-Nationals Government will be establishing a new position of a property services commissioner to support the New South Wales real estate industry and consumers who interact with it. The commissioner will be given a mandate to improve the customer experience of property services professionals, be an advocate for delivery of services and regulation by and to the industry. The commissioner will be an independent industry expert to ensure the Government is getting the very best advice on how to work with this important sector of the New South Wales economy.

Expert commentators on regulatory practice often note that industry-specific regulators carry a risk of regulatory capture, which happens when the regulated industry dominates or becomes too strongly connected to the responsible regulatory agency. For some decades now, industry-specific regulatory models have been avoided or abandoned at both State and Commonwealth level. The regulatory model proposed in the bill runs counter to the direction of regulatory policy in consumer protection in recent years, and the Government is loath to change course. In particular, the bill provides for a governance structure in which the Real Estate Institute is represented by three members on the council's board as opposed to other groups that will only be allocated one representative. There have previously been similar councils to the one proposed in the bill, which have been abandoned for lack of tangible return on investment of the Government's time and resources.

The bill proposes a similar statutory authority that was established under the repealed Real Estate Services Council Act 1990. As an economy-wide regulator, on the other hand, Fair Trading is independent of the real estate and property services sector and all other industries it regulates. That independence is critical to its credibility in safeguarding the public interest. An example of that is Fair Trading's use of the consumer complaints register, which was introduced in 2016 to protect consumers by helping them make informed purchasing decisions. The complaints register is the first of its kind in Australia and is published monthly on the Fair Trading website, listing the businesses that Fair Trading received 10 or more consumer complaints about in the previous month.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Motions*

## **COOTAMUNDRA TURF CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:52):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the Government's announcement of \$300,000 to the Cootamundra Turf Club for an upgrade to its grandstand.
- (2) Acknowledges this funding is part of a \$67 million investment for regional racetracks.
- (3) Recognises the Government's contribution to regional New South Wales.

It is a pleasure to highlight the investment of \$300,000 for a much-needed upgrade of the Cootamundra grandstand as part of the New South Wales Government's \$67 million investment in regional racetracks. With the support of

the New South Wales Government, the project will see the full removal of the grandstand's flooring and its replacement with an all-weather flooring option, as well as the installation of new seating. Concerns about the future of the Cootamundra grandstand were brought to my attention by the Cootamundra Turf Club president, Anna Mullins, and members of the committee. I met with them in February this year. We have worked closely together over the past four years. The club has previously secured three grants amounting to just under \$150,000 for repairs to the function room and for irrigation upgrades at the grounds. The near century-old grandstand is now simply no longer withstanding the elements. It is not a good sign when rain leaks through the grandstand flooring into the function room below. That is why I am delighted that the New South Wales Government has lent its support to the project.

The Cootamundra Turf Club on Racecourse Lane in Cootamundra is home to the annual Cootamundra Picnic Races and the Cootamundra Cup. The venue also plays host to a wide range of events, from weddings to birthday parties and other gatherings of the Cootamundra community. Many memories have been made at the much-loved venue. The project is about ensuring the local racing facilities are more user friendly, supporting greater numbers at the community's major events and greater visitation to the region. The benefits of an upgrade such as this will reach well beyond the immediate facility. Ensuring facilities at local race meets are more user friendly will support greater visitation at major events, meaning more people are staying in local hotels, eating at local cafes, shopping in local stores and boosting the local economy. Additionally, the Cootamundra Turf Club is planning on engaging with local tradies and members of the community to complete the upgrades, and keeping works local will be a boost to the local economy.

I extend my thanks to Cootamundra Turf Club president Anna Mullins, secretary Lynn Smith, treasurer Craig McTavish, vice-presidents Greg Ewings and Brad Shields, and committee members Gary Arthur, Margaret Wallace, Richard Coulton, Mick Chester, Jo Chester, Radar Donaghue, Peter Dawson, Dick McAllister, Karlie Johnson, Karney Chester, Rohan Doullman and Nigel Marion. They are strong advocates for the racecourse and devote countless unpaid hours to ensuring the important facility is in great shape for the benefit of current and future generations of locals and visitors.

The New South Wales Government's support of the racing industry extends well beyond the Cootamundra Turf Club project. I will highlight other investments in my electorate across the racing codes. Racing is a passion shared across the generations. Temora Greyhound Racing Club is one of my electorate's strongest clubs, and it has continued to work hard on upgrading its facilities to make the club more family friendly for its events. With support from the New South Wales Government, it has installed new children's play equipment to create a more inclusive family-friendly environment. Cowra Showground, Racecourse and Paceway Trust, and Gundagai Racecourse have both received significant investments by the New South Wales Government for works including upgraded amenities, lighting, equipment and a new race commentary tower.

Again, I acknowledge the committees and teams right across the Cootamundra electorate who work tirelessly behind the scenes on the countless projects currently underway. It is heartening to know that the continued investment by the New South Wales Government will ensure all racing codes emerge stronger than ever from the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a lot of work that goes into the production of racing events, but it all pays off when one hears the main street hum with hordes of people coming into town on race day and sees the income generated for the local communities.

I made the point already that these facilities are not just for single racing events held during the racing season. They are also community facilities, available all year round for community functions, charity and private events, rural shows and more. Maintaining these facilities are crucial to the survival of some local events. It has been great to see the New South Wales Government give racing organisations a hand to ensure the facilities are up to standard and safe for everyone to use. To that end, the New South Wales Government has invested a record \$67 million in regional racetracks in the 2021-22 New South Wales budget to deliver better facilities for punters and racegoers. That is the single largest investment in grassroots regional racing and racing infrastructure in the history of New South Wales, with every dollar going into small regional racecourses. The investment is the envy of racing in every other State and Territory and cements our State as the leading jurisdiction for racing in the Southern Hemisphere.

In addition to the project in my electorate, the program includes \$20 million to the Scone racetrack for a poly-training surface and stables, and \$4.2 million to the Muswellbrook racetrack for patrons facilities, which the member for Upper Hunter will update the House on. There is also \$750,000 for Moruya for stabling and \$500,000 for Queanbeyan for upgrades to the irrigation system. Those projects have been earmarked by Racing NSW to provide the biggest shot in the arm for regional racing in the history of the New South Wales Government. Racing is a central plank to the social lives and local economies of many regions in New South Wales. In closing, I wish the Cootamundra Turf Club Committee all the very best with the upgrades. No doubt there will be working bees ahead of the main works. I look forward to catching up with everyone on the ground again soon.



**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (11:59):** I make a contribution in support of the motion. I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing the issue to the attention of the House. The Cootamundra grandstand upgrade is part of a \$67 million investment into regional racing in New South Wales and it will have multiplying effects throughout the regions. Racing is a major industry in the New South Wales economy and it has broad appeal. I applaud Minister Anderson for his work in delivering the investment package. The Hunter Valley will get \$20 million for Scone Race Club, \$4.2 million for Muswellbrook racetrack and the clubhouse, and \$11 million for Cessnock Racecourse. We should all be proud of those investments, and I am particularly proud of what they mean for the Upper Hunter.

In the horse-breeding world, there are three world-renowned centres of excellence: Kentucky, Newmarket and the Hunter Valley in New South Wales. For those who cannot fathom what the industry means to us, let me elaborate: It is much more than just a horse, a jockey and a bookie. There are many aspects to this industry: the stewards, the grooms, the trainers, the horseracing industry itself, the tourism and hospitality events structured around the industry and the social life that goes around it, the cropping industry that provides the horse food, and the medical and the transport industry. There are no economies of scale within the horse industry; it is a simple formula: Every horse adds another magnitude of strength.

The investment in the Scone racetrack will create a centre of excellence that the world will be jealous of. It includes 500 to 600 stables; modernisation of the walking machines, swimming pools and treadmills; the replacement of the sand track to a poly track to increase rider safety and to reduce the amount of water that is used—particularly important to our area, which is prone to drought—and rehabilitation areas, all of which will bring jobs to serve many different parts of our community. I have faith in plans in the future for a conference centre and on-site accommodation, and it is a healthy vision indeed. I thank the Scone Race Club Committee, comprising Chair Alastair Pulford, Damien Toose, Daniel Morgan, Peter Townsend and Arthur Mitchell, for its vision. I also thank Paul Messara for his design work, and I pay special tribute to the Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre led by Mr Bill Rose—fantastic work.

The investment in the Scone Race Club is already delivering runs on the board. There is growth in industry confidence, leading to land being purchased and design work being done for a multimillion-dollar equine hospital to be built. I thank Dr Cameron Collins and his team from the Scone Equine Hospital for their confidence for the industry in our area. The Scone Cup is held every year, and I invite every member to join us next autumn for one of the greatest events in New South Wales. The success is being echoed at Muswellbrook as well, with a huge investment in the patron facilities. It is a clubhouse I know well.

Just after the existing clubhouse was built 25 years ago, it was the venue for my wife's twenty-first birthday party, a night I remember well—at least the first half. Today we see an opportunity for that clubhouse to be refreshed, which will be a huge investment for punters and people who visit that facility. I especially thank the Muswellbrook Race Club, including Chair John Sunderland, Keith Gooze, Jon McTaggart, Heather Parry and Jim Rodger. Further investment will go to the Cessnock Racecourse as we see regional strength come together in the area. Throughout the Hunter Valley, we love our racing industry. We love the jobs that it brings and we love the people in the industry—and they are our people. The Government's investment in grassroots regional racing is an investment into country New South Wales. Racing is not just an industry; it is a passion for thousands of people right across New South Wales. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:04):** I acknowledge the outstanding member for Cootamundra and the National Party whip, Steph Cooke, for bringing the motion to the House. I note the fantastic contribution from the member for Upper Hunter, who has hit the track running since being elected at that by-election. He has got his feet firmly in the stirrups and he is doing absolutely everything he can to improve the racing industry in the Upper Hunter, as we have just heard.

As the member for Terrigal and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, I am delighted to speak on the motion brought to the House today by the member for Cootamundra. The racing industry is flourishing on the Central Coast and across New South Wales. I have had the pleasure of working side by side with The Entertainment Grounds at Gosford, formally known as the Gosford Race Club. The venue has been rebranded and re-energised into an incredible organisation. Recently, it was lucky enough to receive \$3.4 million worth of funding to help construct an all-weather training surface. I acknowledge the outstanding work of its CEO Daniel Lacey, the commercial manager Kristina Ayton, operations manager Matthew Hill, finance manager John Drummond, track manager Stephen Scollard, marketing assistant Lana Williams, the hospitality and event sale coordinator Andrea Young, accounts assistant Tracey Bellenger and the fantastic receptionist Stacy Fraider. Whenever you ring up The Entertainment Grounds, her friendly voice is always at the end of the phone wanting to know how she can help you.

The rebranded facility is not just a racing facility but an entertainment grounds for the Central Coast. It has hosted multiple functions with former Premier Berejiklian and the former Treasurer and now Premier Perrottet.

I have had the pleasure of speaking to our community about the Gosford Gold Cup, which is the Melbourne Cup for the Central Coast. They asked me to do a video, which I was absolutely delighted to do. There I was standing on the track, all 5'7" of me, next to a 17.5-hand-high non-gelding. I have to say it was slightly intimidating because he was up there and I was down here. It was pretty tough, but we got the job done and the video was great promotion for the Gosford Gold Cup.

The race club was awarded a standalone race day in 2020, which is the most significant event in the club's calendar over its 100-year history. With that came the addition of a new race called The Coast, an unrestricted quality handicap over 1,600 metres for three- and four-year-old horses. The Coast will offer a \$500,000 purse, the highest prize money ever for a single race day event at The Entertainment Grounds. I was asked once again to take part in promoting that event. It was done at Terrigal Beach, the first time we had a racehorse at Terrigal Beach. All I have to say is that it was a much nicer 14-hand-high mare in a much more relaxed state and it was delightful to be able to promote this fantastic event, which has turned out well.

COVID has presented its challenges for The Entertainment Grounds, which has risen to the challenge. It found new ways to help support the community in a broader way. It is great to see so many young people enjoy the social activity of racing. Growing up, my parents had racehorses and I know how much fun it was to go to the track with them. It is great to see The Entertainment Grounds working with the community, utilising the fantastic investment of \$3.4 million from the State Government. I am sure there is more to come because the racing team at The Entertainment Grounds is absolutely outstanding and professional. We look forward to a more exciting future for The Entertainment Grounds at Gosford.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:09):** In reply: I thank the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Terrigal. My colleague the Government Whip in the Legislative Assembly is always a hard act to follow. I thank them for contributing to the debate and for supporting what I believe is a really important motion. I acknowledge the work that they are doing in their communities and thank them for highlighting the great work that is happening in racing at a grassroots level. I also thank Minister Anderson for his leadership in the racing space, delivering record funding for racing, particularly at a grassroots level in regional New South Wales where we really love these events and it is important that the facilities are right for now and generations to come.

I highlighted the \$300,000 investment for a necessary upgrade to the Cootamundra grandstand as part of the New South Wales Government's investment into regional racetracks. I cannot stress enough how pleased I am that the Government has lent its support to this really important project, which is about supporting and improving the future of our local racing facilities to enable greater numbers at major events and increase visitation to the area. A greater number of people attending local events will help boost the local economy. There are 550 full-time employees across the racing industry in the Riverina region alone. It is really important that we have got all of the facilities, the infrastructure and the programs in place to keep those people in their jobs and support their families. The money goes around and around in the local economy.

The fantastic \$67 million investment in regional racetracks by the New South Wales Government will deliver better facilities in towns and communities across New South Wales. It will provide for more jobs, more money coming into local towns, increased tourism and higher quality race meets, which is fantastic for racegoers. Racing is a passion for thousands of people across regional New South Wales and I am really delighted that the investment will continue to allow that passion to grow and develop in the regions. The Government recognises that racing is more than just a single event in regional communities; it is part of the culture. Previous speakers have spoken about how that comes to life. The investment will make racing more enjoyable for those attending events.

The investment comes at a crucial time to support regional New South Wales as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. I thank the New South Wales Government for the investment, which will go to every corner of the State. The Cootamundra Turf Club deserves the investment in its facilities, and the grandstand upgrade will create more local jobs, boost the local economy and provide the quality of racing that we deserve in our part of the world. The continued investment in regional New South Wales by the New South Wales Government will continue to build and support great projects and infrastructure, and be fantastic for attracting more visitors and families in our part of the world well into the future. I thank the House for its indulgence today in considering the motion.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **WHISTLEBLOWER LEGISLATION**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:14):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises encouraging individuals to report wrongdoing, and protecting them when they do, is essential for corruption prevention.
- (2) Notes the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] recommended enhanced protections for whistleblowers in 2014.
- (3) Notes in 2017, the Committee on the ICAC recommended that the ICAC Act be amended to protect people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC against criminal, civil and disciplinary liability, and reprisal action for doing so.
- (4) Notes in 2018, the Government committed to the preparation of a bill to protect whistleblowers who disclose to the ICAC.
- (5) Calls on the Government to introduce legislation to better protect whistleblowers who disclose information or evidence to the ICAC prior to the 2023 State Election.

It has been a long time coming, but I acknowledge that the Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts has introduced the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021 in the Legislative Council. The bill includes a range of measures to address the important issue of whistleblowers. Therefore, it is critical that this motion highlights to the House the genesis of the issue and the reason it is important to ensure that individuals report wrongdoing and that they have protections.

In 2014 the ICAC made a submission to the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The committee's discussion paper entitled *Prosecutions Arising from Independent Commission Against Corruption Investigations* included 21 submissions. The report contained some very useful proposals but none of them were taken up by the Government. Those proposals were about the adequacy of funding for the ICAC. The ICAC called on the Government to introduce an amendment to the Crimes Act that would make a provision for new offences around misconduct in public office. It also recommended that there should be statutory offences into not just misconduct but also common law offences of bribery and conspiring to defraud a public authority or public official. They should also be regulated as part of the Crimes Act. The ICAC went on to make a range of other suggestions about changes to the Crimes Act. One of the issues I took most seriously was in regard to protection for voluntary disclosures.

I put forward a private member's bill on that matter in 2016 and it was voted down. I acknowledge former Premier Gladys Berejiklian because she supported that proposal and said that it should go to the Committee on the ICAC. In 2017 the committee issued 10 recommendations and basically supported the thrust of the private member's bill. I also acknowledge the Minister for Finance and Small Business, who was the chair of that committee at that time. He did an outstanding job on that committee to make sure that the experience from the anti-corruption community was brought to bear to make very positive recommendations. It took a long time for there to be any action. I asked the then Premier a question in May 2018, who said it was coming. Again, I introduced a private member's bill on the matter and that was voted down in 2019. I asked the then Premier again in June 2019, March 2020 and May 2021, and I am very pleased to see that the bill has progressed to the stage where it will be before the House.

I will highlight why the bill is so important. It is not just about lawyers and politicians and commissions pontificating; it has real world impacts. In 2014 two parking inspectors worked at the now-defunct Auburn City Council and they were sacked because they revealed alleged attempts to stop them issuing fines at a councillor's private property developments. They said that in 2014 they were given repeated directions to give preferential treatment to elected members of Auburn council in western Sydney. They alleged that they were directed to stop issuing fines to construction works on developments owned by particular Auburn councillors, and the rangers disclosed that information to the ICAC. Not long after the inquiry finished, the two rangers were suspended for speaking to an independent councillor and they were said to have breached the council's code of conduct and were terminated. That should not be allowed to happen.

If people make disclosures and those disclosures are made to ICAC, there needs to be protection for those people. I am pleased that after almost seven years after the original recommendation from ICAC, there is now a bill before the House that members can rigorously examine. We discuss its merits to make sure that people who disclose to ICAC or any other government agency have the capacity to be protected from retribution. I also acknowledge the member for Mulgoa, who is the chair of the committee on the ICAC. She has always been supportive of proposals I have put before the ICAC committee for us to follow up with Minister Harwin and the Premier. I acknowledge the support of the committee on the ICAC, which has always forwarded letters and pursued the matter diligently at my request. I acknowledge the chair and the members of the committee. I note that the member for Heffron is in the Chamber. I thank the committee for its support.

I understand that the statutory review that was undertaken was also an important step forward. The review was conducted in October 2017 by the joint Parliamentary Committee on the Ombudsman, Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission. Its report made 38 recommendations for reform. I am delighted that the motion is not one born from me pressing and continuing to cajole the Government, and that we now have a bill before us. But I suggest to the Government for the future that six or seven years is too long. The issue has

real-world implications. I am pleased and hopeful that we will soon debate the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021. Its provisions are absolutely critical for good governance, confidence in public agencies, confidence in our Parliament and confidence in our democracy. At a time when democracy is under attack in so many places around the world, it is important to stand for ethical government. I hope the motion will be supported by the House and I hope we see a high-quality Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021 pass imminently.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:21):** Via video link: On behalf of the Government, I support the motion put forward by the member for Balmain, and thank him for raising the issue in this place. Our society needs whistleblowers as an added layer to ensure transparency and accountability. It is important that they have protection and support. I am glad to join the member for Balmain in supporting the motion and acknowledge the work he has put in over a long period. It is always nice when things align and work in unison. I was happy to see the Special Minister of State introduce a bill in the other place just last week entitled the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021. My understanding is that it has been referred to a committee for consideration, which is required to report by November. Depending on the outcome of the committee process, we can be assured that reform is imminent. As for paragraph (5) of the member's motion, which calls on the Government to finally introduce legislation to better protect whistleblowers, we can confidently tick that box.

While we wait for the bill to pass the other place and reach this House, it is useful to understand the genesis of the impending reform. In 2017 the joint Parliamentary Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission undertook a review into the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994. In October 2017 the committee tabled its report, in which it made 38 recommendations. The following month, the joint Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption tabled its own report into the inquiry into protections for people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC, in which it made 10 recommendations.

In response to the Ombudsman committee's report, the Government indicated its support to make it simpler for public officials to make public interest disclosures, and improve protections and remedies for those who suffer detrimental action. In doing so, the Government noted the importance of continuing to protect the reputation of individuals against defamation, and discouraged the disclosure of confidential information. To that end, the Government asked the Public Interest Disclosure Steering Committee, chaired by the Ombudsman, to examine in detail the implementation issues arising from the committee's report and consider a draft bill prepared in response to it. In response to the ICAC committee's report, the Government indicated its support for providing protections to people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC in appropriate circumstances. As the committee noted, in doing so, it remained important to continue to protect individuals from reputational damage arising from the public disclosure of vexatious and untrue corruption allegations.

In drafting the bill to give effect to a new public interest disclosure regime, the Government pledged to consult with the ICAC, through its membership on the Public Interest Disclosure Steering Committee, and consider its views with respect to voluntary disclosures to the ICAC. A new bill will draw on the legacy of the original bill back in 1994. That bill was introduced by the Fahey Government and was a landmark for its time. It represented the first comprehensive whistleblower legislation in the country, and set the precedent for comparable schemes across the nation. The scheme has served the public well. But, over time, its utility has waned, it has become complicated to follow and it can no longer be considered fit for purpose. It is for that reason the Government pledged to introduce—and has introduced—a comprehensive rewrite of the Public Interest Disclosures Act.

Therefore, I reiterate that the Government has no objection to the motion from the member for Balmain. We are getting on with the job by giving effect to the committee's recommendations, introducing a new Act and reforming the public interest disclosures regime in New South Wales. On behalf of the Government, I support the motion.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:25):** I support the motion moved by the member for Balmain. It is carefully worded in a way that should receive the unanimous endorsement of the House. The member for Holsworthy indicated that the Government responded to paragraph (5) of the motion by introducing the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021 in the other place to begin to deal with the issue. I also acknowledge the accuracy of the history given by the member for Balmain in getting to this point, and his relentless advocacy for whistleblower protection. The matter has been subject to detailed consideration and public hearings by the Independent Commission Against Corruption oversight committee, which made a series of recommendations.

I acknowledge earlier attempts to introduce these sorts of provisions in private members' bills. The member for Balmain talked about providing a statutory definition for the offence of misconduct in public office. I remind the House and anyone from the Attorney General's Department who may still be considering that issue that the common law offence of misconduct in public office was comprehensively interpreted by the Court of Criminal Appeal only last year in the matter of *R v McDonald*—the reference escapes me at this time. The offence is now

clear and does not require interference from the Legislature. The issue of concern highlighted by the ICAC oversight committee when it made its recommendations back in 2007—and no doubt the reason for the Government's delay in producing legislation—is that it is not as easy as it sounds. Integrity agencies are quite content to receive any information and any complaint from any person. The committee was concerned—as no doubt was the Government when it sought to introduce a bill; the issue is complex—to provide some mechanism to deter complaints to integrity agencies from being weaponised.

The weaponising of complaints generates complaints that have no substance, which interferes with those that have substance. Those who manufacture complaints—say, for political purposes—that have no substance, no material and no reasonable grounds are subject to an offence of public mischief and can be charged. The problem is that the people who commit such acts are never brought to justice. You do not want your integrity agencies to be overwhelmed by vexatious complaints, but at the same time you want to protect those who legitimately provide information to the integrity agencies so that they can pursue serious and systemic corruption. It has been shown in this State for 30 years now that the source of complaints about serious and systemic corruption is whistleblowers who have genuinely brought that material to integrity agencies. The issue and the motion—its substance and its wording—deserve the support of the House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:30):** I support the motion. The Government strongly backs strengthening protections for public officials who make public interest disclosures. The Government also supports enhancing remedies for people who suffer detrimental action as a result of their whistleblowing. This has been a longstanding commitment by the Liberal Party and The Nationals. I acknowledge the persistence of the member for Balmain in chasing down this issue and his longstanding interest in it. The legislation was introduced by the Fahey Government in 1994 and was the first of its kind in Australia. It protects public officials who make disclosures about corrupt conduct, public maladministration or serious and substantial financial waste.

While the Act has served the public well, it is over 25 years old; its provisions are now considered out of date and difficult to administer. In October 2007 Parliament referred the Act to the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission for review. In its report the committee made 38 recommendations for amendment. One of the principal recommendations was that the Act be redrafted to simplify its provisions and structure. One month later the ICAC made a further 10 recommendations with respect to protections for people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC. The Government then committed to giving effect to these recommendations by introducing new legislation. It has taken some time, but it has been a careful process—which the member for Balmain has been following—that has now produced the Public Interest Disclosures Bill, which is before the Legislative Council.

I am sure this significant bill will have the support of parliamentarians from both sides of the Chamber. We all have a strong interest in protecting the integrity of public life and those who seek to support that integrity by making disclosures regarding legitimate concerns about the conduct of others, where that conduct may undermine the integrity of public administration. It is testament to the hard work and abilities of both of the committees involved that the bill will respond to the issues raised by those committees. The Government fully supports appropriate reforms to enhance the public interest regime in this State. The Government has done the hard yards and is getting on with the job of delivering quality reform in public administration. We can only hope that when the bill is presented to this House it is in a state that allows us to move forward with unity on this issue.

It is something that is beyond politics. It is not a partisan issue. We all support good governance. We all support integrity and want to see democracy served well. The public interest and the interests of the people who elected us to represent them must come first and foremost in all that we undertake. That is a fine proposition to put, but a difficult one to always see put into practice. It behoves all of us to work to that end, to do whatever it takes to ensure that principle is upheld in the structures we put in place, through the legislation we support and in the culture of the organisation of which we are a part. In line with the Government's longstanding commitment to reform, I support the motion.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (12:33):** I speak on behalf of the Government in support of the motion brought forward by the member for Balmain. Comprehensive legislation to protect whistleblowers has been one of the hallmarks of integrity architecture in this State. An Act to protect public officials from reprisal action for whistleblowing has been in effect for over a quarter of a century. This protection allows public officials to make public interest disclosures with respect to corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of financial resources, privacy legislation contraventions and contraventions of local government pecuniary interests. Despite the best intentions of the legislation, the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, as currently drafted, has complicated disclosure pathways that undermine the purpose of the scheme. It is time for reform.

Last week Special Minister of State the Hon. Don Harwin gave notice to introduce a new public interest disclosures bill into the other place. The bill puts in place a new framework described by the Minister as a "no wrong door" approach. It simplifies the disclosure process and enhances protections for individuals who make a

disclosure. In its examination of the Public Interest Disclosures Act, the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission heard that there are elements of the system requiring improvement. The committee focused on simplifying the disclosure process, improving remedies for detrimental action, refining reporting requirements and providing clarification to the Act. In examining the disclosure process the committee found gaps, or technicalities, in the legislation that could cause people who make disclosures to miss out on protections.

A new bill will draw on the legacy of the original bill from 1994, which represented the first comprehensive whistleblower legislation in the country and set precedent for comparable schemes across the nation. While this legislation has served its purpose well, over time it has become complicated to follow and its utility has lessened. For this reason, the Government has pledged to introduce a comprehensive rewrite of the Public Interest Disclosures Act. This bill sets out a modernised legislative framework for managing information exposed by public officers who make disclosures about serious misconduct or wrongdoing in the New South Wales public sector and providing those officers with protection from civil and criminal legal action. On the committee's recommendations this bill will ensure that the disclosure process is simplified, technicalities that cause disclosures to miss out on protections are removed and that the protections around detrimental actions are enhanced. As mentioned, the Government has already pledged to introduce legislation to remedy these deficiencies with the legislation. I support the motion and commend it to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:37):** In reply: I thank the members for Holsworthy, Heffron, Riverstone and Miranda for their contributions to the debate. They were thoughtful and illustrated a good understanding of the history and complexity around this issue. As I mentioned in my introductory speech, I note that the Special Minister of State has now introduced a bill on this matter. I note that my motion calls on the Government to do this before the State election. It is something that I welcome. In 2019 I asked the Premier in the House when the bill would be ready. The Government committed to have it ready by the end of 2019. Before that other commitments were made. I believe there was goodwill on the part of the Government. I acknowledge the important role of the former Premier and her very important work in this area, but it is a complex area of law. I understand there were over 30 drafts of this bill.

The NSW Ombudsman is the chair of the steering committee that had the function to advise the Government on this matter. I acknowledge integrity agencies such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for their involvement. I note this is a very complex area. It is critical to maintain confidence in the system. Previously, people have suffered because of the inadequate disclosure protections. In this motion I am focusing on the ICAC. The Public Interest Disclosure Bill has a no wrong door approach towards disclosure. It will no doubt improve the existing arrangements. I understand that in the other place it has been referred to a short, sharp—as they call it—parliamentary inquiry. I will be following that very closely. I want to make sure that the steering committee's views are adequately reflected in the bill and that we follow through on all of the issues that have been identified by the parliamentary committee on the ICAC and the other oversight committees that have examined this matter.

I acknowledge all the people who have contributed to the bill. It still has some way to go because obviously we want to make it as robust and as strong as possible. I highlight how important it is to address the issues I have raised in a speedy manner. In 2014 the ICAC originally proposed changes to whistleblowing provisions in its legislation. It has taken six or seven years to get to this point. I understand the Government wants to do a whole-of-sector review, which will be positive, but I fear that period is a very long time to wait, especially considering the concerns around the inadequacy of disclosure protection that were identified six or seven years ago.

Moving forward I hope there is a robust disclosure regime to make sure that we acknowledge, support and encourage whistleblowing and the disclosure of corrupt activity. As a member of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption I have seen clearly how critical the ICAC and encouraging disclosures are. The police cannot uncover all corrupt actions. It is very difficult to uncover them through disclosures unless public officials feel that they have confidence disclosing potentially corrupt activities. I thank all members who spoke in the debate on the motion. I appreciate the thoughtful contributions they made. I look forward to the Public Interest Disclosures Bill being enacted. I will continue to push for more changes to make sure that this State has the best anti-corruption and disclosure regime in the country.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **LOCAL SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:41):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes Mosman High School, North Sydney Demonstration School and Neutral Bay Public School are receiving significant investments and upgrades.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government has worked with the local school communities to ensure schools receive these state-of-the-art upgrades.
- (3) Notes the Government is delivering on its commitments to upgrade local schools.
- (4) Thanks the Premier and Treasurer for investing in local school infrastructure ensuring that the Government provides the best learning for local students.

Schools in my local area and across New South Wales are reaping the benefits of the Government's investment in public education infrastructure. It has committed \$7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools across the State. That is the most significant investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. It is exciting to see that early works have started in my community on the major upgrade of Mosman High School. During the recent school holidays, work commenced preparing the site with temporary classrooms, an administration office and a library that the students and teachers will use during the main upgrade works, which will start later this year. The Government has worked closely with the school community, and the wider Mosman community, to ensure that we get the design right for Mosman village and local students. I thank Principal Susan Wyatt, former P & C presidents Evan Predavec and Gerhard Beukes, and current P & C president Richard Fechner for their commitment to seeing the project through.

Mosman High School is being re-envisioned as a modern place of learning for generations to come. The constrained site will be transformed to create modular, multi-use components that will enhance students' creative and academic capacity. The exterior design of the school will complement the built environment and village aesthetic of Mosman. The upgrade includes 16 new home-base classrooms, new administration and staff facilities, a new library, a multipurpose gym and hall, an outdoor rooftop play space—which, I must say, will have views that will make many people across Sydney very jealous—and new canteen facilities. One area of the project that I am excited about is the brand-new theatre. People who know Mosman High School know that the school is renowned for its creativity, particularly in the dramatic and visual arts. Having an incredible theatre, which has been painted a stunning bright red, as an icon in the middle of the school is an exciting contribution to the students, and to the culture and values of the school. I am excited to see that the works have commenced on this once-in-a-generation project. The last time Mosman High School was upgraded was under a former Liberal government and it has not had any major investment since.

Planning is also progressing for upgrades to North Sydney Demonstration School and Neutral Bay Public School. I am stoked that there will be upgrades to three major schools across my community. We are working quickly to get shovels in the ground at North Sydney Demonstration School by early next year. This much-loved school is getting a well-deserved makeover to allow it to continue offering excellent teaching and learning facilities to the many new families that call North Sydney home. The upgrade is an investment in current and future students, and will see the replacement of the old demountables that are strewn across the campus with 16 new and refurbished classrooms, a new school hall, an upgrade to administration facilities, and improved outdoor learning spaces.

The community has played an essential part in helping shape the design so far and advocated strongly for the project. My thanks go to new principal Fiona Davies, who came to the school during COVID. She has had a challenging but already very successful first year. I also thank former principal Myra Wearne, who, for a long period, led the activity and work behind getting the infrastructure approved; former P & C presidents Laurens Liberton and David Bond, who were also very instrumental; and current P & C president Luke McElnea for their dedication to getting the project off the ground.

In the recent budget, funding was secured for a major upgrade that will fully fund Neutral Bay Public School. It will ensure that this high-performing school will continue to be a great place to learn and grow. The Government has worked with the teachers and the school community to co-design state-of-the-art new buildings that will deliver the learning needs of students and school staff. That means getting rid of demountable classrooms while ensuring that the school can accommodate future growth. A key component of that involved connecting the land along Yeo Street, which is currently utilised for the broader school community, to Kindyland through the acquisition of a property to create a bulwark between those two parts of the school. The property will soon be demolished and the land turned into space for students and teachers to use. The site is incredibly constrained, as is the case in many parts of my community due to the density of housing. These are the types of things that this Government is doing to get the school facilities and play spaces that our students need.

I acknowledge Neutral Bay Public School principal Judy Goodsell and deputy principal Victor Tan. I also acknowledge the work of the P & C over many years, particularly that of current P & C president Liz Henry. She works very closely with me on a number of matters related to the school, and not just because the school is across

the road from my electorate office—we get to see each other quite a bit. I acknowledge the hard work and persistence of all the P & C members and the school council, notably council member Jillian Skinner, who has been an advocate for, and involved with, Neutral Bay Public School for more than a generation. Her decades of contribution and work to get the upgrade to the school off the ground need to be acknowledged.

The Government is rolling out a school COVID stimulus program as part of the economic response to the pandemic. A total of \$120 million from the Regional and Metro Renewal Program will provide a government co-contribution of between 50 per cent and 80 per cent for school infrastructure improvements to high priority schools in Sydney. The projects include improvements to covered outdoor learning areas [COLAs] science facilities and toilet blocks. Seven schools in my community will benefit from the second round of funding. Mosman Public School will see its learning spaces upgraded and Mosman High School will receive an upgrade to its science labs, which is on top of a major upcoming upgrade in a different part of the school.

North Sydney Demonstration School will receive an upgrade to its staff room and staff toilets before its major upgrade kicks off. Beauty Point Public School has received funding for a hard surface COLA. Cammeraygal High School's junior campus will have work done to improve shade in the playground area. Middle Harbour Public School will receive an upgrade to its toilets. North Sydney Girls High School—with its most illustrious alumni, including the Hon. Shelley Hancock—will receive an upgrade to its science labs. Finally, North Sydney Boys High School will receive upgrades to its kitchen, prep room and storeroom for food technology classes. These projects will improve the capacity of local schools to deliver quality education for our kids. I thank the Perrottet Government and the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning for their continued investment in our schools.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:48):** Despite what the Premier said in the Chamber, this Government's investment in public education infrastructure is a perfect example of a tale of two cities. I am not saying that Mosman High School should not have a redevelopment, but the redevelopment is being built to meet its growth demands by 2031—which is an increase of just over 80 students. Meanwhile, this Government has put 25,000 residents in Wentworth Point and on the Sydney Olympic Park peninsula with no high school at all. For a decade we have waited for school infrastructure, and it just has not been built. Now the Government has come up with a proposal for Sydney Olympic Park high school—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I ask the member for Blue Mountains to stop holding up signs or she will be put on a call to order.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister has taken a point of order.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Two days ago the member for Blue Mountains held up offensive signs during debate stating, "Liar", "Moron" and "You have blood on your hands". This occurred while I was speaking to a local government bill. I ask that her behaviour be drawn to the attention of the Speaker and that the member be either disciplined or removed from the Chamber. It is a breach of the trust that is placed in members of the Parliament.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** To the point of order—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** She is representing her community in the mountains, which is sick of getting smashed.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Further to the point of order: If Government members held up signs like that in this Chamber the Opposition would ask for those members to be removed from the Chamber. The member for Blue Mountains has been warned and obviously has not listened.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** Further to the point of order: The Parliament is sitting in unusual circumstances. Members on this side of the Chamber have no opportunity to contribute to debate because a decision has been made that they cannot attend the Parliament. It is fine for the member for South Coast to get up and attack the member for Blue Mountains, but time and time again in this Chamber debate is stopped so that voices other than those of Government members are not heard. Government members deliberately stop debate in this Chamber. How many times do Opposition members have the opportunity to talk about our local communities? This Government deliberately stops debate. The member for Blue Mountains and others are stuck in their electorates and are not allowed in the Chamber. Members of Parliament have a right to represent their communities. I ask that members of Parliament be given some leeway considering the situation we find ourselves in during the COVID pandemic.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Members of Parliament do not hold up signs in the Chamber and it is expected that the behaviour of members online reflect their behaviour in the Chamber.



**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** It is alright for the member for South Coast to sit in the Chamber and slag off the member for Blue Mountains all day. What does she do in question time?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Auburn will come to order. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Auburn be instructed to refrain from making personal comments across the Chamber and to direct her comments through the Chair. If she had any idea of the standing orders of this place—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I ask all members to direct all comments through the Chair.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** To the point of order: It would also be appreciated if during question time Government members did not sit on the back bench and constantly yell out personal remarks about members on this side of the Chamber. The member for South Coast is the biggest offender.

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

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** To the point of order: I understand that the member for Blue Mountains has been put on a call to order but I query whether, Mr Temporary Speaker, you will progress the request from the Minister to ensure that the Speaker reviews her conduct. Members are in this place to speak for and represent their communities. We are all bound by the standing orders, and that includes not making offensive comments, not holding up props and not attacking others, including via virtual meeting. The House is debating an important motion, and I was enjoying listening to the contribution by the member for Auburn. I do not appreciate the interjections of the member for Blue Mountains in such an inappropriate manner during debate on this motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I inform members that I will bring this matter to the attention of the Speaker. However, members are here to debate the motion before the House, and that is what I intend to do. The member for Auburn has the call.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As I was saying, it has been a decade for Wentworth Point and Sydney Olympic Park without a school, and now we are not getting a full high school. The Government has put forward a proposal for half a high school. I am pleased that Mosman is getting its creative arts theatre. I will give the education Minister her due; she did visit Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School. Granville South has some of the poorest kids in the State. The largest cohort of single mothers living in poverty is in Granville South. All the school wants is a space for its creative and performing arts. It has been desperately saving up money from its budget because the Government will not come to the table and provide the school with a creative arts theatre and demonstration space. Over perhaps five years the school has managed to save \$1.5 million.

In my electorate there is a community garden that has been fenced up because it is dangerous. I have been asking the Government to provide \$100,000 to have it removed, but the Government has not come to the party. The school does not want to use its \$1.5 million, which it saved for a creative arts performing space. It is all it has got. The answer from the Government is, "No, we are not going to help you out." It seems there is one rule for those in the leafy area of Mosman, which is getting a theatre, which will be the jewel in its development, and buildings not with parapets but with sky gardens. But where is the creative arts performing space for Granville South? Those kids who desperately need it do not have it. Those creative kids need a step up. An amount of \$54 million is a lot of money to spend for an additional 80 kids, when the kids out at Granville South, who are in the most desperate of circumstances, some of the poorest kids in the State—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** That is why we are building schools there.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** I note the interjection of the Minister that they are building schools. There are 25,000 people down on the peninsula with no high school—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** You closed 90 schools when you were in government!

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The Minister will come to order.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** Just two minutes ago the Minister talked about members' behaviour and interjections in the Chamber, but there is a constant stream of interjections from her. The Government increased the Carter Street Precinct project by another 2,000 people on three blocks. It says it is going to put a primary school there. It has already built the flats, and there will be no school for at least another five years. There are 14 demountables at Newington Public School, and they are overflowing. They cannot put any more demountables on the land because the demountables are sinking into marshland, yet the Government says it is building schools.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:56):** Via video link: I contribute to debate on the motion on local schools infrastructure investments. The Camden local government area [LGA] is one of the fastest growing

LGAs in Australia, currently growing at 8 per cent per annum and forecast to grow by 5.5 per cent over the next 20 years. The growth of Camden can be attributed to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006, which was legislated by the former Labor Government. Knowing the growth that was coming to Camden, how many new schools do members think the Labor Government planned, constructed or opened in Camden over the following 4½ years when it was in government? Let me answer by saying, do not judge the Labor Opposition by what it says but judge it on its past record.

Since I was elected in 2019 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has opened Yandelora School in Narellan, a new state-of-the-art, purpose-built school to cater for students with moderate to severe intellectual and physical disabilities. In 2020 the Government opened a new public school in Gledswood Hills and a new high school in Oran Park, and Oran Park Public School was upgraded with an additional 24 learning spaces. These projects allowed students to start on day one, term one of 2020. This year the New South Wales Government opened Barramurra Public School on day one, term one. On Monday the new Denham Court Public School welcomed kindergarten and year 1 students and will welcome students from years 2 to 6 next Monday. Further, an upgrade of Harrington Park Public School is currently under construction.

The New South Wales 2021-22 budget provides significant investment for new and upgraded schools. The New South Wales Coalition Government has allocated \$4.1 million for the design of a State significant development planning process for the new public school in Gregory Hills. This school will cater for 1,000 students. Funding has been locked in for the construction of the new school and, subject to State significant development planning processes, will be completed in late 2022. The New South Wales Government has also allocated \$2.1 million for the Oran Park Public School stage two upgrade. Further, the New South Wales 2021-22 budget provides funding for school works in progress, including \$868,000 for Barramurra Public School, \$25,000 for Gledswood Hills Public School, \$4.4 million for stage two of Gledswood Hills Public School, \$17.6 million for Harrington Park Public School, \$208,000 for Oran Park High School and \$42,000 for Yandelora School. Through the budget, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government announced that it will also invest in a new selective high school at Leppington. As part of the Government's \$120 million investment to expand access to before and after school care, 47 new public schools, including Camden Public School, will receive out of school hours care [OSHC] help hubs during 2021 under round one of the program. It is anticipated that an additional 45 OSHC hubs will be delivered under round two. These new hubs provide additional before and after school care, benefitting families across New South Wales. I thank the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government for investing in new and upgraded schools in Camden, western Sydney and across the State. The Government has taken this action because it understands the importance of learning to our children and young people in New South Wales.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:00):** I thank the member for North Shore for bringing the motion before the House today. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the debate, because it gives me the opportunity to talk about something that is perhaps one of my most favourite topics to talk about in this place and elsewhere, and something that is the cause of the most frustration in my community, that is the Medowie High School. We are talking about the opportunities that public education unlocks. It is critical that we have public schooling in the places where it is needed. In my community of Medowie we have been fighting for a public high school for decades.

The Department of Education has owned the land in Medowie for a public high school since 1983. In 2011 the incoming Minister for Education said to my community that the project will be shovel ready in May. The former Liberal member in the House said that this project was the most important project to the community of Port Stephens. Yet, a decade on since that commitment was given to my community the Government has not lifted a finger. It refuses to meet with me. It refuses to talk to my community. It refuses to consult with my community about the project that my community wants, that is a public high school in Medowie.

We now have two independent schools in Medowie. We have Medowie's excellent Christian school and Medowie's new Catholic high school. We have no public high school. We have three primary schools and we have other primary schools around the area that would feed into it. Instead, with no public high school in Medowie we have thousands of kids on buses every day to get to a public school. The Government does have a plan, I will give it that, a plan that it did not consult the community on at all and still refuses to disclose exactly what it means. The plan is to provide upgrades to the schools in Raymond Terrace that our kids in Medowie feed into. Those upgrades are desperately needed now to provide classrooms to the students that are already [inaudible] the teachers are saying the students squeeze into the classrooms that are there now. Upgrades are desperately needed, but they have been designed to ensure that this Government never delivers on a public high school in Medowie.

We know that is the secret plan of the Government, yet it refuses to consult with the community, refuses to talk to my community about what it wants and it refuses, as it has done for over a decade, to deliver what the community needs, which is a public high school in Medowie. It is a growing community. There are new housing

developments going into the town. Every day there are thousands of new houses for families coming on line in the town. We needed a high school a decade ago. We need it desperately now and I urge the Government to not build new infrastructure and upgrade schools just in the North Shore of Sydney, but to look beyond the boundaries of Sydney. This is a school that is desperately needed in Medowie and I urge the Government, once again, to deliver this public high school.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:04):** I am proud to speak in support of the motion brought by the member for North Shore. I think I share the view of every member in this place that no matter where you are in Greater Sydney or New South Wales, no parent would begrudge any other parent in Sydney or New South Wales getting their fair share to support and provide the education that all young people in our community deserve. While I respect the advocacy and passion of those opposite in arguing for improved schools and further services in their areas, what I do not respect is their argument. Members can see what is happening, they are using the language of division and instead of reaffirming what is best about their citizens and their communities, they are seeking to sow the seeds of divide and division and talk down their communities.

It is interesting to note that it was not a particular part of New South Wales or Sydney that led us through the COVID recovery, in fact every community across New South Wales rallied together and stood together to support one another, whether they were in the 12 local government areas of concern or not. The political tactic—this narrative of division and divide, talking down communities—that is being perpetuated by those opposite is wrong, it is cynical and they should not do it. Trying to weave it into discussions around where funding for education should or should not go is disgraceful and they will ultimately be found out.

Because whether it is a school on the North Shore or in other areas of Greater Sydney or New South Wales, what matters is that every child in our State gets the opportunity to have the best learning facilities possible. I have been hearing a lot of talk around population figures and numbers, and the need for schools in particular parts of Sydney. The Liverpool local government area, for example, has a population of 227,000 people. The Campbelltown local government area has a population of 170,000 people. The northern beaches local government area has a population of 273,000 people. This perception and myth that there is simply no-one living on the northern beaches or that we do not have the pressures of population—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** How much growth have you got?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** We have a lot of growth. We have had a lot of growth over the past 10 years.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What is your growth, mate? What?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Canterbury will cease interjecting.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** It will continue to grow, which is why the education support will continue to be given, not just in the northern beaches but across New South Wales; whether it has been the investment in Manly Village Public School for updated administration and staffing areas; Mackellar Girls Campus, which also has a lot of demountables on its premises; or Balgowlah Boys Campus receiving a new hall, a multipurpose space, which is one of the best performing all boys public schools in New South Wales. The students do it despite the conditions they are in. That school is old and dated and they do a fantastic job. Manly West Public School has demountables, but we have funding to upgrade its toilet facilities to provide the best for its students. Harbord Public School will have old staffrooms upgraded into new administration offices.

I support the motion of the member for North Shore. She brings great news that Mosman High School is to be upgraded. It should not matter where that school is in New South Wales. The Government has made it clear, and will continue to make it clear, that irrespective of where we live in the State, we will get the support and infrastructure that we need and it will continue to build schools across the State.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:08):** I thank the member for North Shore for bringing her motion before the House. We on this side of the House have record investment in new and upgraded schools across New South Wales. This is a government that is investing \$7.9 billion over the next four years, continuing its program to deliver not 100 new and upgraded schools, not 200 new and upgraded schools, but 215 new and upgraded schools across New South Wales, from the beach to the bush. In my electorate we are investing in schools, which means investing in communities. The Government is upgrading and rolling out a program of over 200 new and upgraded schools, including four in my electorate: Penshurst Public School, Hurstville Grove Infants School, Hurstville Public School and Penshurst West Public School.

I am pleased to update the House about the brand-new Penshurst Public School that has been officially opened. It includes 47 new classrooms, a brand-new library, a hall and a covered outdoor learning area. There is more. That is in addition to open play spaces, including playing courts, seating, shade structures, running tracks, new administration and staff facilities, as well as new staff and student amenities. I thank outstanding education

Minister the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, former Premier Gladys Berejiklian, and former Treasurer and current Premier Dominic Perrottet for opening the space with me at the beginning of term one this year. There is even more. The works at Penshurst West Public School are done and dusted and delivered, and the students are absolutely loving them. The upgrades include new modern teaching spaces and facilities, seven new learning spaces and classrooms, a new student amenities building, a special programs room and enhanced open spaces.

Hurstville Grove Infants School has also received upgrades, including a brand-new multipurpose facility that can be used as an additional learning space, a special needs area for before- and after-school care, kitchen facilities, air conditioning and a quiet room for additional use. Hurstville Public School also now boasts one of the biggest upgrades in the local area that included an upgraded learning space, a playground and upgrades to technology, which is fantastic news for the community. Over the next four years the Government's \$10 million program will give schools the opportunity to develop hands-on sustainability projects that are being rolled out right across New South Wales. When it comes to education, this Government is delivering more classrooms, more schools, more upgrades and upgrades to maintenance. Let us look at Labor's track record. When Labor was in government, 90 schools were closed and over 1,000 classrooms were cut, slashed and burned.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Is this a job interview?

**Mr MARK COURE:** It is. Labor cannot be trusted when it comes to education. It closed 90 schools, including Narwee High School in my electorate. When it comes to education, Labor cannot be trusted.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:12):** In reply: We have heard two key themes in the debate on the motion. One is about the record level of investment that the Government is delivering across New South Wales, whether in my community or in the north, the south, the east or the west. Members spoke in detail about that investment across New South Wales. The second clear theme was about the failures of Labor throughout its time in government to deliver these outcomes. Labor closed more than 90 schools, and had a secret plan to close more and make more cuts to schools and education.

I refer to the comments of members who spoke because each of their contributions was valuable. The member for Auburn spoke about the work that she is doing to advocate for funding and investment in her local schools—a very noble goal. She spoke about the need for performing arts facilities at the Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School and education facilities at Sydney Olympic Park. I acknowledge her desire to get the best education outcomes for her community, whether at comprehensive schools or through investment in the performing arts, which is crucial to every child's education. That is why this Government invests across the State and why those opposite refused to invest in my community when they were in government, meaning that we now have to. The Government invests in every part of the State, regardless of local member or which party colour is branded on an electorate.

We heard from the member for Camden. I apologise to Mr Peter Sidgreaves because I cannot list all the new and upgraded schools that he mentioned, like Oran Park High School, Gledswood Hills Public School, Oran Park Public School, Denham Court Public School and Harrington Park Public School. I lost track because he is doing so much in his community. He also referred to the fact that Labor planned and failed to deliver school after school in his electorate. The member for Port Stephens also talked about how important the different public schools in her area are and that the community has advocated for a Medowie high school for decades. I am so sorry to hear her reiterate that Labor failed the Port Stephens electorate throughout its time in government. I am sorry to hear that the people of Port Stephens and Medowie have been failed by Labor since the 1980s. They continue to be failed by their local member, who has not delivered a high school at Medowie.

We heard from the member for Manly, who spoke quite comprehensively about how important it is for both Sydney and New South Wales to receive investment. He spoke as somebody who lives in an incredibly large local government area that is experiencing growth and where the schools, like the schools in my electorate, have to use a significant number of demountables for the kids' learning. Regardless of the fact that there might be different growth levels in different communities across the State, many of our schools have not had the response to historic growth, particularly when Labor was in government. Tons of demountables were never replaced by permanent building structures when Labor was in government. Regardless of geography, postcode or assumed socio-economic status, our public schools need investment across the State, including in Manly.

Lastly, we heard from the bombastic member for Oatley, who spoke about the 215 new and upgraded schools and the \$7.9 billion of investment. He spoke about four schools in his own electorate, including Penshurst Public School. The member for Oatley is the standard-bearer for ensuring that we invest across different parts of the community. There is a reason that voters in his electorate in southern Sydney continue to return him in greater and greater numbers. It is not because of his winning personality and charm; it is because of his hard work delivering for his community. We know he will continue to deliver for his community and local students, and will fight for students across the State. I thank members who contributed to debate on the motion. I am excited to see

the ongoing investment that this Government, Premier, education Minister and Treasurer will make for students across New South Wales.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

#### *Bills*

### **ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

#### **Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bill.

#### *Members*

### **MEMBER FOR WOLLONGONG**

### **MEMBER FOR SEVEN HILLS**

### **MEMBER FOR LISMORE**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Wollongong, the member for Seven Hills and the member for Lismore all the best for their upcoming birthdays.

#### *Announcements*

### **LOUD SHIRT DAY**

**The SPEAKER:** I am wearing as loud a business shirt as I have today and an accompanying loud tie because tomorrow is loud shirt day to raise awareness for people associated with hearing loss. All members in the Chamber would be keen to see everybody reach their full potential. A greater awareness of hearing loss helps to proactively address those issues.

### **DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER, ELLIE LAING**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge Ellie Laing from my office. It is her last day today. I thank her for her service to the Parliament. My office and I wish her well in her future endeavours. Thank you, Ellie.

#### *Question Time*

### **STATE DEBT**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:18):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Premier Dominic Perrottet's plan to borrow \$20 billion and deposit it in the Generations Fund led to New South Wales paying more for its debt than any other State during the Delta lockdown. Is the Treasurer committed to the Premier's borrowing plan?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:19):** Those on this side of the House are committed to building a stronger and better economy. That is what we are all about. We are served in this State by one of the best former Treasurer's to ever occupy the role, the new Premier of New South Wales. Premier Perrottet got us through the pandemic with one of the biggest and boldest plans to protect jobs, the JobSaver program. Let us not forget, had that program not been implemented, we would have lost an additional 100,000 jobs in New South Wales. But the Premier is doing more than that. He is helping to make sure we bounce back better and is getting us out of the worst economic crisis the State has ever seen. Our economy has seen the biggest economic contraction in our State's history as a result of the pandemic. Over 230,000 jobs were lost. Because of the policies of this Government, led by this Premier, we are saving jobs and are making sure that we get out of this stronger than we went into it. That is a fact. That is what coalition governments are all about.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. We are well into the Treasurer's answer and we are yet to hear the words "debt", "borrowing" or "Generations Fund". I will repeat the question for the Treasurer because he clearly does not understand it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member does not need to repeat the question. The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Let us talk about generations. Opposition members will be out of office for a generation because they have no policies. We have not seen a single policy from those opposite. It is a policy-free

zone. In fact, when the Leader of the Opposition first became the leader, he said that he would have a 100-day plan. We are now 139 days into his tenure and we have not seen a single policy other than him getting a haircut.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** You are just jealous.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am very jealous.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 139. The member is even more removed from the question than he was when it was raised by the member for Wollongong, and he is debating the issue.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will return to the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The question was about the fundamentals of our economy and how we do it. The budget is there to serve the economy, not the other way around. We have built a strong fiscal position to protect our economy in the hard times and see us bounce back better in the good times. That is what we are doing.

**Ms Prue Car:** Point of order: Has the Treasurer finished? He clearly does not know what he is talking about.

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

**Ms Prue Car:** My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. We would like to actually hear about the Generations Fund.

**The SPEAKER:** The question was about the Premier's borrowing plan. The Treasurer will address the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Interest rates are at record low levels at the moment. We have made sure to borrow at low levels to help the economy bounce back after the pandemic better than when we went into it. We did borrow to support the JobSaver scheme and underwrite over 100,000 jobs that would have been lost had the policy-free zone opposite been in office. We are building a stronger economy for the future. We will come out of the pandemic more resilient and better than when we went into it. That is why we are investing in things of the future that will create the jobs of the future and make sure that we bounce back better. Take, for example, our \$3 billion hydrogen plan. That is about creating new industries, opportunities and jobs.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We have asked about the Premier's plan to borrow \$20 billion and deposit it in the Generations Fund. It is very specific. Will the Minister please give us an answer in relation to that?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has been close to answering the question. He is framing it in the context of borrowing plans. I will hear further from the Treasurer.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We are talking about borrowing and we have borrowed to support the economy through a difficult time to make sure that we protect jobs. We cannot just focus on the now. We need to focus on the future. That is what the Government is doing. We will build a strong financial position so that there is a strong economy for everyone to benefit from. If those opposite want to talk about generations, I put on the record that they will be out of office for a generation because they have no plans, policies or ideas for the people of the State.

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:25):** Via video link: Mr Speaker, can you hear me?

**The SPEAKER:** I can indeed. I can also see you.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the New South Wales Government's economic recovery strategy to rebound and support businesses, help the hip pocket and boost jobs across the State?

**Mr Paul Scully:** Talk about your borrowing plan.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:24):** I will get to that. On behalf of the Liberal and The Nationals members in this place, I begin by issuing an apology. What we saw yesterday from the member for Londonderry and the member for Coogee was absolutely disgraceful. This morning I reached out to the two people whose names were smeared in this place, without a skerrick of evidence by those members. If those members had any integrity at all, they would contact those people personally. Their details are available from my office. Members do not provide—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Do we get the names from Victor?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No, they will be provided by my office. I say to those members, never come into this place and smear the names of two private individuals again. If they have a skerrick of integrity, they should contact them personally. That was the old Labor way. It has come back to this place with the conduct of the member for Londonderry and member for Coogee yesterday.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to bring this on, he should do so by way of substantive motion. Every single one of my colleagues on this side of the House sticks up for injured workers tenfold, more than what those opposite did. Let's bring it on!

**The SPEAKER:** I believe that the Premier was about to come to the question as the member for Keira took his point of order. I will hear him further. My expectation is that the Premier will come straight to the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Today saw the release of the New South Wales economic recovery plan. After a period of substantial adversity in this State, this plan will set up hope, excitement and opportunity for the people of New South Wales. The Government wants to see a summer of spending in New South Wales, and that is exactly what this plan will deliver. The Treasurer announced a \$3 billion investment right across New South Wales. Last year we saw the success of this approach, and it is exactly what is going to happen under the new Treasurer this year. Here we have a man who has been in the job for 16 days announcing a \$3 billion plan. With the \$5 billion WestInvest fund, that is \$8 billion being invested right across our State to help New South Wales not just recover but bounce back better as we move through this difficult time.

Last year we lost close to 300,000 jobs but recovered every single one of them. To date we have lost 235,000 jobs with the Delta outbreak. It would have been 100,000 more but for our investment in the JobSaver program. We fought the Commonwealth Government to provide that extra support, alongside our State investment. No other jurisdiction has been investing more than we have. At the same time, on the subject of debt, we are the only State jurisdiction with a triple-A credit rating with Moody's because of our prudent financial management in this State—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Except that was the one you inherited from us.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Well the debt and deficit, yes.

**Mr Paul Scully:** No, the credit rating.

**Mr Ryan Park:** We had it for 16 years.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** But you built no infrastructure. Members on this side of the House value surpluses, with sound financial management leading to greater opportunity and prosperity for the people of New South Wales. The plan is not just limited to business support. It provides support for families. It provides support for businesses. It provides support for the homeless and survivors of domestic violence. It provides extra investment in mental health and tutors for our kids who may have fallen behind. This is the most comprehensive plan in the country. That is the difference between the Liberals and The Nationals and the Labor States around the country. We are not just governing for the here and now; we are making record investments right across the board to set up our State for success. As the Treasurer said, from the outset of this pandemic last year we have put people, families and businesses before the budget. Other States do not have the capacity to do that because they did not have the strong foundations that we allowed for through the management of the budget and the New South Wales economy as we headed into this pandemic. In this term of government we have dealt with drought and fires and now we have dealt with this pandemic. [*Extension of time*]

We will come out the other side stronger. We know that what worked last year will work again, plus extra support. I thank every single person who worked with the New South Wales Government in the development of this plan, whether it was business groups, industry leaders, unions, local government organisations or the not-for-profit sector. As I said this morning, when Delta hit we hit the phones. We liaised with everyone across the board to get their input about what would work, including from other State jurisdictions. Underwriting investments from businesses has been incredibly important. Today we have a situation where the Labor Party is running around town trying to drive down business confidence everywhere it goes. But look at the confidence we instilled last year. Business confidence and consumer confidence ensured that we got people back into work and got businesses open again.

Members saw the business confidence figures this week, and the Treasurer raised them earlier today. Business confidence is up 24 points. Those figures are the highest in the nation and the best on record in our State's history. What does business confidence lead to? It leads to business investment, which leads to greater employment. That is the confidence that we need to get New South Wales back on top. The \$3 billion plan for our State that was announced today plus the \$5 billion WestInvest fund could never have happened under Labor

because it opposed asset recycling. It has opposed the progress that we have made as a State. While Labor continues to talk New South Wales down, the Government will continue to instil hope and confidence in everyone across New South Wales.

#### NSW GENERATIONS FUND

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:31):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Premier Dominic Perrottet's NSW Generations Fund has lent \$75 million to the Russian government, \$30 million to the Cayman Islands and \$45 million to the government of Saudi Arabia. Will the Treasurer continue the Premier's plan for borrowing money to buy bonds and stocks?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira is back to his old habit. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:32):** I do not accept the premise of the question. I will say that I want to make sure that when the New South Wales Government invests taxpayer dollars that it does so in a way that aligns with the values of this State. We should be investing to help solve the challenges of our time. I will be commissioning a review to make sure that New South Wales is a leader in ethical investing because that is what this Government is about.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order. It had better be a good one.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** It relates to Standing Order 129. My mother is a very strong anti-communist—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bankstown will resume her seat.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** She always said to never give money to Russia, okay Treasurer?

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

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** You would know about the Russians!

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Bankstown appears to know more about Russia than I do. We want to make sure that New South Wales taxpayer funds are invested in a way that aligns with the values of this State. This Government has shown that it has good values, which is exactly why we are leading the way when it comes to tackling the challenges of our time, such as climate change. This Coalition Government has the most ambitious renewable energy plan in the State's history—in fact, in the nation. It is this Coalition Government that has delivered the most ambitious electric vehicle plan in the nation's history. It is this Coalition Government that is reducing our emissions in a way that grows our economy to create jobs, raise living standards, drive investment into New South Wales and underwrite the prosperity of this State for generations. We are doing what is right by the State and we will do it with how we invest in the State. We will commission a review and make sure that alliance with—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am not sure of the general relevance of the answer that the Treasurer is giving to \$75 million being lent to the Russian government and where it is going.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer was referencing investments and is being generally relevant.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Again, I do not accept the premise of the interjection. What I will say is that we should be investing in line with environmental, social and governance [ESG] principles and I will be commissioning a review to advise us on exactly how we can lead the way in doing that. That is exactly what coalition governments do, because we believe in making sure that we are solving the challenges of our time. The way we have approached tackling climate change demonstrates that track record, unlike the policy-free zone opposite. We have not seen a single policy from them around investing, climate, or any of the challenges of our time. It has been 139 days since the Leader of the Opposition said that he had a plan for the State, but we have not seen a single policy from him. We have seen a plan to get a haircut. We saw the member for Canterbury come up with a plan to get rid of speeding fines, but we have not seen a positive plan for the people of New South Wales.

In 16 days the new Premier has come up with a plan in a way that the Leader of the Opposition has not been able to. We will continue to do that because we are about building a better, more prosperous and stronger future for everyone in New South Wales, whether it be coming out of the recovery, or looking to the future to set up the State for success. We are doing it in all aspects of our policy work. That is the difference between a Coalition Government led by Dominic Perrottet and an Opposition led by Chris Minns. It is a policy-free zone. We have



not seen a single plan or policy other than a plan to get a haircut, and that is not good enough. It is a great haircut and I am very jealous, and that is a matter of public record.

We are about building a stronger, fairer and better State for everyone, one that leaves no-one behind. That is one of the reasons that we are investing half a billion dollars to support some of the most affected people through the pandemic, like those suffering from domestic or family violence. We will almost double the number of women's refuges in New South Wales. That is something that we should all be proud of. We will continue to do the right thing by the State. We will look to ensure that our investment strategy is also leading the way when it comes to solving the challenges of our time. We will commission a review to make sure that is exactly what happens.

#### COVID-19 AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:37):** 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 how the New South Wales Government is helping regional communities get back on their feet after the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (14:37):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. I acknowledge the work that the member for Coffs Harbour does on behalf of his community. I also acknowledge that the community of Coffs Harbour was hit by a massive storm yesterday afternoon and extend my thoughts to that community as it rebuilds. The Government will be working with the member for Coffs Harbour and assisting the community as it bounces back on its feet. There is no doubt that the past few months have been incredibly tough for those in regional New South Wales and across the State. That comes off the back of some difficult times, dealing with drought, bushfires and floods. Over the past months with the COVID restrictions that have been in place for regional communities, it has been a very tough time.

Last week the Premier and I announced that the New South Wales Government is stepping up and providing significant investment to support our regions. This will allow them to open up once again. Last week we announced a \$200 million Regional Economic Stimulus Package. This is significant because this investment will create jobs, promote tourism, build infrastructure and provide investment to stage events in regional parts of New South Wales. It will set us up for better days and months ahead. As we head towards Christmas people will want to visit family and friends and there is hope on the horizon. We know that tourism will boom once again, because people will go into regional New South Wales. That will set people up for a very strong start for 2022.

This comes off the back of the enormous investment that the New South Wales Government has announced over the past couple of weeks. We have made investments in mental health, in support for survivor victims of domestic and family violence, in regional housing and in support of regional jobs. A part of the announcement that I am particularly pleased with is that our investment will support country shows, which can be the lifeblood of many of our communities. They might be where the community has the largest gathering throughout the year. This \$5 million investment will help agricultural shows to come back bigger, better and faster as we head into the 2022 Royal Easter Show. I encourage all members to get out into the regions once we are able to travel again and experience what our country shows are all about. It is a great way to support our local communities that have been doing it hard for so long.

We are investing \$50 million with a package to support regional events and festivals in our communities. This is not just about having a good time; this is about providing an economic boost to local communities, allowing them to get back to enjoying some of the things they used to do. This is important because it provides a mental health boost to the regions. There are plenty of Sydneysiders who want to do their bit and head out to the regions in November and December, catch up with family and friends, and also see what is on offer and support regional New South Wales. I say to the Opposition: If you want to get out and see regional New South Wales, go and talk to some of our members. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Go and talk to the member for Dubbo. Go and ask him some of the things that you can see. There is the zoo. Go and have a look at the Regional Rail Maintenance Facility in November, December. If the member for Wollongong wants to go out and visit regional New South Wales—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Go and see the member for Northern Tablelands. Go and have a look at the Moree artesian baths. Go and have a look at the \$80 million investment in our Moree Hospital redevelopment. That is the investment that we are making in regional New South Wales. I say to the member for Londonderry: Go and

visit the member for Coffs Harbour, go and have a look at the iconic Big Banana and the billions of dollars that we are investing into the Coffs Harbour Bypass.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** That is the investment that we are putting into regional New South Wales. That is the investment that is creating jobs and providing a huge economic boost in our regions.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The Government is continuing to provide support to the hospitality industry and our tourism sector as they bounce back. This Liberal-Nationals Government— [*Extension of time*]

Because we have so much to offer in regional New South Wales I say again to those opposite to get out there and see what is on offer. You might enjoy some of the things out there.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

**Ms Prue Car:** You keep changing it. You keep changing the date.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I said November, December. Take the opportunity when you can.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 71. When you intervene to prevent a quarrel, it is not just the Opposition you should put on a call to order. The quarrel was started by the Leader of the National Party and he is getting the response that he deserves. I ask that he direct his remarks through the Chair and that you intervene to stop him from being quarrelsome.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Deputy Premier to direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** If you have a look at the investment that we are making, look at the Design & Discovery vouchers—and I encourage you to use them when you go out to the regions—another two \$25 vouchers. Who will that support? Take it into the regions and it will support our tourism and hospitality industry. Go to a restaurant, a club or a pub, because these are the people who need your hard-earned dollars to support them at a time when they want to bounce back. Let us not forget our Stay & Rediscover vouchers for \$50 to support our accommodation sector. This is to get people into the regions to support an industry that has suffered over the past few months. Regional New South Wales will be an exciting time. Regional New South Wales has a lot to look forward to. This Liberal-Nationals Government is providing hope on the horizon for people across the State, whether they live in the city, regional or rural New South Wales.

#### NSW GENERATIONS FUND

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:44):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. In line with the Treasurer's comments moments ago that investments will now align with the values of the New South Wales Government, will the NSW Generations Fund withdraw investments from the Russian government and the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:45):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I said, we will commission a review that will look at the funding of the NSW Generations Fund [NGF]. We want to make sure that New South Wales is a world leader when it comes to environmental, social and governance [ESG] principles and investments. It is a bit rich for the Leader of the Opposition to ask questions about dodgy financing when Labor's last election campaign was funded through bags of cash in Aldi bags.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** It is under Standing Order 73, and it is obvious. If the Treasurer wants to do this, he should move a substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not sure that Standing Order 73 applies, but I am happy to hear the Treasurer further. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I was talking about dodgy financing. Labor's last election campaign was funded through Aldi bags full of cash. When Labor had a leader who was prepared to stand up for integrity and decency, what did the Leader of the Opposition do? He got rid of her. He hung up and slammed down the phone on the former Leader of the Opposition. That is what happened.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129, which requires general relevance to the question asked. Imputing improper motives on members of the Opposition is nowhere near relevant to the question

specifically asked, which relates to funding of the Russian government, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the KGB.

**The SPEAKER:** I will rule on the point of order. In my opinion, the Treasurer has answered the question. He has indicated a review will be conducted. In terms of robust debate, there is a certain tolerance, particularly with leaders representing a government levelling criticisms. However, I ask the Treasurer to be mindful of not becoming too personal in his comments aimed at the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is quite troubling that the Labor Party is attacking the integrity of the governance board of the NGF. It is made up of people with the highest level of integrity, like Glenn Stevens. It has a strong governance structure. We will commission a review to make sure that we are proudly leading the way in ESG investments. As Treasurer, I have a proven track record in making sure we are looking to the future and aligning with community principles to grow our economy, just like I did as the Minister for Energy and Environment in delivering the country's leading policies to tackle climate change. It is a bit rich for the Labor Party to raise issues around dodgy financing when we all know it is the party of Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Aldi bags full of cash.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: While the Treasurer channels James Bond and professes from Russia with love, I would ask that he return to the question at hand.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Treasurer has answered the question and he is now talking generally. The Treasurer may continue.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am very happy to talk generally. We can talk about the strong financial position the Coalition Government has placed this State in to deal with a once-in-a-generation economic shock that the COVID pandemic has delivered. Imagine if Labor was in office during this time. It had deficits as far as the eye could see and left the State in a disastrous financial position. This Government restored the financial health of the State, which has enabled us to manage our way out of issues like the COVID pandemic. That is what we have done, and we did it in a way that saved over 100,000 jobs. New South Wales is in a better position because the Coalition Government has displayed strong economic management over a long period of time, protecting the economy in time of need, and we will ensure that we bounce back better with today's announcement of the State's economic recovery plan. It is a big challenge ahead and we need to make sure we do everything possible to restore those jobs lost, restore our strong economic position and come out of the pandemic even stronger. As the Treasurer of New South Wales, that is exactly what I intend to do.

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:49):** Via video link: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on what policies the Perrottet-Toole Coalition Government is putting in place to help our economy bounce better and whether there are any alternative policies?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:50):** What a great question from the rock star from Manly, a great member of Parliament who does great things.

**Mr Ryan Park:** The King of the Corso.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I note the interjection from the member for Wollongong: the King of the Corso. The second part of the member's question was interesting: Are there any alternative policies? No, there are not. In fact, it has been 139 days—I think I have said that three times now—since the Leader of the Opposition announced that he would have a 100-day plan for our State. We have not seen any plans other than his plan to get a haircut. When he pitched to the Labor caucus to get rid of the former Leader of the Opposition, he said, "I am going to have a plan for our State." It is a secret plan though. It is so secret that I do not even know what it is.

Unlike those opposite, the Government has a plan to ensure that we bounce back better from the pandemic. We have a plan that will ensure we come out of the worst economic crisis that we have ever seen. The New South Wales economy has seen the biggest contraction in the State's history. As I have mentioned, over 235,000 jobs were lost. It would have been a lot worse had it not been for the now Premier's JobSaver scheme, which saved around 100,000 jobs in New South Wales. That is 100,000 people who were able to put food on the table during the worst pandemic and the worst economic crisis our State has ever seen because of the bold and courageous policy that the Premier put in place. Thousands of families are better off because of the policies put in place by the current Premier.

Some sectors of the economy were particularly hard hit—the arts and hospitality sectors, the retail and transport sectors. They did it very tough, which is why today we announced a plan to do four things. Firstly, we need to rebuild consumer confidence. We are planning to do that by issuing \$500 million worth of Dine & Discover vouchers and Stay & Rediscover vouchers. It is about giving a shot in the arm to our restaurants, small businesses, pubs and clubs right across the tourism and hospitality sectors in New South Wales. And we know

those vouchers work. They have a significant multiplier effect. Those Dine & Discover vouchers encourage people to spend more when they go out. The member for Ryde will buy another cocktail when he goes out. The member for Cronulla will buy another mocktail when he goes out. That is the benefit of Dine & Discover. It is to support our economy, our small businesses, our pubs and clubs, our industries to get back on their feet.

We are also looking to restore business confidence. The latest indices showed that New South Wales has the highest rate of business confidence in the country. Growth in business confidence is at its highest point in a very long time. That is because we had a strong health plan to keep us safe, and we have a strong economic recovery plan to see us bounce back better. We have in place guarantees for inventory so that businesses can buy stock, throw open their doors and get trading again. We also want to make sure that we are supporting those parts of the economy that had been hardest hit through this pandemic, which is why we are putting \$50 million towards supporting the performing arts. The member for Bathurst has been singing for his supper. People in his electorate will now be able to see real performers. They will be supported by this Government so that they can go out and do what they love.

In addition, we are encouraging people to dine outside. We know that dining outside is safe and we are providing \$66 million to encourage restaurants, pubs and clubs to introduce al fresco dining. We want to have a boom in al fresco dining throughout the CBD. I see the member for Terrigal is very excited about that. He will come down from Terrigal to go al fresco dining in the CBD. It is an exciting thing to do. We also need to target those people who have suffered the most through the pandemic. Parents who have been schooling kids at home, the remarkable homeschool heroes— [*Extension of time*]

**Mr Ryan Park:** It hasn't been remarkable. It was a nightmare.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I suspect the member's kids are better behaved than mine are. It was very difficult. We want to make sure that no kids are left behind, which is why we are putting around \$300 million into our COVID Intensive Learning Support Program. We are also supporting mental health by providing \$130 million for people across the State to access mental health services. I mentioned before that we want to support victim-survivors to enable them to escape a violent domestic situation and that is why a \$480 million package will help double the number of women's shelters across New South Wales. We know that economic downturns mean that some people will not return to work or will find it very difficult to do so. That is exactly why we are spending around \$200 million on training and creating 100,000 new fee-free training places to help people get back into the workforce. That is what we are doing. We want to get business back in business, people back to work, recover all the jobs lost and build on that in the future. This is a package that will help us do that.

On the topic of jobs, I acknowledge the good job done by the member for Strathfield. She has done an outstanding job and has been a great community champion. She has been a corruption fighter and a great member of this place for many years. I join with many people to congratulate the former Leader of the Opposition, the member for Strathfield, and wish her the very best. I join Tanya Plibersek, who said that Jodi McKay was a person of great integrity and intelligence. She said, "Thank you for your service to our State and our party."

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** And for giving it to Tripodi.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** And for giving it to Tripodi as well. There are some great tweets here for the member for Strathfield. I might return to them if I get the chance in answer to another question from the Opposition.

## GOVERNMENT REVIEWS

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:57):** My question is directed to the Premier. Six months ago his Government commissioned ex-Liberal Minister Pru Goward to do a review of New South Wales ministerial offices. Yesterday she said that the poor are damaged, lacking in trust and discipline and highly self-interested, that they are always the last to give up smoking, get their shots and eat two servings of vegetables a day, that they neglect their children, they live in public housing blocks—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128—questions should not contain statements of facts unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible and can be authenticated.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The member for Londonderry is referring to a particular statement to obtain the Premier's view about the accuracy of that statement. Unless all the statement is given to the Premier, he cannot fairly respond to what is put to him. He needs the material to be able to answer the question, otherwise it will not make sense.

**The SPEAKER:** As I have indicated before, I am happy for a brief context to be created to make a question intelligible. I believe the member for Londonderry is going beyond that and is providing more detail than

is necessary, which is contrary to Standing Order 128. I invite the member to truncate her question. I indicate that if she does not do so I will rule the question out of order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I will truncate my question. After ex-Liberal Minister Pru Goward yesterday termed the poor the "underclass", will she ever conduct another review for the Government?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:59):** I make some quick points. I completely disagree with the comments that the former Minister made in yesterday's article. It shows a complete lack of understanding of the working class; therefore, I agree with the premise of the question. In relation to reviews that are conducted by governments from time to time, we will always look to appoint people to conduct reviews based on their competence. I know that Pru Goward conducted a very fine review of workplace behaviour in parliamentary offices. I commend her for that work, but I do not commend her for the article yesterday. I completely disagree with it and I think its entire premise is terrible.

### HORSERACING INDUSTRY

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:00):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's support for the 30,000 people who work in the racing industry?

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the Minister is racing into the main part of the Chamber.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:00):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. He is a very strong supporter of the racing industry. It was not so long ago that we were in Scone for the Upper Hunter by-election. The races were on, featuring the Scone Cup. It was a fantastic day. The member for the Upper Hunter went on to win the seat and it is great to see his strong representation of racing. Speaking of by-elections, there is another one coming up in the electorate of Monaro. An outstanding candidate, Nichole Overall, will be lining up and we look forward to welcoming her to the Parliament. I am sure she will be a great advocate of regional racing as well.

It was at Scone in the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter that we announced the first ever regional racing package of \$67 million. It is the first time anything like that has been allocated to regional racing across New South Wales. The package will support growth, expand the industry and make sure that tracks are upgraded in the most important racing areas to drive the economy and jobs in regional communities. Every cent of the \$67 million package will be invested in a racecourse in a regional community, creating more jobs and more money for our country towns. The economic benefits to our communities of racing spread far and wide. During the pandemic the racing industry stood head and shoulders above the rest. It was the gold standard for keeping people at work during the pandemic, making sure through COVID-safe areas and public health orders that the industry could continue to operate.

During the pandemic 30,000 people kept their jobs. Those people had food on the table and a roof over their heads. More than half of them work in regional New South Wales. The industry is an economic driver. The Government is driving economic growth through employment and tourism, and delivering better facilities across New South Wales. The racing industry contributes \$1.9 billion to the State economy. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to supporting racing. That was the case last Saturday at Royal Randwick Racecourse when 10,000 people were on course. It was fantastic to be there—it was the vibe. When Art Cadeau, ridden by Tommy Berry, won The Kosciuszko a regional racecourse came to Sydney. The Kosciuszko is for regional trainers, owners and connections to have their say and play their part in the big dance at Royal Randwick.

While we are talking about racing, there is only one race that really matters and that is the race for Macquarie Street. The Government's side is stacked with sprinters; the Opposition's side is stacked with donkeys, led by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is at long odds; he has drawn a wide barrier. He is 139 days in, showing very little form, and the Government is led by the favourite, the Premier. He is well liked by punters and he has plenty of supporters, strong connections and a promising future at stud when he finishes his current career. I am backing the favourite, the Premier, to lead the race and bring home the COVID economic recovery cup.

### DRIVER TESTING

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:04):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Minister for Digital. Many young and elderly drivers in my community, and indeed all across regional New South Wales, are waiting several months for Service NSW to undertake their driving examinations. That is now affecting job opportunities, livelihoods and independence. What is the Minister going to do to reduce that time frame?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service, and Minister for Digital) (15:05):** I thank the member for Orange for his question and the community in Orange for their resilience and patience throughout the pandemic. As we have seen, COVID-19 has affected our daily routine and the way we interact with services. Governments all around the world have had to make some really tough decisions to prevent the spread of the virus, particularly when there was no vaccine, and protect its citizens. Several times throughout the pandemic the New South Wales Government has had to make the difficult decision to scale back services, including to suspend driver testing. But at all times we were guided by the health advice.

In relation to the regions, driver testing resumed in regional areas where stay-at-home orders were lifted prior to 11 October 2021. Service NSW is processing a backlog of priority tests in the first instance. Those are customers who need a test to keep their current licence, such as aged assessments and customers who previously had a test booking. There is currently a backlog of approximately 17,000 driver tests in regional New South Wales; 3,000 driver tests have been completed since restrictions were lifted in regional areas. Tests will once again be made available online for customers to book once the existing backlog is complete. Social media updates will be provided when that function is live. Service NSW was limited in preparing to recover the service given the COVID restrictions that impacted recruitment and training activities. However, Service NSW is now actively recruiting new driver testers to better meet the high demand. In relation to Orange specifically, Service NSW is working through driver tests in Orange on a needs basis with approximately 20 tests occurring per week. All priority aged and medical essential tests in Orange are now complete and Service NSW is now working through hardship cases in the area.

I make the following points in relation to driver testing across the State. To protect customers and staff, Service NSW and Transport for NSW postponed driver testing from 28 June 2021 in line with stay-at-home orders across the State. Driver testing resumed in regional areas where stay-at-home orders were lifted prior to 11 October 2021. From late September 2021, limited driver testing for priority customers was only reintroduced in areas with stay-at-home orders in place with an average COVID-19 infection rate of less than 0.5 per cent over the previous four weeks. Service NSW has introduced measures to ensure the safety of driver testers and customers at that time. For example, only driver testers who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination are completing testing and customers taking driver tests must either show that they are fully vaccinated or provide a negative COVID-19 test result.

As the member for Orange would appreciate, driver testing was a high-risk activity; it is undertaken in a very closed environment with not much ventilation in the car and the driver tester is less than a metre away from the driver for a prolonged period. They were very challenging situations for the driver testers we retained, and potentially equally as challenging for the customers as well. That is why we had to make the difficult decision based on health advice to suspend that service. As I indicated, driver testing is well and truly getting back to where it was to a high level of service. I ask the member for Orange to extend my appreciation to his community for their patience to date.

#### **COVID-19 AND DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:09):** Via video link: My question is addressed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government has continued to support people with a disability during the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:10):** I thank the member for her question and her longstanding interest in the disability sector and the issues facing the most vulnerable in our community. Despite the sharp drop in infection rates in recent weeks and the massive surge in vaccinations, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a concern for the vulnerable members of our community, including people with a disability. The New South Wales Government has recognised the COVID risk to vulnerable groups and taken many extra precautions for those who need them. We were fortunate in Australia that the swift action taken by the State and Commonwealth governments allowed us to keep COVID-19 at bay in the community for much of 2020. That provided the opportunity to observe and reflect on experiences all over the world, to learn from best practice medical and social policies, and to implement sensible measures to protect those most at risk.

Data from the United Kingdom has shown that between January and November 2020, amongst a heavily unvaccinated population, a majority of serious illness from COVID-19 occurred amongst people with a disability. That shows the vulnerability of people with a disability and the importance of getting vaccinated. At the commencement of the outbreak, New South Wales led the establishment of the Disability Outbreak Management Oversight Group consisting of senior representatives from New South Wales and the Commonwealth, the National Disability Agency and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. That group has met immediately after any notification of a positive case with respect to NDIS participants or workers in New South Wales to address and escalate issues relating to COVID outbreaks in disability settings and to establish protocols around collaboration,

responsibilities of each agency or jurisdiction and information sharing. It has been essential in quickly working out what needs to be done, what resources are required and which agencies can assist to protect residents, workers and support staff while providing the most appropriate public health response.

New South Wales is leading the world in first- and second-dose vaccination rates amongst the general population. We have moved past our 70 per cent and 80 per cent double vaccination targets, and thanks to the New South Wales Coalition Government, we have started to lead the nation in the easing of restrictions and the return to normal. Since becoming a Minister in May I have worked with the great New South Wales health Minister, his Federal counterpart and the Federal NDIS Minister to identify and provide access to the most appropriate vaccinations for people with a disability. I am pleased to inform the House that in the past four months we have seen an enormous increase in the number of NDIS participants who have received a first and second jab. As restrictions ease and society opens up, we know vaccination remains the greatest protection against the virus and so we must continue our efforts to vaccinate as many vulnerable people as possible.

Alongside our COVID-19 response over the past two years, our Government has continued to roll out and deliver the once-in-a-generation social reform that is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We were the first State or Territory to sign up. Presently more than 150,000 people are benefiting from the increased supports and services in New South Wales. Today 80,000 people in New South Wales who were ineligible under previous State-based disability services are now supported by the NDIS. Since the transition to the full NDIS scheme on 1 July 2019, New South Wales participants have benefited from \$24.1 billion in committed supports, with a New South Wales contribution of \$10.5 billion. Fifteen years ago the current types of disability funding and services were a pipe dream for the disability community. I give credit where it is due. The 2013 reform by the then Federal Labor Government together with the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales has received nothing but bipartisan support. [*Extension of time*]

The partnership between governments, non-government service providers and the disability community is something that every member of this place should be very proud of. However, I was quite saddened by the actions of the shadow Minister and member for Port Stephens in recent months. Only a few weeks ago the member for Port Stephens was tweeting about the privatisation of disability services in New South Wales. There is no privatisation of disability services in New South Wales. Despite Labor's previous support for privatisation of everything from roads to prisons to electricity generators, the Opposition is so desperate for relevance and so lacking in policy depth that it has resorted to trying to scare the people of New South Wales.

**Ms Prue Car:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to raise a concern about what the member for Port Stephens has said—which was entirely justified, in our view—he should do that by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** What is the specific comment that you are taking exception to?

**Ms Prue Car:** The smearing of the member for Port Stephens.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I will listen further to the Minister.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The NDIS is a bipartisan national scheme that increases the quantity, quality and safety of supports for people with a disability. The Labor frontbench members are calling into question its very existence. The NDIS should be above politics. It should not be a vehicle for political scaremongering by the Labor Opposition. It is below the dignity of this House. I thought it was below the dignity of Labor. Whatever happened to the team of Mr Positivity? This Government will always support the NDIS and will continue to fight for it.

#### *Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ROUTINE OF BUSINESS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (15:17):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) To provide for the following routine of business on Thursday 11 November 2021:
  - (a) Speaker to take the Chair at 12.30 p.m.;
  - (b) General Business Notices of Motions or Orders of the Day (not being bills), up to 1.15 p.m.;
  - (c) At 2.15 p.m., Speaker resumes the Chair;
  - (d) Ministerial Statements;
  - (e) Giving of notices of motion (Government Business, Bills, Business with Precedence);

- (f) Question Time;
  - (g) Ministerial Statements;
  - (h) Papers;
  - (i) Committees – tabling of reports and announcements;
  - (j) Petitions;
  - (k) Placing or Disposal of Business;
  - (l) Business with Precedence under SO 118 if any;
  - (m) Private Members' Statements;
  - (n) At 4.00 p.m. Petition Debate; and
  - (o) Private Members' Statements, after which the House to adjourn without motion to next sitting day.
- (2) To provide for the following routine of business on Friday 12 November and Friday 19 November 2021:
- (a) Speaker to take the Chair at 9.30 a.m.;
  - (b) General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) up to 1.15 p.m.;
  - (c) At 2.00 p.m., Speaker resumes the Chair;
  - (d) Ministerial Statements;
  - (e) Papers;
  - (f) Petitions;
  - (g) General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) up to 5.00 p.m.; and
  - (h) Private Members' Statements until 6.00 p.m. when the House will adjourn without motion to next sitting day.

Yesterday I foreshadowed the suspension of standing and sessional orders due to a late start on Remembrance Day and to indicate that the Government proposes that the first two additional Fridays will be used for private members' business, mostly private members' bills. I will come back to the House for a proposal for 19 November. I indicate to the House that we will keep arrangements for those first two Fridays under review. That is our current proposal.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PETITIONS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (15:20):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) An additional two speakers to participate in today's petition debate; and
- (2) One additional speaker to be an Opposition member and one additional speaker to be a crossbench member.

I indicate that today's petition on the subject of consent and respectful relationship education is an extremely important debate in the community and across all members of this Parliament. The Government agrees to have two additional speakers, which will bring the total number of speakers to eight: three Government members, three Opposition members, and two Greens members. Given that we are sitting late to deal with the private member's bill of the member for Orange and other business of the House, the Government will not contemplate granting leave to any other additional speakers. There will be two additional speakers under this suspension of standing orders.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:21):** The Opposition agrees to the motion as proposed by the Leader of the House. We express appreciation to the Government for doing this. I am aware that leave has never previously been granted to allow additional members to participate in a petition debate. As the Leader of the House said, it is an important matter. The member for Granville and the member for Charlestown will speak to the petition. The member for Coogee was a co-sponsor of the petition and will participate. The Government agreed to suspending the standing orders and I express the appreciation of the Opposition for the Government's cooperation.

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

**Motion agreed to.**



*Bills***COASTAL MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021****Returned**

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

**PROPERTY SERVICES COUNCIL BILL 2021****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:23):** Via video link: I will spend just one or two more minutes completing the speech I began earlier in the day. In the lead-up to the commencement of the register, Fair Trading worked closely with dozens of major businesses that were likely to appear on the register due to their complaint numbers. Several of those were real estate franchises, which substantially improved their complaint handling processes and responsiveness to problems within their businesses. The result was that the total number of all real estate-related complaints to Fair Trading dropped in the ensuing months and some real estate businesses succeeded in ensuring they were not named on the register. Members should ask themselves how likely it would be that an industry-dominated regulator would implement this type of landmark reform in the best interests of consumers and the property market. Fair Trading and the Government received representations at the time that no business in New South Wales should be subject to that sort of scrutiny.

In closing, I note that the real estate and property sector continues to account for around 10 per cent of the 43,000 consumer complaints handled by Fair Trading every year. The persistence of complaints about instances of serious misconduct such as misrepresentations and trust account defalcations strongly suggests that the industry is not ready for self-regulation. As members know, we are living through a housing sales boom. In 2020 alone there were over 150,000 property transfers in New South Wales. Across the country, the total value of residential dwellings has increased by \$257 billion to more than \$7.7 trillion. That tells us that the property services sector is too big, too valuable and too important for its regulation to be handed over to an industry-dominated council. For that reason, I oppose the bill.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:25):** Via video link: I welcome this debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021. I thank the member for Orange and his colleague in the other place the Hon. Mark Banasiak for bringing the bill before the House. The Parliament's website says that the electorate of Orange comprises almost 17,000 square kilometres, so there is little doubt the member for Orange has done a lot of travelling, consulting and listening to his constituents and stakeholders. He is very well informed on the issues in the bill. He is also well known for his commonsense approach in this place. Unlike many of the members who sit on the Government benches, his feet stay firmly on the ground as he holds the Government to account to deliver for his constituents. Indeed, getting to know the member for Orange and interacting with him has been one of the joys during my time as a member of Parliament. I congratulate him on his work in this area.

My electorate is very similar to the electorate of Orange, despite their distance and demographic differences. Both have constituents who simply want a fair go and to be heard, and they want a government that helps and protects them and their families. In that context, I welcome this debate on the bill. Real estate, in all of its manifestations, is of interest to us all. More often than not, real estate is one of the issues that is raised at dinner at home, in a restaurant or at a party. In Sydney, copy space for real estate-related matters dominates many of the city's papers. Whether we buy, rent or lease, we all have a stake in the real estate industry.

Like many members, I have been contacted by real estate agents and other interested stakeholders about the bill. One letter I received said, "It's no secret that the relationship between the property services industry and NSW Fair Trading is not productive." Fair Trading has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to understand the complexity of property transactions, protect consumers and support the industry. Agency practice is undergoing significant disruption. The use of technology and consumers' expectations of immediacy are two examples of that. To respond to these challenges, we need an industry-experienced regulatory authority that will work cooperatively and constructively with the property services industry.

The Property Services Council Bill 2021 has passed through the upper House. However, the Government in the lower House opposes the bill, which is a great disappointment. If the bill can manoeuvre its way through the parliamentary processes, it will establish a dedicated Property Services Commissioner who will have industry knowledge and experience. The role will replicate that of the Legal Services Commissioner and the Building Services Commissioner. I received another email on this matter from an interested stakeholder who is in favour of the bill who wrote, "Real estate has been pivotal to New South Wales' economic recovery. It's in all of our

interests that this continues." The Government and the property services industry must work together to ensure market confidence for this to happen. All stakeholders will benefit from a united approach that focuses on supporting consumers through the biggest transaction of their lives.

Unfortunately, NSW Fair Trading refuses to engage with the property services industry and, as I understand it, has even committed to a campaign of denigrating the image of the industry in the eyes of the consumer. No-one wins with this damaging approach and it needs to end. Government members should support the urgent need for regulatory reform, vote to pass the bill and give the property services industry the dedicated industry-experienced commissioner it so desperately needs. The emails I have received highlight many of the key issues that prompted the introduction of the bill. Passing the bill should not be difficult, nor should it be particularly controversial. Labor is committed to protecting consumers when they purchase a home. Further, Labor supports the appropriate regulation of the real estate industry and the proposal for an independent commissioner and authority. It staggers me that the Government opposes the bill; one can only imagine why.

The Property Services Council Bill has been the subject of widespread consultation. It will simplify licence applications, improve industry standards, reduce regulatory burden on licensees and, most importantly, appoint a transparent regulatory authority that will include an independent Property Services Commissioner with real knowledge and experience of real estate. It has been decades since the last major overhaul of the property services industry in New South Wales. In that time so much has changed. The bill seeks to reflect the fact that things have changed, not least in the property and real estate industries. We should always look to do things better. The Property Services Council Bill will do that in an area of life that is so important to all of us. I commend the bill to the House. I again thank the member for Orange, his colleague the Hon. Mark Banasiak and my Labor colleagues in the upper House for their hard work, diligence and commitment to the bill.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:30):** Via video link: On behalf of the Government I make a contribution to debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021, which has been referred from the Legislative Council. I do not support the bill, the reasons for which I will outline. Housing is extremely important to all people. Shelter is a fundamental human need. Home ownership has been considered one of the key elements of high living standards. It provides security, independence and privacy. For most home owners, a house is the largest single asset in their lives. Australians traditionally place a high degree of importance on home ownership, which is perceived as important for the stability of family life and for wealth creation.

For a long time governments have encouraged home ownership. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's home ownership and housing tenure snapshot, released on June 30 2021, there are around 8.3 million households in Australia. It is estimated that around 67 per cent of Australians live in owner-occupied dwellings. Of those, 48 per cent own their dwellings outright without a mortgage and 52 per cent have a mortgage. Housing accounts for around 55 per cent of the total assets of Australian households. Around 33 per cent of Australians live in rented accommodation, more than three-quarters of whom rent from private landlords.

Housing plays a strong role in the social wellbeing of Australians. Good housing in Australia has provided the good social and economic environment that is essential for political stability and prosperity. According to realestate.com.au data, close to \$95 billion changed hands in the New South Wales housing market in the year to November 2020. Roughly the same amount was spent on real estate during the whole of 2019, despite the pandemic. That rise in spending was spread across Sydney and regional New South Wales. Price increases have led to a situation where, as the Hon. Mark Banasiak identified in his second reading speech, the revenue generated by the property market now dwarfs the mining, retail and even tourism industries.

According to the 2021 budget papers, property transfer duty contributed \$6.95 billion to the New South Wales economy in the 2020 financial year. That is forecast to rise to \$9.38 billion this financial year. Another \$4.5 billion can be added to that from land tax. Housing is no longer just about shelter or the Australian way of life. It must be regarded as an integral part of our State and national economic infrastructure, with the family home the new engine of economic growth. Many homes are used for running small businesses, shopping, learning and studying online, and as home offices. According to the Housing Industry Association, housing generates a flow of economic services. The contribution of the housing sector to Australian GDP and employment is also notable.

I make no apology for what may be seen as long-winded points. I make them to stress the importance of the sector to the New South Wales economy and to the people in my electorate. The property sector is vital to our continuing success and a professional real estate industry is critical to achieving stability and confidence in the market. The bill intends to impact real estate professionalism and the property market. Its importance and my reason for speaking in debate on the bill is clearly understood by most members in this House and the householders in my electorate of Wollondilly. It is deeply disappointing that yesterday a few members in the House attempted to deny debate or consideration of this bill. It showed their contempt for the cross bench. It showed contempt for the industry stakeholders. More importantly, it showed disrespect for hardworking persons in our State and in my

electorate of Wollondilly. Housing is an incredibly important issue and one very important to me. As their representative, I contribute to this debate on their behalf.

I now turn to the bill. As members have heard in this debate, the bill proposes to establish a new statutory authority, the Property Services Council. This council is to take over the functions of the NSW Fair Trading commissioner as they relate to the regulation of real estate and property agents, alongside functions relating to strata and community scheme oversight. One of the key arguments being put forward to support the establishment of this new statutory authority is that the New South Wales Government and Fair Trading have failed to address concerns over inadequate education and training standards in the industry. The Government categorically rejects this argument. The Government has delivered significant changes to the regulation of real estate and property agents, with the primary aim of raising professional standards in the industry.

The Government knows that the relationship between the industry and the regulator could be better. That is why it will appoint a commissioner to respond to the needs of industry and ensure the highest standards for the benefit of those wanting to make the biggest investment of their life. I congratulate the Minister on his announcement of a new position of Property Services Commissioner to support the real estate industry and customers. The commissioner will be an independent industry expert working alongside Fair Trading to ensure the Government is getting the very best advice on how to work with this important sector of the New South Wales economy. It worked with the building industry, and I am confident we will see the same positive outcomes for the property industry.

These reforms were the product of three years of critical engagement and consultation with industry and the public. They were legislated under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Act 2018 and commenced on 23 March 2020. The reform journey began in 2015 with an independent review of real estate education and training in New South Wales, which found a genuine case for lifting mandatory requirements across the board. The review took place against a backdrop of historically high numbers of consumer complaints in this sector and concerns within industry groups about the standards within the industry. As a result, in 2016 the Government published its *Real Estate and Property Industry Reform Paper*, which committed to measures that would enhance training and qualification requirements for agents; improve supervision, conduct and accountability requirements within licensed agencies; strengthen Fair Trading's disciplinary powers; and streamline the licensing system.

In particular, I note that the education component of the reforms was developed to align with national training packages regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority as well as fair trading regulators from other States, which are also at various stages of the same reform journey as the one we have recently completed in New South Wales. Under the new system, all agents who want to continue working in the industry, or are entering it for the first time, are now required to become fully qualified, licensed agents within a maximum of four years from the time they start out as an assistant agent. [*Extension of time*]

During that time, assistant agents are required to complete their certificate IV in their relevant field and prove a minimum of 12 months' supervised experience working in all aspects of the property profession. While they are on this professional pathway and before they become fully qualified, agents are restricted by law in terms of the regulated functions they can perform. For example, assistant agents are prohibited from entering into an agency agreement, which is the binding contractual arrangement between an agency and a property vendor, a landlord or, in the case of strata managing agents, an owners' corporation. The reforms also include further restrictions on licensed agents to tighten the controls over funds held in trust by real estate agents. In particular, only fully licensed class 1 agents who are also nominated as the licensee in charge of business at an agency are permitted to authorise the withdrawal of funds from a trust account.

The reforms introduced last year also brought with them other important changes. These include tightening disclosure obligations on agents through the "material facts" prescribed by regulation and requiring agents to continuously upskill and build on their expertise so that vendors, buyers and renters can have confidence in the professionalism and reliability of the agents they deal with. With all this in mind, the suggestion that the Government has failed to address professional standards within the industry is clearly untrue and unfounded. I refer members to the following statement:

But these reforms have been embraced by our industry and, not only will this ensure agents of the future are receiving the best training possible, as it's a great step in our ongoing pursuit for professionalism ...

The quote is from Leanne Pilkington in her president's message contained in the *2019-20 Annual Report* of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. It seems to me that an original critic of the profession's education standards, the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, is now very happy with the reforms that were put in place in March last year. Unlike the proposals in this bill, the Government's recent reforms were developed through the strong partnerships that Fair Trading has forged across the property sector, including with peak bodies, registered

training organisations, franchisors, individual agents and other regulators. In particular, the changes made to the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 were developed in close consultation with the Real Estate Reference Group over a number of years. The reference group gave the Government extensive information in relation to the impact of the reforms on individual participants and businesses, transitional arrangements, industry communication strategies and other—

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Wollondilly to either raise his voice or move a bit closer to the microphone. His audio is just starting to get a little bit faint.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The reference group's views were sought on the amending regulation, draft qualifications order and revised continuing professional development requirements, with several drafts of these instruments provided to the reference group for feedback between February and December 2019. The Government also released these instruments for a four-week public consultation period in 2019 and certainly considered the 128 submissions that were received. In addition, Fair Trading has held a quarterly franchisor forum consisting of property franchise group operators such as Ray White, McGrath and LJ Hooker. This group was also consulted on the reforms, transitional arrangements and implementation strategy. Overall, the reforms introduced by this Government have enhanced training and education requirements for all agents because of concerns raised during a transparent and thorough consultation process. Those increased requirements address many of the concerns that form the basis of the bill. By contrast, there has been no proper consultation with the property service industry and strata and community sectors on this radical proposal to hand over their governance to a statutory council that does not yet exist and has zero experience administering or enforcing laws and regulatory requirements.

Finally, as the reforms have only been in place for just over 12 months, it is essential that the focus is on supporting the industry in understanding and complying with their obligations, rather than suddenly throwing it all away. The Government is concerned that the major changes proposed today will only cause confusion in the industry, disrupt the momentum and benefits, and undermine the commitment and effort made by the sector to implement these changes. We need to remember that property agents act on behalf of consumers in the biggest transactions of most people's lives. They deal with large sums of money and are entrusted to manage valuable rental properties and strata schemes. Historically, their reputation has been plagued by unacceptable conduct by some in the industry, and consumer trust in them has been very low. The Government is not at all convinced that the New South Wales public would be well served by the establishment of a statutory property services council. I oppose the bill.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:45):** I support the Property Services Council Bill 2021. I acknowledge the member for Orange, who brought the bill to the House. The bill is all about consumer protection, which is extremely important. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues the member for Swansea, Yasmin Catley, and the Hon. Courtney Houssos in the Legislative Chamber, who are both very passionate in the area of property services and who have also done some very good work. If passed, the bill will represent a major overhaul of the property services industry. I also acknowledge the member for Rockdale, Stephen Kamper, for his expertise in this area.

As a matter of background information, the property industry is one of the largest in New South Wales, with residential property transactions reaching approximately \$95 billion in the year up to November 2020. Accordingly, the property industry contributes billions of dollars every year to the Government's coffers through stamp duty and land tax. The property industry touches every citizen in New South Wales. Our constituents either own their home or are renting or are involved in a number of other arrangements. When a resident wishes to purchase or sell a property, it is one of the major transactions in their life. For some, their entire life savings are on the line. In short, the stakes are incredibly high.

Many buyers or sellers across New South Wales can face a number of issues when undertaking a property transaction. One of the top disputes between buyers and sellers is the failure to disclose defects or material facts that may have otherwise impacted the buyer's decision to purchase the property or the price they are willing to pay. There are also purchase contract issues. Many real estate agents use standard forms for the purchase of property. As a result, issues regarding inaccurate information being filled in on those forms leads to disputes between buyers and sellers. There are also issues surrounding where an agent's interest lies. Buyers and sellers may be anxious that an agent is not acting in their best interest and is only interested in making the sale for the commission. Another issue is deposit disputes. If the real estate transaction does not go through, the parties may disagree on who should retain the deposit. This is usually a legal issue that must be determined on State law.

The sheer size of the property industry is precisely why the House has an obligation to draft legislation that actively plays a role in protecting consumers who purchase and sell homes, especially first home buyers. NSW Labor remains committed to promoting healthy competition in the New South Wales market, but it also remains committed to regulating markets to protect consumers. I raise the issue of expertise in the Department of

Fair Trading. For the past decade, the Government has hacked away at that expertise and made many cuts in the department, particularly through efficiency dividends. The Department of Fair Trading has lost a lot of its expertise over the past decade. That is why these problems occur and why the bill has been brought to the House. It will not only create an independent statutory authority but also bring back that incredible body of work and important information that experts have.

In the property industry, the stakes are simply too high for this Parliament to resign itself to the old saying "buyer beware". In this case, when both the buyer and seller are potentially putting their life savings on the line, soft regulation is not good enough. To that end, the bill proposes to remove the regulatory authority of the real estate industry from the Department of Fair Trading. It proposes to establish a new and independent regulatory body with an independent Property Services Commissioner. The independent board will be highly representative of market participants, as it will include representatives from the Owners Corporation Network; the Australian Consumers' Association; the Real Estate Institute; the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association; the School of Built Environment, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, University of Technology Sydney; the Tenants' Union of NSW; and the Strata Community Association. Just naming those organisations should give members a clear signal that change is necessary and that there is obvious support for the proposal from the member for Orange.

With such a diverse range of members, the independent board will be well equipped to tackle the regulatory challenges of the property industry, such as failures to disclose, purchase contract issues, underqualified and selfish agents, and deposit disputes. That will no doubt instil trust in market participants and stakeholders—trust that has been lost by the department. I note that the Government has established the position of Property Services Commissioner; however, I also note that the role will be within the Department of Fair Trading. The role of that commissioner will be very different to the role of a property services commissioner under the bill. If the Government is serious about protecting consumers, it should save everyone's time and support the bill so that a truly independent property services commissioner can get on with the job of protecting property market participants. I also note that the bill was not developed in isolation. Rather, it was developed in close consultation with those key stakeholders within the industry and members have been talking to them. If the Government is really serious about the issue, it should support the bill.

There needs to be a statutory authority separate to Fair Trading and the arm of government; it is absolutely imperative. We have worked very hard with stakeholders. When the Ageing and Disability Commissioner role was established a couple of years ago, the Government claimed to want an independent commissioner. When the bill was scrutinised by members on this side of the House, we found that the so-called independent commissioner was just another arm of the Government. Labor and the crossbench worked very hard to make sure that there was an independent commissioner. In this instance, with the support of the stakeholders and with wideranging engagement and consultation, an independent statutory authority at arm's length from the Government to consider the objectives outlined in the bill deserves merit. I call on members to support the bill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:54):** Via video link: From the outset, I join my Government colleagues in opposing the Property Services Council Bill 2021. However, I do say that reform is absolutely vital in the area of real estate transactions. I give the member for Orange, who moved the bill, and the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales nine out of 10 for effort and for their advocacy for change in this industry, which must happen and cannot happen soon enough. It probably should have happened more than a decade ago. However, much as the Government has reformed many areas of NSW Fair Trading this is another area that we are looking to reform, putting in place a Property Services Commissioner. I commend the Minister on that approach. We can only hope that, once in place, the Property Services Commissioner will be as successful as the NSW Building Commissioner, David Chandler, and the former Small Business Commissioner, Robyn Hobbs. I have the greatest respect for both of them, especially for their role in protecting consumers and, in circumstances where they needed to, businesses, but largely for getting appropriate and ethical reform across many areas and providing support to those consumers and businesses that have never received it, and which has been desperately wanted.

In regards to self-regulation of the industry by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, that would be akin to putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank. Whilst that may be a little bit cruel, the fact of the matter is that I believe a Property Services Commissioner must have government oversight for appropriate legislative changes that may come up from time to time. Property transactions in New South Wales, which now amount to over \$1 billion every year, are the greatest decisions that people, couples and families will ever make in their lives. They are investing their hard-earned money and, in some cases, losing their hard-earned money because they are not being appropriately protected by the government oversight that is required, which will hopefully be brought forward when we have a Property Services Commissioner put in place.

The NSW Building Commissioner, David Chandler, has already played an enormous role in correcting the great problems that we have right across the building sector. He has been incredibly busy in my backyard of the Castle Hill electorate, where we have seen some of the most deplorable actions by discredited and disgraced people. Just last night on *A Current Affair* we saw one developer, Jean Nassif, who is the owner of Toplace, Hills Central and 51 OCHR, businesses that are all registered at the address of 121 Majors Bay Road, Concord. Once again he was dragged to account by the media for the failure to put in place the appropriate building standards that we in this country expect and deserve.

Never has it been more important to back that up than with support from the Property Services Commissioner that the Minister is proposing to put in place. Already this year many people have come to me to discuss the problems that they have faced when purchasing properties off the plan, where attempts have been made to extort up to \$100,000 above the listed price of a property from those unsuspecting families. I have raised it publicly and they have been corrected. They get a pathetic letter back from Fair Trading stating that the issue has been resolved amicably. But it has not been resolved adequately; it has had to be hard fought. To say that in these cases the department has been less than useless is an absolute and utter understatement.

I recognise the time and I think I have made my points. I will oppose the bill not because reform is not necessary in this industry but because I think the appropriate commissioner required to be put in place must have government oversight. I commend the current Minister and everyone who has played a role in the advent of that commissioner role. That can also be attributed to the real estate industry and the member who moved this bill for highlighting the shortfalls that have existed in Fair Trading for far too long, which will be corrected once the commissioner is in place. I oppose the bill for the reasons I have stated, but reform is absolutely vital.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### **WATER INDUSTRY COMPETITION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

**Returned**

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

#### *Petitions*

#### **HOLISTIC CONSENT SEX EDUCATION**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** As we have a significant number of people watching this petition debate online and an outstanding effort in terms of the volume of signatories, I will explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to directly bring their concerns to the attention of the House. The intent of this procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from a member, which in most cases will be the member who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, although today we have allowed two additional members to participate in the debate, considering its importance. After all members have spoken, the House will vote on the question that the House take note of the petition. The question will in most cases be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if it is challenged by a member it may proceed to a division.

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

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:01):** On behalf of The Greens and the 20,986 residents of New South Wales who have raised their voices in support of stronger consent education and better consent laws in our schools and our society, I proudly present this petition to the House. Way back in February a young woman named Chanel Contos became a household name overnight when she started collecting testimonials from people across the country shining a light on the assaults, harassment and misogyny they experienced every single day in school settings. Pretty soon those testimonials grew to the thousands: story after story after story of young women being harassed, raped, shamed and bullied, and of young men acting appallingly out of an unchallenged feeling that they owned women's bodies and that they were entitled to do whatever they wanted to those bodies. They were stories of young women who felt unprepared and ill-equipped to protect themselves or their friends—and desperately felt that they should not need to have to protect themselves.

One thing was made perfectly clear from these testimonies and the 20,000 people who signed this petition: Young people are not getting the education around sex and consent they need. We can hear their call loudly: "Teach us consent." They want to learn how to behave and recognise behaviour. They want to know what is not okay and where they can go to for help. They want to know how to respond when they experience these assaults or violence. They want everybody to be taught how to be respectful of each other. This petition calls on us as legislators to act to ensure that holistic consent sex education—which acknowledges toxic masculinity, rape

culture, slut-shaming, victim blaming and sexual coercion, and emphasises communicative consent, affirmative consent and offers content for all people in our school system and community—is included school curriculums.

The petition also calls for urgent reform to our sexual consent laws in New South Wales. Yesterday it was so wonderful to see real progress on that front in this place with the introduction by the New South Wales Attorney General of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Consent Reforms) Bill 2021. Much credit and gratitude must go to the powerful leadership of Saxon Mullins for driving that reform. We will have affirmative consent in New South Wales because of her strength and determination. Earlier today a small group of young activists draped more than 6,000 ribbons over the front fence of Parliament House, just like the one I hold in my hand: one ribbon for every testimonial shared with Teach Us Consent and Chanel Contos.

There is a reason this issue has taken centre stage in the media over the past several months. It is because it is something every woman understands intimately. If I were to walk out on the street right now and ask the first woman I see whether she had ever been harassed, assaulted, pressured, slut-shamed, felt uncomfortable in an intimate setting or not really known what to do when someone ogled her or made a comment about her, or touched her in a way that she did not want, the answer would no doubt be "Yes." It has happened to me and it has happened to others in the Chamber and if we do not change how we educate our young people, it will happen to our daughters and our granddaughters, too.

It might feel uncomfortable to hear these stories but, trust me, it is nothing compared with the impact that it has on those who are subjected to sexual assault and sexual violence. Reading through the thousands of testimonies there are recognisable phrases, and the consequences of failing to address them confront us—"We were friends", "I was at a party", "While I was sleeping he wouldn't stop", "I was scared", "I froze", "I didn't know what to do", "I would never have consented to public sex if I had been sober", "Afterwards I went to the bathroom and cried", "He was a friend", "I was trapped, scared", "He groped me", "I didn't tell anyone", "No-one knows", "I was raped by a boy I knew", "I was felt up while I slept by someone who was my friend", "I was 12 years old the first time", "I was afraid to walk down the corridors at school", "The school hasn't taught us enough".

We know that teachers are doing the best they can with what they have, but I do not think any member in this place can say we are doing enough. When we ask, "Are we doing enough?", the answer is overwhelmingly "No". I congratulate everybody who has signed the petition calling for consent to be put on the agenda and for us to make reforms so that no young woman, no young person in our society, ever faces the kind of violence and assault that we have heard in the testimonies shared here today.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:06):** I speak on the holistic consent sex education petition brought to the House by the member for Newtown. Every individual deserves to live their life free from violence and harassment, but women's safety remains a key issue of concern raised by my community and communities across the State and the country. There are too many stories and too many girls and women being assaulted at schools, workplaces, public places and even in their own homes. We need to address the issues of why and how women feel unsafe and are unsafe. This petition calls for consent to be taught earlier and more holistically in the school curriculum to reduce the extent of sexual assault experiences among youth. It also calls for the curriculum to acknowledge toxic masculinity, rape culture, slut-shaming, victim blaming, sexual coercion and enthusiastic consent as well as queer sex education.

I acknowledge the member for Newtown, Jenny Leong, for presenting this petition to the House, and the member for Coogee, Marjorie O'Neill, for her support of the petition alongside me. The petition follows the teacher's consent initiative by Chanel Contos. I acknowledge everything she has done and the movement that she commenced that has gone beyond her own initial efforts. A former Kambala student, Chanel's initiative is supported by more than 44,000 signatures and over 6,000 testimonies. Chanel wants these voices to be heard and I want these voices to be heard. I believe we, as members of Parliament, owe it to those who made the effort to disclose instances of abuse and assault to listen to their voices and deliver on the societal and structural changes that we need and deserve.

I thank the many brave women and men who came forward to share their experiences. This is a huge step forward in breaking the silence on this insidious form of violence. As a member of the Government, I know that it is committed to improving the prevention and reporting of domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, and ensuring women's safety. The member for Newtown has already acknowledged this, but this week the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Mark Speakman, introduced a bill in this place to implement a range of consent reforms that we can be very proud of. It moves to a communicative model of consent and will clarify consent provisions in the Crimes Act 1900, strengthen laws to provide that consent must be a free and voluntary agreement that is communicated between participants, ensure fairer and more effective prosecutions of sexual offences, address misconceptions about consent in trial

proceedings and improve victim experience of the justice system—which has, horrifically, led to too many individuals not receiving justice.

These changes are groundbreaking. We are a step closer to simplifying our laws and setting clearer boundaries for consensual sex and better support for victims. I congratulate the Attorney General on his work in bringing forward this reform and echo the words of the member for Newton in acknowledging Saxon Mullins' tireless leadership and personal contribution to seeing this through. We also know that schools and parents will play an important role in supporting consent law reform. I recognise that the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning is looking to take action on this issue and has taken certain steps. I have spoken with her on a number of occasions about my views on this and the work we need to do. Earlier this year the Minister released the cross-sector statement of intent, working across schools and school sectors to try to look at a response to the testimonies shared by Chanel Contos highlighting the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual violence. It is government, independent and Catholic schools coming together to commit to the sectors strengthening students' understanding of consent and preventing and responding to sexual assault among young people.

Earlier this year the Minister announced an entirely new package for New South Wales schools, which has support for teachers and engagement with parents. This is not just about legislation or our education system; it is much more holistic. It is about cultural reform and attitudes and behaviours that flow from that. It all comes back to listening to what people have to say because if we do not understand the problem and we do not know the pervasiveness of it, we do not know the importance and necessity to act. I refer to two testimonies from my community and put their voices on the record. The first is from a person who attended Queenwood School for Girls in Mosman. She said:

I have had numerous encounters where consent was ambiguous, only to realise years later that I was assaulted after finally receiving sexual education all too late in year 11. Being visibly too drunk to consent or being penetrated without my knowledge were things I had both shrugged off at the time. Teaching the importance and nuances of consent at a younger age is vital to the emotional wellbeing of both girls and boys.

The second is from a student who attended Loreto Kirribilli. She said:

Whilst we had vague conversations about sex and sex education - these were mostly limited to the onus that was on women to be prepared with contraception when encountering sex ... This was too late for those who attended the school and had either formed differing views on consent prior to those discussions or had already been through traumatic experiences.

Consent starts with respect for other human beings and the autonomy of their bodies. We can work together to improve the State's response to this serious issue and help to stop assaults from occurring.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:11):** I speak as a proud signatory to the holistic consent sex education petition presented by the member for Newtown. The fact that this petition has cross-party support speaks volumes about the importance of what we are debating. We are witnessing a powerful movement of people demanding change, particularly when it comes to sexual assault and sexual harassment. A key part of this movement is about evaluating the role that our education system has in teaching sexual consent. I thank Chanel Contos for her remarkable advocacy and action that has played a vital role in the petition that we are discussing today. I thank all those who were brave enough to share their testimonies, particularly women who have been sexually assaulted—many of whom were unable to identify at the time that they had been assaulted at all.

A review of the way in which we teach consent has been in dire need for generations. Important conversations on this topic have been had in our communities for years. Finally, today we bring this discussion to the Parliament. Young people, in particular, are screaming out for change. They demand a curriculum that is inclusive of diverse genders and sexualities, that provides an in-depth analysis of safe and respectful relationships and makes clear how essential the role of consent is in ensuring equality. We know that school-age children are struggling to understand appropriate respectful norms of sexual behaviour. We also know that without addressing this, those young people become adults who struggle to understand and establish appropriate and respectful relationships.

Schools play a pivotal role in helping to lift the level of understanding that young people have of consent, and in doing so can help to shift the way our future generations think and act. To achieve this, we need a formal approach to consent education. What we stand to gain from informed, holistic and professional delivery of consent education and sex education is immeasurable progress. We can begin to address directly the harrowing rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment in our community. We stand to gain a deeper understanding of how such abuse is always correlated with an unequal distribution of power between people. In order to do this, a curriculum must be developed and delivered by experts in this field. We must not let the success be evaluated by the wrong metrics. The measure of success cannot simply be how many students attended a session or downloaded materials. It must be evaluated on the depth of understanding and a reduction in the cases of sexual harassment and sexual assault. I have particularly deep concerns about the current proposal put forward by the Government of the metrics



to be used and placing the burden of consent education onto our already overworked and underpaid teachers. The education should be delivered by specialist experts.

Our education system must not be the only place our children and young people learn the concepts of consent and respect and how to differentiate between what is acceptable and what is not. As a society, we all play a role. We can all help young people practise what they have learnt in the classroom in real-life behaviours. We know that sexual assault, sexual harassment and discrimination towards women is born from the inequality we see each and every day. Such inequality thrives in our workplaces, on our sporting fields and outside of classrooms. It is this inequality that allows the conditions in which sexual harassment and abuse occur. Normalising the subservience of women in our society is evident everywhere we look—in our pay inequality, in the glass ceiling, in the lack of financial recognition for the unpaid care and responsibilities that keep our economy going. Those areas must all be addressed.

I echo the words of the member who presented the petition to the House. I welcome yesterday's legislation introduced by the Attorney General that looks to strengthen sexual consent reform laws in New South Wales. It is an important piece of legislation, but we cannot stop there. It is a wonderful breakthrough that we are finally having this conversation today in Parliament but there is so much more work that needs to be done. We owe it to the next generation to get on with the job and fix all of the systemically underlying problems that drive inequality, rape and sexual discrimination.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:16):** The message of the petition is clear: Women and girls in New South Wales are subjected to sexual assault and harassment at alarming levels, and the 20,986 signatories to the petition understand that one of the drivers of the situation is that young people are simply not being provided with adequate education about sex and consent. Consent is not simply not hearing "No". Consent means having the permission of an engaged and enthusiastic partner, and it can be revoked at any point. Just because someone consented to sex or a sexual act in the past, it does not mean it is okay at a later time.

Consent also has to be understood in the context of our culture. It has to include an understanding of enthusiastic consent, toxic masculinity, rape culture, slut shaming, victim blaming, sexual coercion and queer sex. Teaching consent and sex education does not mean teaching biology. It means educating young people, in particular, to understand that sexual assault is not just an act of someone jumping out of a dark alley and forcing themselves on another person. It often can be, and it is, more subtle, more insidious and more gradual.

Yesterday in the House the Attorney General spoke about the Government's plan to reform consent laws in New South Wales. The Attorney General went into great detail about the continuum of consent and he gave detailed examples of how consent should work in practice. These are complicated, sensitive conversations to be had. That is why the petition has rightly called on consent and sex education to be conducted by experts. Each of the 6,000 people who contributed their testimonies to the Teach Us Consent website wants change. Every one of the 20,986, who signed the petition wants change in this area. The experts, advocates and community groups, including Domestic Violence NSW, Women's Safety NSW, rape and domestic violence advocacy services, GetUp!, Foundation for Young Australians, people like Yumi Styne, Clementine Ford and Mamamia all want change. I want change. The House should demand change.

If this Government wants to take steps to end sexual violence, it has to start by ensuring the delivery of mandatory consent education that is early, clear, direct, comprehensive and taught by experts. I thank all the members in the House who approached the issue with goodwill. I thank my Greens colleague Jenny Leong, the member for Newtown, and her staff for their work. I also thank The Greens members in the other place, including Abigail Boyd, MLC. I also acknowledge and thank Chanel Contos, Dani Villafana and the team at Youth Against Sexual Violence, and Jaime Evans from the Women's March. The time has come to address this issue. The Attorney General has introduced legislation to the House that has to be reviewed with the community, with those 20,000 people who have signed the petition, to make sure that it is the most robust, forward-looking and most effective legislation not just in Australia but around the world. If we take that step, we will be proud to be the legislators who delivered that outcome to the next generation. We owe it to the survivors to listen to them and to deliver change. I urge members to support the petition.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:21):** Via video link: I endorse the thoughtful comments and contribution of members who have been involved with or spoken in debate on this important petition. I particularly acknowledge my colleague the member for North Shore, who takes every opportunity she can to raise the topic of supporting women and their safety. In addition to highlighting the importance of consent education in schools, the petition also calls for urgent reform to require sexual consent to be known as what the petition calls "enthusiastic consent".

The New South Wales Government has committed to reforms to simplify and strengthen the law around sexual consent. As a member of Parliament, I am pleased and humbled to be able to help future generations to not

have to face what so many of us have been through. In May 2018 the New South Wales Attorney General asked the New South Wales Law Reform Commission to review sexual consent laws and report on whether the laws should be amended, simplified or modernised, having regard to all relevant issues, including the experience of victims-survivors in the criminal justice system. The commission consulted widely over 2½ years and received extensive feedback, including almost 200 written submissions and more than 3,850 survey responses.

The commission's *Report 148—Consent in relation to sexual offences* was tabled in Parliament on 18 November 2020. On 25 May 2021 the New South Wales Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence, announced the Government's response to the commission's report and reforms to simplify and strengthen consent laws together with survivor advocate and director of Rape & Sexual Assault Research & Advocacy Initiative, Saxon Mullins; the NSW Police Commissioner, Mick Fuller; the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, Sarah Mitchell; and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor.

Currently it is a crime for a person to have sexual intercourse with another person without the consent of the person or knows that the other person does not consent. An accused knows the other person does not consent if they have actual knowledge, are reckless or have no reasonable grounds for believing the other person consents. Under the Government's reforms, a person does not consent to sexual activity unless they said or did something to communicate consent. An accused's belief that consent existed will not be reasonable in the circumstances unless they said or did something to ascertain consent. Importantly, the reforms that were introduced this week by the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence to help simplify and modernise our State's consent laws focused on holding perpetrators to account while also changing social behaviour. The changes will be accompanied by extensive community education so that we all know what is appropriate and what is not okay.

The New South Wales Government supports, or supports in principle, all 44 recommendations made by the Law Reform Commission in its report and plans to go further in one key respect. The reforms will reinforce that consent is a free choice involving ongoing and mutual communication. Consent should not be pursued. In addition, the reforms will include five new jury directions to help juries better understand the experiences of sexual assault survivors and to address common misconceptions about consent. The directions will support complainants by ensuring that their evidence will be assessed fairly and impartially and that juries will be able to better understand the experiences of sexual assault survivors.

The directions include the following: non-consensual sexual activity can occur in many different circumstances and between different kinds of people, including people who know each other, people who are married to each other or people who are in an established relationship with each other; responses to non-consensual sexual activity, including that there is no normal response and that people may respond in different ways, including by freezing, and the jury must avoid making assessments based on preconceived ideas about how people respond to non-consensual sexual activity; people who do not consent to sexual activity may not be physically injured, subjected to violence or threatened with physical injury or violence, and the absence of any evidence of this does not necessarily mean a person is not telling the truth about the alleged sexual offence; responses people may have to giving evidence, including that trauma may affect people differently, and that the presence or absence of emotional distress does not necessarily mean that a person is not telling the truth; and it should not be assumed that the person consented because of their behaviour, including because they wore particular clothing, consumed drugs or alcohol or were present at a particular location.

A research project will also be established to improve our understanding of the experiences of complainants of sexual offences within the criminal system. I know my time is running out, so I will finish by thanking each and every one of the signatories on the petition. They helped provide an avenue for us to highlight and make changes to this significant topic.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:26):** I contribute to the debate today as the shadow Minister for Youth and as a victim-survivor of sexual assault. At the outset, I thank Chanel Contos for her incredible bravery and strong advocacy in highlighting the dire need for better consent education and reforms to the Crimes Act through the petition, and for creating a platform for thousands of her peers to talk about their awful experiences of sexual assault, harassment, victim blaming and slut shaming. I also thank the member for Coogee, the member for Newtown and the member for North Sydney for sponsoring the petition before the House.

After reading about Chanel's experiences, I contacted her because they were so similar to my own experience of sexual assault 28 years ago, which I spoke about to *The Sydney Morning Herald* earlier this year. They were similar in the attitudes and backgrounds of the men who raped each of us. Both men came from quite privileged backgrounds, attended single-sex schools and did not have a lot of contact with girls. Both of us had mistakenly thought they were our friends.

It turns out Chanel's father's office is just around the corner from mine, and he is so proud of his strong and articulate daughter and the voice she has given to so many. He is a lovely man and he is incredibly proud of her, as he should be. It is incredibly disappointing to me that a generation after I was raped, the same problems remain and the same excuses are used. There is an enormous need for better consent education. The rigour cannot just be measured in required hours in the personal development, health and physical education syllabus. It needs to be measured in outcomes, and it needs to be delivered by experts.

The testimonies made to Chanel's platform from thousands of young victims of such a traumatic crime suggests that an overhaul is necessary. This is about the safety and wellbeing of young people and is incredibly important. It needs to start earlier. Boys and girls need to know what respectful relationships look like and that sex is supposed to be a mutually enjoyable experience entered into willingly by both partners. If it is not and if there is not consent then it is a crime and it can be incredibly traumatic, causing years or even decades of distress.

Too many young lives, especially young women's lives, have been destroyed by being sexually assaulted. There is no such thing as "just getting a bit carried away". It is important that girls—and it is usually girls who are victims—know their rights, but also that boys know the consequences of their actions. They need to know there are no mixed messages. There is absolutely nothing that can convey consent, other than enthusiasm—no outfits, no prior behaviour, nothing.

The language of the testimonies reflects the problems that exist around education and the confusion that so many experience after being assaulted. It is only later, when they have received education on the topic, that they realise what happened to them was actually a crime and there are reasons why they were so distraught by the experience. The slut shaming and victim blaming can start a lot younger than we anticipate. We need to make sure that does not happen to children.

I thank the Attorney General for proposing long-overdue amendments to the Crimes Act to move to an affirmative consent model and remove the defence that a rapist thought their victim had consented. I am hopeful that this will assist in the prosecution of this most horrible crime, and we will begin that debate shortly. Reform has taken far too long. It is a generation on from when I appeared in court as a victim of sexual assault, and that was not long after unsworn statements from the dock were banned. Not much has happened in the meantime, but we do need to change things and we need to make sure juries understand the circumstances that victims find themselves in.

Prevention is just as important, if not more so. Sexual assault is an incredibly prevalent crime that around 20 per cent of women experience at some point, most commonly between the ages of 15 and 25. It is also rarely reported. We can do more to prevent it, and education is key. I thank Chanel for her bravery, and I thank women like her. Saxon Mullins, Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins have all been an inspiration to many of us. Tens of thousands of Australians—women and men—marched this year in support of ending sexual and gendered violence. Enough is enough. Reform is long overdue.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:31):** Via video link: For so long, the pervasive problem of sexual violence has been allowed to fester in the shadows. As shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am pleased to speak in support of this petition calling for a number of things but, in particular, for holistic consent and inclusive sex education in the school curriculum and for reform in the way the law approaches consent. Disgusting behaviour has often been waved off with statements like "Boys will be boys". Victim-survivors have far too often been ignored, degraded and re-traumatised by those who, in theory, should have supported them through what may well have been the darkest times of their lives, while perpetrators have often been left free to move on to the next victim.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] figures speak for themselves. In the two years from July 2019 to June 2021, the rate of sexual assaults reported to police in New South Wales went up by 21 per cent. Still, justice remains difficult to secure for too many victim-survivors. There are an estimated 200,000 sexual assaults in Australia each year. Only 13 per cent are reported to police, about 5 per cent make it to trial and just 2 per cent result in a conviction. There can be no avoiding that we as a society face a reckoning on the issue of sexual violence. Thanks to brave individuals like Saxon Mullins, Brittany Higgins and Chanel Contos, we are having a long-overdue public discussion around rape and consent. Saxon Mullins went public about her horrific personal experience. She said, "All you need to say is 'Do you want to be here?' and, very clearly, 'Do you want to have sex with me?'" If it's not an enthusiastic yes, then it's not enough."

Supporting the petition being debated today, the Teach Us Consent website contains thousands of harrowing stories, experiences and disclosures of young people who want to see sexual consent reform in the law and sex education and consent in schools before senior years. Those experiences may be recent or they may be decades old, but they all contain the same consistent themes: that there was no consent given for the sexual act that occurred and the result of that lack of consent has been felt by the victim on an ongoing basis, sometimes for

years and sometimes for a lifetime. The person who was not given consent was more often than not a trusted person, and sometimes the person retelling their experience at the time of the assault, perhaps right up until sharing their experience as part of the campaign, did not even know that what happened to them was rape; there was no consent given.

We have to do better. It must be clear that if consent is not clearly given, sexual activity cannot and must not happen. Sex without consent is rape, and rape is not okay. I note that yesterday the Government introduced the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Consent Reforms) Bill 2021. I will have more to say on that bill during its second reading debate. It is worth noting that Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia CEO Hayley Foster stated that the legislation requires active steps to establish whether a person wants to have sex before engaging in the act. This petition calls for legislation to do that.

The issue of consent education in schools is also a key part of this petition. I note that a statement of intent has been signed by the Department of Education, as well as independent and Catholic school bodies. I truly hope that statement of intent goes beyond intention and into action. It is through frank and inclusive discussion of consent and respect across school years that change will occur. I recognise the great work of the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect [NAPCAN] Love Bites program, which receives very little government funding but is present in many schools.

I recognise that Chanel Contos, who led this petition, has been in contact with NAPCAN about the program after being introduced by the former shadow Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the member for Blue Mountains. The thousands of real experiences on the Teach Us Consent site simply cannot continue. We must not allow lives to continue to be damaged for months, years and sometimes lifetimes. I thank all the women and men who have come forward to share their stories and drive this important and long-overdue discussion. I join with the signatories of this petition in saying, "It is beyond time; let's get it done."

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (16:36):** I acknowledge the more than 6,000 victim-survivors of sexual violence and assault who have shared their personal testimonies. I also acknowledge my colleagues who spoke so eloquently about the difficulties of speaking up and the way society treats victims of sexual violence. Most importantly, I thank the member for Newtown for bringing this important petition to the House. I speak in my capacity as a lower House Minister, representing the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning in the upper House. The Government acknowledges how important it is that all students, and indeed all members of the community, receive appropriate and timely education about consent and respectful relationships.

Sexual assault is one of the most heinous crimes to confront our community and the justice system. Sexual offences are significantly under-reported to police. When charges are laid and matters proceed to court, attrition rates are high and conviction rates are comparatively low. Recent figures from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show a 61 per cent increase in sexual assault incidents reported to the NSW Police Force in March this year compared with the monthly average over the previous year. That spike coincided with the substantial media coverage of the issue earlier this year, which sparked a long overdue public conversation about sexual violence in the community.

There are many reasons why victim-survivors of sexual assault might choose not to report what has happened to them. When they do, it is critical that they are supported throughout the process. The Government has heard the voices of victim-survivors loud and clear. The initiatives outlined by my colleagues illustrate some of the changes that are underway in our education and justice systems in response. The Department of Education runs the Life Ready program, which is a mandatory 25-hour course for all year 11 and year 12 students in New South Wales public schools. The course builds on the respectful relationships education that is included in the mandatory kindergarten to year 10 PDHPE syllabus. The course prepares senior students to lead healthy, safe and meaningful lives, and to develop respectful, safe and healthy relationships.

The New South Wales Government has developed professional learning programs and resources to support the teaching of the PDHPE syllabus and the Life Ready course. Those resources help students to develop the skills to recognise and respond to unsafe situations, effectively seek assistance and develop the knowledge and skills of protective strategies appropriate to their age and stage of learning. Subsequent to the implementation of the new syllabus, there has been wide public discussion around consent and sexual assault experienced by young people. The reports have further raised awareness about this major societal issue, which requires a further response. As mentioned by previous speakers, the cross-sector statement of intent acknowledges the crucial role of schools in supporting and protecting the safety of children and young people. It identifies key areas where the education system and schools can lead meaningful change, including providing increased support for teachers and school leaders and extra curriculum provision. That will ensure the views of students are heard, strengthening community and parent connections. The Government has introduced a bill to implement those reforms, which is not about

just holding perpetrators to account but also changing society's behaviour. Ultimately, these are matters of respect, and everybody deserves to be safe.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:41):** In reply: We were going to have the galleries packed. We had planned for thousands of people to be chanting right now on Martin Place, replicating the incredible presence of tens of thousands of women marching to say "enough is enough" on 15 March this year. I acknowledge Kaitlyn Birkett, who worked in my office, for organising and planning that mass action that, unfortunately, will not eventuate. Instead, I am sure that there are a few people watching online. Thank you, Chanel, for checking in. Hopefully the debate on this petition will be shared in many ways.

The power of the voices that spoke today in this debate is strong. We have seen momentum grow, from the Me Too movement and the Enough is Enough marches at the beginning of the year to the delivery of real reforms this week in the Chamber that will legislate affirmative sexual consent in New South Wales. That demonstrates the movement is not going anywhere. We will not stop until the harassment, the violence, the bullying and the outrageous toxic masculinity stops. I acknowledge the members who contributed to this petition debate: the members representing the electorates of North Shore, Coogee, Balmain, Holsworthy, Granville, Charlestown and Parramatta. I also acknowledge the instigator of this petition, Chanel Contos—we did it, Chanel!—and thank the member for North Shore and the member for Coogee for co-sponsoring and standing with this petition when it was set up. In addition, I acknowledge and thank the amazing young women who stood in front of Parliament today and tied 6,000 ribbons onto rope: Lucinda Hoffman, Chloe Korbel, Dani Villafana and Harriett Ryder.

I also acknowledge my fellow MPs who joined us out the front: Abigail Boyd MLC, the member for Granville, the member for Coogee, the member for Maitland, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Summer Hill and the member for North Shore. I thank the organisations that my colleague the member for Balmain ran through for sharing this petition. It is not easy to get to 20,000 signatories. I will end by saying the weight of responsibility that members have to do something about the 6,000-plus testimonies is huge. Legislators in this place have a responsibility to make sure that we do not stop here and we continue until there is an end to sexual violence and sexual assault across our society and our school system in New South Wales and across the globe.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I commend the 20,986 signatories to this petition. I also thank colleagues on both sides of the House who have expressed the views of the many members who were unable to participate in the debate, including myself. Debate on the electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons on holistic consent sex education having concluded, I thank the members of the public who listened to the debate online.

**Petition noted.**

### *Bills*

## **PROPERTY SERVICES COUNCIL BILL 2021**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:44):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021. The intent of the bill, which was introduced in the Legislative Council, is to constitute and confer functions on the Property Services Council through two key roles: firstly, the creation of the Property Services Council; and, secondly, the establishment of the office of the Property Services Commissioner. In his second reading speech, the Hon. Mark Banasiak noted the inadequate education required to enter the property services industry in New South Wales. To begin a career in real estate, one is only required to obtain less than one week's worth of education and one does not need relevant experience. Prior to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002, it was obligatory for prospective real estate agents to attend TAFE for three years part time, gaining relevant experience during the course of study. The educational requirements prior to 2002 were fair and ensured that those working in the property services industry were better prepared for the challenges that may arise in their careers. It is alarming to see such a dramatic decrease in education standards for the property services industry.

Now more than ever, we need educated persons in the industry. There is a greater number of properties in New South Wales than we have seen before, and new issues are arising that require expertise. The property services industry affects almost everyone in New South Wales. One does not need to own a property to be a stakeholder in real estate. As the property services industry affects the majority of our lives in one way or another, one would expect the experts in the industry to be well educated, well experienced and appropriately equipped to deal with the complexities of the real estate market. For the sake of better protecting all stakeholders in the property services industry and to ensure the property services industry is efficiently run, Parliament needs to introduce regulatory reforms through parliamentary legislation.

The Property Services Council Bill 2021 seeks to regulate the property services industry through several proposed functions. NSW Labor supports the Property Services Council Bill 2021 in its new capacity with the six amendments moved in the Legislative Council by the Opposition. All six amendments were agreed to. Those amendments include changing the title of the bill from the Real Estate Services Council Bill to the Property Services Council Bill. The Opposition also moved an amendment to require that the Property Services Council, which I will discuss next, includes the appointment of representatives from the Tenants' Union NSW and the Strata Community Association. Finally, the Opposition moved an amendment to require the introduction of education, training and professional development for strata managing agents. The Property Services Council Bill will create a body corporate with the corporate name of the Property Services Council, which, for the purposes of the Act, is a New South Wales government agency. The Property Services Council is subject to the control and direction of the Minister on the exercise of its functions, except in relation to the contents of any advice, report or recommendation given to the Minister.

The Property Services Council will contain a board that consists of a person appointed by the Minister as the chairperson of the board; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Owners Corporation Network of Australia Limited; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Australian Consumers' Association; three persons appointed by the Minister from a panel of five persons nominated by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales Limited; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the head of school in the School of Built Environment, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, at the University of Sydney, after having consulted with the senior members of the school; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Tenants' Union of NSW; a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Strata Community Association of New South Wales; and the commissioner.

The Property Services Council Bill also stipulates that the board may establish other committees to assist it in connection with the exercise of any of its function. The members of a committee should not be members of the board. The calling of committee meetings and the conduct of business at those meetings is to be determined by the council or by the committee. The main purpose for the Property Services Council is to promote appropriate standards pertaining to the conduct and competency of agents. The council will serve to protect the interests of people who deal with agents and facilitate the resolution of disputes between agents and persons who deal with them. With those key objectives in mind, the Property Services Council will have the following functions. It will provide advice, reports and recommendations to the Minister relating to the business of agents; to the education, training and continuing professional development of agents; to consumer protection; to the management of strata properties and community schemes; and to the education, training and continuing professional development of strata managing agents. The council will provide public information and guidance programs.

The implementation of a Property Services Council will help to better assist property owners, who currently rely only on NSW Fair Trading. Too often I hear complaints from constituents, many of whom live in strata-based apartment complexes, about the incompetency of their real estate agents and the incompetency of NSW Fair Trading to protect their consumer rights. Many of my constituents have complained that their real estate agent's responses to their questions and requests are far too slow or simply do not happen at all. Many feel that the process of dealing with agents is stressful and that often a satisfactory outcome is never achieved. That begins to affect the mental and physical health of those renting or living in a property. Everyone deserves a safe, functioning home, and home owners deserve to have their hard-earned property cared for. By having a regulatory framework that oversees the duties of real estate agents, they can be better educated and properly perform their roles. The CEO of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, Tim McKibbin, states that the Property Services Council Bill 2021 will help to provide holistic reform, which is desperately needed to help deal with the current housing crisis in New South Wales. He goes on to say:

The many issues affecting the industry which demand a more appropriate regulatory response, from supply, affordability, agent education, consumer protection and more, will be put under the microscope with the opportunity for an industry-experienced regulator to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Tim McKibbin also says that if the bill were to be blocked, it would not pass the commonsense test. The second critical purpose of the bill is to allow the Governor, on the recommendation of the council—other than an incumbent commissioner—to appoint a Property Services Commissioner. The commissioner would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Property Services Council in accordance with the policies and general directions of the board. The commissioner would act outside of NSW Fair Trading. Any act, matter or thing done in the name of, or on behalf of, the council by the commissioner is taken to have been done by the council. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales and the Estate Agents Co-operative Limited both support the establishment of a dedicated commissioner for the property services industry, separate from NSW Fair Trading.

The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales and the Estate Agents Co-operative Limited believe that the Property Services Bill 2021 will allow organisations such as theirs and other knowledgeable organisations in the property service industry to genuinely have a say in the functioning and development of their industry. They believe that NSW Fair Trading has failed to adequately protect consumers, failed to investigate illegal and inappropriate behaviour, failed to support the property services industry, and hindered and harassed hardworking agents who genuinely deliver quality service to their clients. [*Extension of time*]

In summary, the NSW Labor Opposition is committed to protecting consumers who are purchasing and selling homes. For many, purchasing a property will likely be the biggest purchase they make in their lifetime, and with that sort of purchase comes a number of stakes. Labor supports the implementation of a transparent regulatory authority, including the appointment of a Property Services Commissioner, who would act separately to NSW Fair Trading. The property services industry has not had a major overhaul in New South Wales since 1941, and it is long overdue. The Property Services Council Bill 2021 will support the property services industry by establishing a body corporate: the Property Services Council. The Property Services Council will recommend the appointment of the commissioner.

The Property Services Council Bill 2021 will better regulate and create transparency in an incredibly important industry. Additionally, the bill will introduce education and training, including professional development for real estate agents and strata managers. Finally, the bill supports the availability of information and guidance to consumers to purchase a home, allowing consumers to be protected and to make informed decision. For all involved, whether they be workers in the property services industry or consumers who deal with the property services industry, the Property Services Council Bill 2021 benefits all by supporting the property services industry to provide high quality and professional services. NSW Labor does not oppose the bill.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:56):** I speak in opposition to the Property Services Council Bill 2021. The bill would establish a new agency, to be known as the Property Services Council. The bill proposes that the objects of the council would be to promote appropriate standards of conduct and competency for agents, to protect the interests of persons who deal with agents, and to facilitate the resolution of disputes between agents and persons who deal with them. The proposed functions of the council include providing advice, reports or recommendations to the Minister relating to the following: the business of agents; the education, training and continuing professional development of agents; consumer protection; the management of strata properties and community schemes; the education, training and continuing professional development of strata managing agents; and any other matter requested by the Minister. It will also provide public information and guidance programs.

It is apparent from the second reading speech given by the Hon. Mark Banasiak in the other place that one motivation for proposing the bill is a perception that NSW Fair Trading, as the regulator, has been unable to deliver on those objects and functions. That is not a perception I share. In my view, it is one which fails to take into account the enhancements to the regulatory framework that have occurred in recent years. Consequently, my comments will focus on the Government's recent delivery of major reforms to the regulation of real estate and property agents in New South Wales.

The bill proposes to establish a new statutory authority called the Property Services Council to take over some of the functions of the Fair Trading Commissioner related to the regulation of real estate and property agents. Establishment of a new statutory authority would introduce a measure of self-regulation of the real estate and property industry on the basis of a perceived failure by the Government and NSW Fair Trading to address concerns over inadequate education and training standards in the industry. The Government does not accept that proposition. This Government has, in fact, recently delivered a major suite of reforms to the regulation of real estate and property agents, with the primary aim of raising professional standards in the industry. Those reforms were legislated under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Act 2018, which was the product of three years of critical engagement and consultation with the industry and the public.

The reform journey began in 2015 with an independent review of real estate education and training in New South Wales, which found a genuine case for lifting mandatory requirements across the board. The review took place against a backdrop of historically high numbers of consumer complaints in the sector and concerns of industry groups about the standards within the industry. As a result, in 2016 the Government published a paper entitled *Real Estate and Property Industry Reform Paper*, which committed to measures that would enhance training and qualification requirements for agents; improve supervision, conduct and accountability requirements within licensed agencies; strengthen the disciplinary powers of NSW Fair Trading; and streamline the licensing system.

The education component of the reforms was developed to align with national training packages regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, as well as fair trading regulators in other States that are at various stages of the same reform journey as the one recently completed in New South Wales. As a result, all agents who want to continue working in the industry or are entering it for the first time are now required to become fully

qualified licensed agents within a maximum of four years from the time they start out as an assistant agent. During that time, assistant agents are required to complete their certificate IV in their relevant field and prove a minimum of 12 months supervised experience working in all aspects of the property profession.

While they are embarking on this professional pathway and before they become fully qualified, agents are restricted by law in terms of the regulated functions they can perform. For example, assistant agents are prohibited from entering into any agency agreements, which is the binding contractual arrangement between an agency and their property vendor, landlord or, in the case of strata managing agents, an owners corporation. The reforms include further restrictions on licensed agents to tighten the controls over funds held in trust by real estate agents. Only fully licensed class 1 agents, who are also nominated as the licensee in charge of the business at an agency, are permitted to authorise the withdrawal of funds from a trust account. Those changes require agents to continuously upskill and build on their expertise so that vendors, buyers and renters can have confidence in the professionalism, contemporary skills and reliability of the agents they deal with.

The reforms include other important changes, such as tightening disclosure obligations on agents through the material facts prescribed by regulation. With all that in mind, the proposition that the Government has failed to address professional standards within the industry is blatantly false. Those reforms were developed through the robust partnership that NSW Fair Trading has forged with industry, including peak bodies, registered training organisations, franchisors, individual agents and other regulators. To say otherwise—that somehow NSW Fair Trading and the Government have failed to involve industry in changes being made to the laws that govern them—is frankly not acceptable.

I now turn to the changes made to the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002. The reference group gave the Government extensive information about the impact of the reforms on individual participants and businesses, transitional arrangements, industry communication strategies and other implementation considerations for the reforms. The reference group was also consulted on the amending regulation, draft qualifications order and revised continuing professional development requirements, with several drafts of those instruments being provided to the reference group for feedback between February and December 2019. The consultation was quite extensive. The Government also released those instruments for a four-week public consultation period in 2019 and carefully considered all 128 submissions received.

In addition, NSW Fair Trading held a quarterly franchisors' forum consisting of property franchise group operators such as Ray White, McGrath and LJ Hooker, among others. The group was also consulted on the reforms, transitional arrangements and implementation strategy. Put simply, the reforms introduced enhanced training and education requirements for all agents because of the concerns raised during a transparent and thorough consultation process undertaken by NSW Fair Trading and the Government. Those increased requirements address many of the concerns that form the basis of the bill. In addition, as the reforms have been in place for only 12 months, we need to support the industry in understanding and complying with its obligations. It has only just started the journey. The Government is concerned that any sudden effort to change the status quo will cause major confusion and disruption in the industry. The industry needs stability and guidance to comply with the new laws and rules in place. The momentum and benefits of our recent reforms could be seriously interrupted.

In closing, we should remember that property agents act on behalf of consumers in the biggest transactions of most people's lives. We have heard that from other speakers. They deal with large sums of money and are entrusted to manage valuable rental properties and strata schemes. Historically, their reputation has been plagued by the unacceptable conduct of some in the industry. Those are some fundamental reasons why the Government is committed to ensuring that regulation of the real estate and property services industry is reasonable and responsive to the needs of consumers in New South Wales.

The Government is far from convinced that those ends would be well served by the re-establishment of a statutory Real Estate Services Council, as the bill proposes. The level of complaints received about the industry each year strongly suggests it is not an industry that is ready for self-regulation, or best placed to manage the obligations that a regime of self-regulation entails. Fair Trading is a robust organisation that is sufficiently detached from the industry to avoid undue influence or capture by stakeholders. It has the capacity to do the job the people of New South Wales require. The Government strongly opposes the bill.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:05):** I contribute to the debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021, formerly known as the Real Estate Services Council Bill 2019. The passage of the bill began in the other place and was introduced and first read by the Hon. Mark Banasiak, MLC, of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, on 24 October 2019. The journey of the bill to this House commenced on 17 March 2021. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of the Parliament, the bill was unable to be debated. Subsequently, the bill has been re-ordered to be discussed in this place again.



I acknowledge the contribution made by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, who led for the Opposition on the debate in the other place. I support the comments made by my colleagues in the other place and in this place. The Hon. Daniel Mookhey stated that the Opposition would not oppose the bill. In debate on the bill in the other place the Opposition was successful in amending the bill. Some of the minor amendments related to the omission of the words "real estate services" and the change in the bill's name to "property services". There was also the inclusion of the amendment on page 3, clause 7 (2), which related to the inclusion of the following:

- (f1) 1 person appointed by the Minister from a panel of 3 persons nominated by the Tenants' Union of NSW, being Tenants' Union of NSW Co-operative Limited ABN 88 984 223 164,
- (f2) 1 person appointed by the Minister from a panel of 3 persons nominated by the Strata Community Association (NSW) ... Limited ACN 001 767 997

A further amendment related the Property Services Council on page 5, clause 12 (a), which sought to include:

- (iii1) the management of strata properties and community schemes,
- (iii2) the education, training and continuing professional development of strata managing agents

The final amendments by the Opposition were miscellaneous. In turning to the debate in this place, I thank the member for Orange, Phil Donato, MP, for his work in advocating for better outcomes for all involved in the real estate industry. I will speak to the objectives of the bill. The Property Services Council Bill seeks to establish a Property Services Commissioner, who will have extensive industry knowledge and experience and will focus exclusively on the industry; create the Property Services Council, which will have broad industry representatives tasked with investigating industry and consumer needs and make recommendations to the Minister—it makes sense to have the industry's input—and, finally, foster an environment of mutual respect and common purpose between Government and industry.

The real estate industry is a multibillion-dollar industry involving agents, buyers, sellers, renters, investors, strata managers and more, who support and work in the industry. Buying a property is one of the most important decisions any person can make and it is highly emotive. For some individuals it involves making decisions about raising children, access to public transport, access to hospitals and healthcare services, lifestyle decisions, such as tree change or sea change, potential for expansion through renovations, multi-generational living, downsizing, investing financially for the future, subdivision or the development of a property for multiple dwellings. Whatever the circumstance, it is important that the industry work to the highest of standards for all involved. That includes education, training and professional development for the future.

As experienced over the past two years due to the pandemic, the sector has had to readapt to meet the demands of the market. That has meant the rules of engagement have changed for the provision of inspections, sales and auctions. During the lockdown period the auction process occurred in an online capacity. The sector had to quickly regroup and arrange for the provision of that method of sale in accordance with the public health orders issued by NSW Health. Any changes to the methods of sale must be consistent across the board to ensure fairness and equity for the vendor and buyer. It is incumbent upon the industry to have a level playing field for all.

The property sector is far-reaching, with the 2016 census showing a total of 37,703 agents in New South Wales. It also indicated that the average agent is a woman in her 30s working in the city and earning approximately \$58,468. It is staggering to note that the New South Wales real estate industry turnover is \$107 billion. That is based on the value of residential property sales each year. As can be seen the sector is a major employer and contributor towards the State's finances, in fees, charges and taxes. It is essential then that all involved continue to participate in professional development and move towards improvements that benefit all involved.

Moving on the establishment of a Property Services Commissioner, I note that the member for Orange stated that the cohort comprising property services representative bodies have repeatedly called for the establishment of a Property Services Commissioner. Those bodies were the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, Australian Livestock and Property Agents, Estate Agents Co-operative, Owners Corporation Network, Property Owners Association, Strata Community Australia and the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. The member for Orange said, "Importantly, those entities have made repeated requests, with the entire property industry making repeated requests for a Property Services Commissioner."

It is good to hear that, as of today, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson, MP, announced that the New South Wales Government would act on the creation of a Property Services Commissioner. I note that the Property Services Commissioner will be within the office of Fair Trading and not a single independent entity. That is a step in the right direction for the Minister and I look forward to further work regarding the Property Services Commissioner. In conclusion, I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Hon. Mark Banasiak, MLC, in the other place, and Phil Donato, MP, in this place, for their work on the bill and their constant consultation with the sector. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:14):** I contribute to debate on the Property Services Council Bill 2021. In New South Wales property is a huge sector, from construction through to eventual destruction and all of the exchanges in between. It is a significant employer, a significant contributor to the economy and a significant source of assets for individuals, families and investors. In fact, recently the Australian Bureau of Statistics valued total residential dwellings in Australia at nearly \$9 trillion. A substantial part of that is the New South Wales residential dwellings sector. I begin my contribution by reflecting on something the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation said in his contribution earlier today. He stated:

The primary concern the Government has with the bill is that it allows for regulation to be steered by people who have a vested interest in how the industry should operate.

In a former career I had a lot to do with regulatory economics, as I was a regulatory economist. As such, I consider how good and bad regulatory structures can be put together. I do not believe the bill before the House is a bad regulatory structure and I do not believe the Minister has correctly characterised what the bill seeks to do. The second reading speech of the member for Orange summarises quite succinctly what exactly this bill is about. He stated:

It is incorrect that the bill does not create a new government agency led by the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales or, for that matter, any other industry representative body. The bill does not grant any regulatory functions to the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales—

That is an important point—

or any other industry representative body.

The Minister's whole reason for not supporting this bill is gone because his contribution is not actually satisfied by the bill itself. The member for Orange went on to state:

The principal legislative instrument for the regulation of the property services industry, the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, remains unchanged, save for the Commissioner for Fair Trading being replaced with the Property Services Commissioner.

The whole basis upon which the Government has set about opposing this bill does not actually exist. It is not there. In fact, as the member for Fairfield stated in his contribution, the Minister has today announced that he will create a Property Services Commissioner. In his contribution the Minister stated:

The Property Services Commissioner will be given a mandate to improve the customer experience of property services professionals and to be an advocate for delivery of services and regulation by and to the industry. The commissioner will be an independent industry expert to ensure the Government is getting the very best advice—

But it will not be independent of Government or the department tasked with the regulation of property arrangements in New South Wales. That independence and disconnection is an important part of the regulatory structure in this bill. The bill before the House removes the regulation of the real estate industry from NSW Fair Trading in what is considered to be the first major overhaul of the property services industry in New South Wales since 1941. The member for Prospect might know, but I do not think many other industries have gone without regulatory reform since World War II.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** No, not that I am aware of.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** No, says the member for Prospect; there are none that he is aware of. There are very few industries that are so important and so central to our lives that do not get reformed from period to period. In fact, Government members come into this Chamber on a daily basis and tell members what a great reforming Government they are a part of. Faced with a reform of the biggest sector in New South Wales, the Government stops short. NSW Labor supports the introduction of education and training, including professional development, for real estate agents and strata managers. We maintain our commitment to protect consumers purchasing a home—arguably the biggest purchase they will make in their lifetime—and we support appropriate regulation of the industry. Why? It is because the industry is important, and it is important that we get the regulation of a big industry right. We believe this bill does exactly that.

The bill will establish a body corporate named the Property Services Council. The council will be, for the purposes of any Act, a New South Wales government agency. The Property Services Council will be subject to the control of the Minister, who oversees the council's functions except those relating to any advice, reporting or recommendations provided to the Minister from the council. Unlike members opposite who have sought to characterise this as some sort of regulator gamekeeper capture, the council includes a chairperson appointed by the Minister and appointments from the Owners Corporation Network of Australia; the Australian Consumers' Association; the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales; the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association; a nominee of the head of the School of Built Environment, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building at the University of Technology Sydney; the Tenants' Union of NSW; the Strata Community Association; and the commissioner.

The board can establish other committees to undertake its functions. This is not a case of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales running the show when it comes to the regulation of property services in New South Wales. This is a comprehensive cross-section of the entire property services industry that is coming together to form a council established to promote appropriate standards of conduct and facilitate resolutions between agents and consumers. A person does not need to spend terribly much time in the office of any member in this Chamber to understand that there are regular disputes around real estate and property. There is also regular dissatisfaction with the capacity of NSW Fair Trading to deal with those disputes. That is not said as a criticism of the officers of Fair Trading. Rather, it is a criticism the approach of this Government, over its decade-long life, loading more and more things onto Fair Trading and expecting it to be the solver of all problems. The Government cannot do that while tying one hand behind Fair Trading's back with its budget decisions and expect all these things to be done.

NSW Labor supports the bill introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party because it is a sensible improvement that has been well discussed with the industry and will improve property services within New South Wales. It is disappointing that a so-called reforming government cannot just accept a reform when it is presented to it and say, "Yes, actually, this is a good thing." This is a good, sensible, smart reform of an industry that is negotiated, dealt with and born out of industry discussions and consultation. Rather, the Government has taken the approach to say, "My expert panel is better than your council, so therefore we will not do the better one"—which is the council—"but we will stick with the expert panel." It is disappointing that the Government has taken that approach. However, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:22):** In reply: I thank the 13 members who spoke in debate on this bill: the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and member for Tamworth, and members representing the electorates of Swansea, Riverstone, Granville, Mulgoa, Wollondilly, Macquarie Fields, Canterbury, Castle Hill, Prospect, Hawkesbury, Fairfield and Wollongong. Today I sat in the Chamber listening to all the contributions made during this debate.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Learned colleagues.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I acknowledge the interjection from my friend the member for Tweed. They were contributions from my learned colleagues. I have listened very closely to the reasons put forward. I will touch on some of the issues raised during the debate. First, I turn to the response of Minister Kevin Anderson in his contribution. He indicated not only that the Government would oppose the bill but the compelling reasons for that. As succinctly put by the member for Wollongong, the Minister indicated that his main concern was of an industry self-regulated by parties with a vested interest.

The bill is quite concise and quite simple. In essence, it creates two things: the Property Services Council and the position of the commissioner of that council. I know that members of the Real Estate Institute, the real estate sector and the property sector are all tuning in and watching this debate. I acknowledge the Minister has just joined us in the Chamber. The Minister clearly did not read the bill—he might need to have a word with whoever wrote his speech for him—because if he had, he would have read what clauses 5 and 6 of the bill state. Part 2, clause 6 of the bill titled "Ministerial control" states:

The Council is subject to the control and direction of the Minister in the exercise of its functions, except in relation to the contents of any advice, report or recommendation given to the Minister.

Clause 5, titled "Status of Council", states:

The Council is, for the purposes of any Act, a NSW Government agency.

It is clear, black and white. At page 3 of the bill, clauses 5 and 6 indicate that the Minister still has control of the proposed council. It is not, as the Minister said, the property services sector or the real estate sector or parties with a self-interest or a vested interest—as if there would be some kind of conflict of interest—controlling the council. The Minister was critical about the composition of the board but clause 7, titled "Board of Council", states, "There is to be a Board of the Council." Clause 7, subclause (2) states:

(2) The Board is to consist of the following members—

- (a) 1 person appointed by the Minister as the Chairperson ...
- (b) 1 person appointed by the Minister from ... the Owners Corporation Network of Australia Ltd,
- (c) 1 person appointed by the Minister from ... the Australian Consumers' Association,
- (d) 3 persons appointed by the Minister from ... The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales Limited,
- (e) 1 person appointed by the Minister from ... the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association Ltd,
- (f) 1 person appointed by the Minister from a panel of 3 persons nominated by the Head of School, School of Built Environment, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, University of Technology Sydney ...

- (g) 1 person appointed by the Minister from ... the Tenants' Union of NSW ...
- (h) 1 person appointed by the Minister from ... the Strata Community Association (NSW) ...
- (i) the Commissioner.

To say that the proposed council is an organisation that is completely independent of Government or Government control, that members of that council for whatever reason have a vested interest and will, therefore, not be acting with the integrity that one would expect of such an organisation, is clearly wrong. It is under the control of the Minister and the Minister appoints who is on the board of the council. Straight from the outset, the submission made by the Minister and many of his Government colleagues who raised issues about the composition of the board—that it would be a board or a council with a vested interest and would be essentially self-regulated—is clearly wrong.

I was pleased to hear the Minister's announcement about the imminent appointment of a commissioner who will still sit within Fair Trading. Members may recall that in my second reading speech I spoke about the significant contribution the property sector makes to our State economy. It involves every one of us here in this Chamber, whether we own a property, are paying off a property or rent a property. Every adult citizen in the State in some way, shape or form has a connection with the property industry. Therefore, one would think that the property industry should not just be bundled up into Fair Trading. We heard the member for Wollongong say that Fair Trading looks after a whole multitude of organisations, companies, businesses like hairdressers and tattooists. When your toaster gets broken and you want to take it back or make a complaint, you go to Fair Trading. It has now also been tasked with looking after the property portfolio.

Clearly it is an important portfolio and contributes significantly to our economic activity. It employs thousands and thousands of people, and every adult individual in our community in our State has some involvement in the property sector. It needs to be placed and viewed with significant importance. In my second reading speech earlier today, I spoke about the clear conflict between Fair Trading and the property sector, and members from both sides of the House who contributed to debate also made that point.

The property sector does not want to operate in an environment where, if a complaint is made, the person who takes the complaint also investigates the complaint. Presently, Fair Trading operates in a one-size-fits-all approach. It looks after complaints, does the auditing and the prosecutions, and looks after the educational requirements of real estate agents. It cannot be responsible for looking after all those criteria and then be independent, or quasi-independent, to appropriately represent the property council or the property services or the property industry in an appropriate way. It simply does not work. That is why the property industry is screaming out for an independent council. That is why the property industry is screaming out for the appointment of an independent commissioner so that those issues can be addressed significantly.

The property sector wants to improve its industry. It wants to get rid of the few bad eggs who damage the reputation of the overwhelming majority of the industry. The property industry wants to do the right thing, but it does not want to have a department that looks over it, criticises it at every opportunity, refers to it as "dodgy" and cracks down on it with blitzes. As I indicated in my second reading speech, Fair Trading constantly uses defamatory language when it talks about the property sector. How can the sector have any confidence in Fair Trading when it is treated like that? It is a relationship that clearly has some issues.

As I said, I welcome today's announcement by the Minister about the imminent appointment of a commissioner. I hope the new commissioner, despite being located within Fair Trading, will have the powers and, more importantly, the support to go against at times what Fair Trading may want. My concern and the property industry's concern is that whatever falls within Fair Trading, the commissioner will not be impartial, independent or objective and will represent the interests of the industries it would actively seek.

What does the bill change? It establishes a dedicated industry-experienced commissioner and a council of stakeholders that will have to access to the Minister. Currently, that function is filtered through Fair Trading. Under that model, the Minister's commissioner for property service will be resourced by Fair Trading, with the same people who refuse to engage meaningfully with the property industry. It is all optics and no substance. In essence, the fear is that nothing will really change. No doubt the Minister's announcement of the commissioner has come about because of the pressure from the bill and the property sector's general lobbying of Government over a long period of time. In some way, the announcement is an effort to address that pressure and appease the sector. But while it is within the ambit and control of Fair Trading, the industry is very suspicious and does not have a lot of confidence that the new commissioner will represent and look after the interests of the property sector. For all those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes ..... 11  
 Noes ..... 15  
 Majority.....4

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
 Butler, R  
 Car, P  
 Donato, P (teller)

Harris, D  
 Hoenig, R  
 Leong, J  
 McDermott, H

Mehan, D (teller)  
 Mihailuk, T  
 Scully, P

#### NOES

Anderson, K  
 Cooke, S (teller)  
 Crouch, A (teller)  
 Evans, L  
 Greenwich, A

Marshall, A  
 Piper, G  
 Saunders, D  
 Singh, G  
 Speakman, M

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

#### PAIRS

Atalla, E  
 Bali, S  
 Barr, C  
 Catley, Y  
 Chanthivong, A  
 Cotsis, S  
 Crakanthorp, T  
 Daley, M  
 Dib, J  
 Doyle, T  
 Finn, J  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Hornery, S  
 Kamper, S  
 Lalich, N  
 Lynch, P  
 McKay, J  
 Minns, C  
 O'Neill, M  
 Park, R  
 Saffin, J  
 Tesch, L  
 Voltz, L  
 Warren, G  
 Washington, K  
 Watson, A  
 Zangari, G

Gibbons, M  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Smith, N  
 Berejiklian, G  
 Constance, A  
 Barilaro, J  
 Sidgreaves, P  
 Clancy, J  
 Perrottet, D  
 Toole, P  
 Ayres, S  
 Hazzard, B  
 Stokes, R  
 Dominello, V  
 Hancock, S  
 Pavey, M  
 Kean, M  
 Williams, R  
 Conolly, K  
 Preston, R  
 Petinos, E  
 O'Dea, J  
 Lindsay, W  
 Lee, G  
 Henskens, A  
 Griffin, J  
 Elliott, D  
 Davies, T

**Motion negatived.**

#### *Bills*

#### **CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) BILL 2021**

#### **Returned**

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

*Private Members' Statements***COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:49):** Vaccination has been the key to preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus and is important in ensuring the health and safety of people across New South Wales as we exit lockdown. More than 95 per cent of residents from the Lake Macquarie and Central Coast areas have now received their first dose of the vaccine, while 78.7 per cent of Lake Macquarie residents are fully vaccinated and 80.8 per cent of Central Coast residents have had their second vaccination. It is pleasing to see high vaccination rates across Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast considering the hurdles these communities faced trying to access the vaccine. When Pfizer vaccination supplies were redirected to Sydney hotspots, multiple members of the Swansea community approached my office because they were forced to reschedule their appointments.

As vaccine supplies have returned to the region, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast residents have been doing their very best to get vaccinated. I am proud of the people of the Swansea electorate for getting vaccinated to protect themselves, their loved ones and their local community against the coronavirus. Lake Macquarie and Central Coast residents would not have been able to get inoculated without the assistance of the wonderful nurses and staff at the Belmont mass vaccination hub, the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre and many local pharmacies and doctors surgeries. What a mammoth effort.

Local nurses and health staff have been facilitating COVID-19 vaccination appointments at the Belmont mass vaccination centre since 19 July. They have been working tirelessly to ensure that Lake Macquarie and Central Coast residents are presented with an excellent level of service and care whilst attending their appointments at the hub. To ensure that vulnerable communities are protected against the virus, a number of priority appointments and walk-in clinics have been held at the Belmont mass vaccination centre for Indigenous residents. Walk-in clinics were also conducted at the hub to make sure that our year 12 students had the opportunity to be vaccinated before they sit their HSC and that hospitality workers could be inoculated before reopening. By providing priority appointments and walk-in clinics to specific groups, the nurses and health staff at the Belmont hub have been able to assist the Lake Macquarie and Central Coast areas to achieve high vaccination rates in short periods.

Given the challenges the Hunter and Central Coast communities have faced in obtaining vaccine supplies, the nurses and staff at the Belmont hub should be extremely proud of their efforts. The San Remo Neighbourhood Centre is a local not-for-profit organisation that has also played a key role in facilitating vaccination appointments for Lake Macquarie and Central Coast community members. Whilst a number of vaccination appointments have been hosted at the neighbourhood centre, they recently held a priority walk-in Pfizer vaccination clinic for vulnerable people aged 12 years and over. To assist vulnerable communities to attend the clinic, they have provided transport services. What an amazing effort. I have been informed by the centre's director, Jillian Hogan, that the priority clinic was such a success that they will be holding more in the near future.

The extensive measures the staff at the neighbourhood centre have taken to enable vulnerable individuals from Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast to get vaccinated demonstrate that they are dedicated to looking after the health and wellbeing of others. I commend them for their efforts in providing vaccinations and other important services and programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Pharmacies and GPs have continued to look after the health of Lake Macquarie and Central Coast residents throughout the pandemic. To limit the chances of the local community contracting coronavirus, several pharmacies and GPs have taken on the extra workload of administering the vaccinations. Until recently, these were solely AstraZeneca appointments. However, many pharmacies and doctors surgeries now have the capacity to provide Moderna inoculations. Selflessly taking on the additional task of providing COVID-19 vaccinations reflects how committed our local pharmacies and doctors surgeries are to ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of our residents.

Despite issues with the initial vaccine rollout, many Lake Macquarie and Central Coast residents have done their very best to get vaccinated. However, they would not have been able to do that without the tremendous support of the nurses and staff at the Belmont hub, the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre and local pharmacies and GPs. I take this opportunity to also thank both Hunter New England Local Health District and the Central Coast Local Health District, their CEOs and all their staff, who have been absolutely amazing. They have had open channels of conversations with all of the local MPs. We have all buckled down and worked together to make sure that our communities get vaccinated and, ultimately, that they are safe.

**NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE OPEN SPACES**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:54):** One of the things that COVID taught us is how much we need to value our open spaces—a crucial public amenity where people can relax, exercise, play and enjoy the natural environment. It has always been something that has been of profound importance in my North Shore

community. We know how fortunate we are to have access to our beautiful Sydney Harbour foreshore. We are just moments away from the Sydney CBD but also the vibrant local CBDs of North Sydney and St Leonards. But in that we always need to make sure that we can continue to enjoy our natural environment by preserving our existing open spaces and maximising the potential for new open spaces.

I thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads, Mr Rob Stokes, for the \$4.75 million of New South Wales Government funding through the Public Spaces Legacy Program, which will deliver an over-rail plaza in St Leonards by building 4,750 square metres of open green space over the rail line. This space equates to the size of almost four Olympic pools in the heart of the St Leonards CBD. This will be transformative. Those who know St Leonards would be aware that St Leonards has a significant amount of development with some residential development towers of 40, 50 or almost 60 storeys in height. The level of development that has been protracted in that area for many decades means that we need to wrest back any open and public space that we can. We can do this not just because of this funding from the New South Wales Government but also because of the vision of the Lane Cove Council in transforming this airspace. I thank the mayor, Pam Palmer, and general manager, Craig Wrightson, for their commitment to bringing to life these innovative designs for this new space.

The St Leonards over-rail plaza will include a multifunctional space with landscaping, a central lawn, recreational and play areas, and alfresco dining opportunities. It will connect through to the St Leonards train station and also will include upgrades to interconnecting pedestrian pathways, which will link through to the new Metro in Crows Nest. More and more people are calling St Leonards home and we are investing in projects like this to make apartment living the best it can be. We know that great global cities have great public spaces and this plaza will bring a little bit of New York to St Leonards. Part of my ongoing work to deliver a greener, better connected, and vibrant St Leonards and Crows Nest are plans to convert the Holtermann Street car park in Crows Nest into a green open public space. The final St Leonards Crows Nest 2036 Plan includes forward funding from the New South Wales Government to deliver this new park in partnership with the North Sydney Council. Moving the existing carpark underground on Holtermann Street will make way for a vibrant green core right in the heart of busy Crows Nest and reflects another innovative plan to improve our amenity.

I thank North Sydney Council for agreeing to this initiative and for its support for this project. Investment in open and green space is happening right across the North Shore. One of the key commitments I made in running for election to this House was to return to our community Berrys Bay in Waverton. The introduction of the Western Harbour Tunnel project was the catalyst for buying back the lease licence, which had been hovering over the community of Waverton for over a decade with the threat of an over-developed marina. By buying back that lease licence we have given ourselves the opportunity not just to utilise it for the delivery of this crucial infrastructure project but to return it to the community in better condition than we currently find it. I understand the importance of Berrys Bay's history, heritage and character. We are working on a vision that respects that heritage and character while also considering opportunities for place activation. I led and commissioned the work that Planning and then Transport did to institute the Berrys Bay Community and Stakeholder Working Group, which will help to shape the future vision for Berrys Bay for our community and by our community to ensure a thriving public space is available for all to enjoy.

Our community will also be able to enjoy a revitalised Blues Point Reserve once work is completed on the tunnelling for the Sydney Metro project and extending access to the incredible Sydney Harbour foreshore but with the acquisition of 1 Henry Lawson Avenue to have contiguous waterfront at McMahon's Point. The New South Wales Government also continues to invest in open space through our long-running open space grants program, the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, with \$100,000 to invest in Wollstonecraft's Smoothey Park pathways. North Sydney Council is delivering a wider primary pathway, new stairs, and a path to formalise the track created by walkers. These improvements will mean residents can make the most of the existing green and open space, whether for a bush walk, which we have seen so much of in recent months, or for their commute to work.

Nearly \$4.75 million in funding has been granted to the Mosman Council to help with amenity and connections along the Manly to Bondi walk and the funds will further refocus a revitalisation of Mosman's town square through to Mosman Park. I thank, in particular, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Road, Mr Rob Stokes, for his work with this funding and programs to enhance and create safe, quality green and accessible public open space.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:59):** I compliment the member for North Shore on her vision and delivery on commitments. It is important and refreshing for a member such as I, who represents a regional area, to see the commitment of the member for North Shore to green space, walkways, lovely trees, gardens, et cetera. As we go forward into climate change, I think what we are really missing is that type of involvement in the city. I know the member for North Shore is totally committed.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** I am.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I also compliment the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads but, really, the driving force is the member for North Shore. The people of North Shore are extraordinarily lucky that they have such a fine advocate looking after their needs on a daily basis in this place. Well done to the member for North Shore!

#### **CAPE HAWKE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:00):** I take this opportunity to update the House on the achievements of the Cape Hawke Surf Life Saving Club, which is part of the Lower North Coast branch of Surf Life Saving NSW, which includes the Crowdy Head Surf Life Saving Club, the Old Bar Surf Life Saving Club, the Black Head Surf Life Saving Club, Forster Main Beach Surf Life Saving Club, Cape Hawke Surf Life Saving Club and the Pacific Palms Surf Life Saving Club. The Cape Hawke Surf Life Saving Club is located at the southern end of One Mile Beach at Forster, which is a magnificent beach, and this truly fantastic club has done so much in the year 2020-21. In that year 54 of the club's lifesavers achieved 100 per cent patrol attendance. Their dedication and organisation skills of the 10 patrol captains have made One Mile Beach a safe place at which to swim and for enjoyment. What a fantastic achievement.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Name them.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** I congratulate Sophia Blomgren and Luke McNeil on being recognised for their enthusiasm and diligence in surf lifesaving by each being nominated for Junior Lifesaver of the Year for the Lower North Coast branch whose fantastic president, Brian Wilcox, is a former deputy president of Surf Life Saving NSW. Ordinarily I would attend the club's presentations and annual dinner but, because of COVID restrictions, I was unable to do so this year. Recently I had the pleasure of announcing that the Cape Hawke Surf Life Saving Club was granted \$48,544 as part of the New South Wales Government's Surf Club Facility Program. The funding will be applied towards repairs of the club, especially the roof, and the installation of solar panels and other work. It is a fantastic club that was completed in 2013 with assistance from Federal funding and \$350,000 from the Surf Club Facility Program, which enabled the club to build a clubhouse worth \$4 million. Through donations of materials and time, the club was able to complete construction for a cost of approximately \$1.4 million.

During the year the club recorded a number of other achievements and presented awards: The Open Club Champion was the ladies surfboat team of Corinne Stevenson, Kia-Mae Wilson, Sarah Little, Maggie Collins and the sweep was Ben Stevenson; the Captains Encouragement Award, Jason Gaye; Patrol Member of the Year, Mark Jackson; Patrol Patrons Award, Luke McNeil; Ladies Encouragement Award, Siemma Hayes; the Mens Encouragement Award, Ben Forrester; the Cliff Pell Award, Vella Binnie; Club Member of the Year, Emma Barton; President's Award for Outstanding Contribution, Rob Cornhill; the Ray McDonough Honour Award, Ian Reynolds; Life Membership, Roy Anderson; Distinguished Service Awards, Melissa Borden, Warwick Brian, Bruce Collins, Kylie Jones, Janet Robinson, Tim Koch; Five Year National Patrol Service Award, Kim Hamilton, Mitchell Hamilton, Stephen Hamilton—you had to be a Hamilton to get that award.

The Ten Year National Patrol Service Award was received by Melissa Borden, Gary Breise, Adam Mulligan, Darren Reidy; Fifteen Year National Patrol Service Award, Raylyn Carmichael, Nathan DeRoy, Karen Fuller, Kylie Jones, Peter McTiernan—a guy I served in the NSW Police Force with way back when I was stationed at Taree. The 20 Year National Patrol Service Award went to Andrew Jones and Ian Reynolds; the 25 Year Long Service Award went to Andrew Jones and Peter McTiernan; the 30 Year Long Service Award went to Malcolm Flew, Brendan Guiney, John Hahn and Paul Scott; and the 50 Year Long Service Award—is that not amazing?—went to Graeme Marshman. A 10 Year Operator Award as well as a 15 Year Officiating Award went to Wayne Barry. The Age Manager of the Year was Kristy Lunney; Youth Volunteer of the Year, Luke McNeill; and Assessor of the Year, Richard Ellery. The 5 Year Support Operations Award went to Alan Bawden and Andrew Jones; and the 10 Year Support Operations Award went to Greg Brown and Richard Ellery.

The 100 per cent member for Tweed asked me to name the members who got the 10 Year National Patrol Service Award: Wayne Barry, Emma Barton, Melissa Bawden, Alan Bawden, Sophie Ablongdon, Sue Breese, Greg Brown, Warwick Bryan, Dylan Sakarto, Cameron Sakarto, Garry Clemencine, Bruce Collins—the list goes on—there are over 100 of them. Congratulations to the Cape Hawke Surf Lifesaving Club.

#### **BANKSTOWN-LIDCOMBE HOSPITAL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:05):** I update the House on the new Bankstown hospital, which was announced by this Government back in March 2019. There was a lot of fanfare around that announcement by then Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Wendy Lindsay, the candidate at the time for East Hills, and the Liberal candidate for Bankstown, George Zakia. At the time the announcement was made it was about 10 days



or so before the State election. It is now 2021—close to three years since the announcement was made—and we still do not know where the site of the Bankstown hospital will be.

I saw a very small allocation of funding in the budget for the hospital: in the 2021-22 year, \$109 million has been allocated for the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and community health services redevelopment out of the estimated total cost of \$1.3 billion. In the financial year prior to that almost no funding was provided—the only funding was for the upgrade to the existing Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. A request for information process was issued and that closed on 28 August 2020. Certain parameters were put in place and the Government committed funding to build a new state-of-the-art Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. The parameters were that the site had to be four hectares and that certain zonings had to be considered with the new hospital. I understand that a number of applications were presented to the relevant officers within the health department to assess what would be an appropriate site.

In March 2019 residents in Bankstown and in East Hills were given to understand that the location of the hospital would be on the existing site or on a site suitable for residents west of the Bankstown and East Hills electorates. The one area to which the communities in both Bankstown and East Hills would be very much opposed would be the location of the hospital in the Bankstown CBD. I understand that a couple of sites have been considered there and there have been a lot of rumours that potentially the TAFE site would be used as a new teaching hospital for this \$1.3 billion hospital. That is not an appropriate site for a new hospital as it has a tremendous amount of traffic congestion. A train line cuts the Bankstown CBD in half and very soon a 400-metre interchange will divide our city further.

The ambulance station was moved from Meredith Street in Bankstown because of issues pertaining to that area. In general, it is difficult for vehicles to manoeuvre from one part of the Bankstown CBD to the other. The current hospital site is in close proximity to Canterbury Road. A lot of parking is available at the current site, the underused Bankstown Senior College is across the road and I believe that the number of adults enrolled in the college has reduced. In addition, a new private hospital with a mental health facility will be built close to the existing hospital site.

It is important for the Government to make the right decision now about the new hospital site. We have heard many rumours about it over the past 2½ years and the community has had enough. We want a firm commitment that the site will be where the hospital is currently located or across the road. It should be an appropriate site that is not in the Bankstown CBD and will not disenfranchise the East Hills community and the west Bankstown community.

#### COVID-19 AND GOULBURN ELECTORATE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:11):** Via video link: The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to the world, to New South Wales and, importantly, to the Goulburn electorate. The Goulburn electorate has not only faced but also risen to these challenges, off the back of bushfires, floods and crippling drought not so long ago. I am pleased that Goulburn's current vaccination rates, whilst initially lagging behind our metro counterparts, sit at an average of 81.8 per cent double vaccinated. I acknowledge the efforts of our GPs, our local health district and, most importantly, the community for coming forward and doing their part to help us get back to a somewhat normal life.

Since June and to date, there have been over 400 cases in the Southern NSW Local Health District and, sadly, three deaths. I express my sincere condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones. They remain in our thoughts and prayers. Our rural communities are known for coming together in times of crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic has been yet another great example of this. I cannot thank enough the teachers and the parents who have endured another year with significant homeschooling and all the battles that come with it. We thank the principals as well as the admin and support staff of each of the 57 schools across the Goulburn electorate for their efforts and the care they have shown to our learning families. We look forward to end-of-year celebrations with them all.

New South Wales police have also served their State during a time of tremendous social upheaval and have protected the lives of so many in the community by monitoring and ensuring compliance with the public health orders, which often changed quickly. It is a challenging role for our police officers and I commend them for their ongoing efforts in this regard. Particular thanks go to Superintendent Paul Condon and Inspectors Matt Hinton and Dave Cowell. When it comes to health, so many people have played vital roles over the past few months and will continue to do so in the future. We simply cannot thank enough the doctors who administered vaccines and made sure supply was readily available in our rural communities; the nurses who cared for the sick and kept turning up to work day after day; the admin and support staff who keep things rolling smoothly in the background; and the external providers who helped with testing clinics and contact tracing, working around the clock to try to keep us safe.

It is at this point I particularly want to mention Dr Isabella Hawke of Goulburn, Dr Win of Boorowa, the many GP practices managing the vaccine rollout and the team at COORDINARE, South Eastern NSW Primary Health, in particular Dianne Kitcher. Their efforts throughout this pandemic are so admirable and inspiring to all those in the health profession and it is not surprising that my office has been flooded with comments of praise for them all. I also want to particularly mention the role of our local health districts [LHDs] in the electorate, Southern and Murrumbidgee, and the South Eastern Sydney LHD. Special thanks to Lou Fox, who has taken the challenge to coordinate the response in the Southern LHD and has done a remarkable job. I thank Leanne Ovington who has coordinated the vaccination clinics, along with Dianne. Together they have achieved a State high of 97 per cent first doses and the highest percentage in the State for the Indigenous population at 79.3 per cent. I thank Vanessa Barrett for her work in keeping the community informed. Although I could mention many more names, as the list is a long one, those I have mentioned have been the clear standouts. On behalf of their communities, I publicly acknowledge their efforts today. Thank you and well done.

More importantly, I am proud of the community and their response. Well done and congratulations. I say a big thank you to our small businesses for their courage and adaptation to the health orders as they changed throughout the process, for hanging in there and doing their best within the rules and for continuing to have a go under tough circumstances. I appreciate that it has certainly been a rough time for all of them, and now as we begin to open up and customers return, I know they will flourish once again. I also thank the New South Wales Government for its ongoing financial support offered to our small businesses, including the extension of the Dine & Discover program. I know the program has been well received and I look forward to a further rollout in December, just in time for Christmas.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:16):** I support the great member for Goulburn who, has led and supported her community in these difficult times with COVID-19, with a number of outbreaks in her electorate. I am aware that she is very supportive of her frontline workers: doctors, nurses, clinicians, cleaners, caterers, testers, pathology laboratories and so on. The member for Goulburn is a credit to this House. She is committed to the wellbeing of her constituents and is a fine advocate for the good people of Goulburn. She never misses an opportunity to put their cases forward. As Parliamentary Secretary, I say well done to the member for Goulburn.

#### **COVID-19 AND DUBBO ELECTORATE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:17):** Individuals and businesses in my electorate have struggled with the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020, but in August it hit the Dubbo region with a ferocity we had not seen before. The Dubbo local government area has now had a total of 967 cases, Narromine shire 58 cases and the mid-western region 32 cases. The cases in my electorate represent 68 per cent of the health district's total number of cases. We are not out of the woods yet, but the situation is a lot better thanks to skyrocketing vaccination rates. I want to thank each and every person who stayed home, got tested and got vaccinated. Let me be very clear: You have helped to save lives.

Today I want to thank a few people who played a role in our emergency response. It will be far from everyone; that is a bit hard to do. But I do want to mention a few. First, the chief executive officer of the Western NSW Local Health District [LHD], Scott McLachlan. From the day we went into lockdown on 11 August, almost every day for six or seven weeks Scott stood by my side to update the people of western New South Wales. Scott is a practical bloke who tells it like it is, but he has also got a lot of heart. I have no doubt that his calm and compassionate approach helped a lot of people during this time.

Scott's team behind the scenes include Brendon Cutmore, Director of Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing; Donna Stanley; Adrian Fahy; Leanne Casey; Dan Robinson, for the wellbeing pack distribution; Kathy Radiavata; Kathy Connell; Kate Hennessey; Matt Findlay; and in the office Trish and Krissy. A massive thumbs up to the staff at the LHD call centre. Most of Dubbo and the regions got to know the number 1300 066 055 because we mentioned it every day. The staff were inundated with calls and they did an amazing job answering questions. I thank all the staff at the Wellington Health Service, including manager Steve Dyer, along with the Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service and the Swift Street Medical Centre, who combined to make a dedicated vaccination hub in Wellington. Through that clinic and the practices, almost 8,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given at Wellington. That is a huge effort.

As to our police, we were a bit lucky as the outbreak happened just before the Western Region Commander, Assistant Commissioner Geoff McKechnie, left the force and handed over to Assistant Commissioner Brett Greentree. They led our emergency response, along with the new District Commander, Superintendent Danny Sullivan. Geoff has now retired but his leadership was certainly an inspiration to us all. All of our police personnel have gone above and beyond over the past 18 months but especially since 11 August. During Operation Stay at Home from 11 August to 30 September 30, police across the western region responded to over 13,700 public health order incidents. Also, with the help of the Australian Defence Force [ADF], they completed 15,907 wellbeing checks. I make special mention of the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers [ACLOs]: Willie

Middleton at Dubbo, Teleria Milson at Wellington, Glen Knight at Gilgandra and Teresa Stanford at Coonamble. Those ACLOs delivered welfare and personal protection equipment packages. They did an amazing job within our communities. Thank you so much and well done. The ADF has now vaccinated over 55,000 people across western New South Wales with a team of only about 70 people, which is remarkable.

I give a huge shout-out to everyone at the Dubbo Regional Council. Starting at the top, Mayor Stephen Lawrence and CEO Murray Wood were fantastic in their collaboration. Next is the customer service and economic development teams: Bryson Rees, who is the council's liaison on the local emergency management committee; Aboriginal Liaison Officer Kerryann Stanley; and the media team of Andrew Parsons, Kellsea Galea, Annabelle Hudson, Rochelle Hinton and Ashleigh Allen. Kim Hague and the events team set up the vaccination hubs and helped with the wellness hamper distribution; and Simon Warman and all the staff in high-visibility clothing helped set up and run multiple testing and vaccination sites, including the State's first drive-through vaccination clinic at the Dubbo Showground. The water and sewerage team connected water for the new heavy vehicle testing site on the Newell Highway; and the Creo Cafe made 4,500 meals in a couple of months to help support vulnerable people through Orana Support Services.

There was a whole crew that helped us with community service announcements on Facebook. Thank you to Riverbank Frank, Aunty Marg, Peter Gibbs, Trixie Watts, Dawn Towney, Joe Williams, and the list goes on. Thanks to all the community-based support services, including LeaderLife/Apollo House, Orana Support Services, Meals on Wheels, Uniting Care, Vinnies and the Salvos. I give a special mention to my staff members Jane Diffey and Jennifer Hoare, who were incredible in supporting me 24/7 for six weeks straight and helping me to provide information to the community. My biggest thanks go to the people whose names we sometimes do not know: the supermarket workers, truck drivers, cleaners, teachers and childcare workers, doctors, nurses, aged-care workers, disability support workers, pharmacy staff, GPs and allied health, police, community transport workers and taxi, bus and train drivers. I also include food and other delivery drivers, council staff, Service NSW and Centrelink staff and, of course, all of the business owners, who adapted and showed a huge amount of resilience. So many of you made a massive difference to us as a region and as a community. I say thank you.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:22):** I feel obligated to applaud the member for Dubbo, who has not only the voice but also the charisma to carry out his leadership role. I note also his strong support for his local clinicians and the local NSW Police Force. The 13,700 incidents and 15,000 wellbeing checks, which the member quoted, are a real credit to the police. A focal point of my day was to watch our Premier and our health Minister at their media event and then I would tune in to the member for Dubbo conducting a similar media event. The member for Dubbo impresses me because time and again he picks up the phone, it does not matter who it is or what they are doing, and puts forward his point of view for the good of his people. The people of Dubbo are very well served by the great member for Dubbo.

## TAXI INDUSTRY

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:23):** Via video link: I speak about the New South Wales Government's dysfunctional taxi industry. The Government is putting local taxi owner operators out of business, with no reparations in return. There is a fund, which is funded by passengers of point-to-point transport vehicles. The fund has reached \$250 million. I am told that there is still \$100 million left in it and it is accumulating at a [inaudible] rate annually. So there is plenty of money to pay reparations to those who are suffering as a result of economic injury caused by the Government. There is no other way to say it. My local taxi operators are [inaudible] from the stress. As I have said before in this place, in my electorate two local chaps, both in their seventies, are still driving to cover the payment of their costly once-prized plates. They have to keep working to pay for the plates, but the value of the plates has dissipated due to the inaction, and in some cases action, of the New South Wales Government.

The taxi industry has been one of the most regulated industries in New South Wales, not just for health and safety measures but also for entire commercial operations. The Government has caused taxi plates, which are [inaudible] to go from \$400,000 per plate in some cases to, in a lot of cases, being almost worthless. The New South Wales Government [inaudible] had their hands on all the levers. I am not saying all of this is bad. But what is bad is the New South Wales Government's exit plan, if it can be called a plan, because it is just to deregulate and let it rip. Small business owner-operators of one or more taxis have seen their goodwill being taken away from them by this process and have been given nothing or very little in return.

There have been reviews, reports, responses, a parliamentary inquiry and some half-baked measures, where some of them got \$20,000. After paying tax, they got \$11,000 and it affected a whole range of other benefits. I will use the words of my local taxidriver. They said, "How can it be legal to seize a person's assets and pay under market value for them? For generations taxi licences have been bought and sold within New South Wales, and now, after significant investment from our members, many face the likelihood of having no form of superannuation, as that investment was placed in the purchase of their licence. This example of behaviour is

likened to selling Government land to citizens after they have taken out a mortgage for, say, \$300,000, and then taking that land back for public use and paying \$50,000. Disgraceful!

Two reports prior to the Finch report have found the Government has been responsible for an 8 per cent decrease in the value of taxi licences. Why were these reports rejected by the Government? To our knowledge, no adequate reasons have been disclosed to the public. Why will the Government not commit to a buyback scheme, instead of destroying the industry and providing financial assistance? The current \$1 or \$1.10 levy is remaining in place to fund the reform package. So why isn't that levy being produced to fund fair and appropriate compensation to taxi licence owners?" I call it reparation. They currently have several members locally who purchased taxi plates for \$200,000.

"If the figure included [inaudible] is taken at face value, 50,000 of our members will be left with no asset and possibility of a crippling debt. Previous owners who sold their plates stand to lose tens of thousands of dollars if plates are seized by the Government, as the new owners will be unable to pay their licence. Removing boundaries from taxi licences will just see taxis migrate to towns with [inaudible], leaving their own licence territories without or with much reduced services. As you can see, Janelle, there are myriad issues facing our industry in the seizing of our hard-worked-for assets, and buying back licences at pre-point-to-point-reform prices is just not right and certainly should strike fear into any other investment that people are looking at, that is owned or regulated by the Government." They said they appreciate my representation of their industry. I say to the New South Wales Government that we have the money. Let us just fix this; we just need to do it. These are our local hardworking people. We cannot do this to them.

### SOUTH KIAMA LAND REZONING

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:28):** Having been born, grown up, lived and worked in my area all my life, I can say with some authority I have seen considerable and indelible change, both good and not so good. As a younger member of this place, I acknowledge and agree that growth is important for all communities, not just to build businesses and jobs, but also to provide affordable options for young people who struggle to enter a housing market that is rapidly falling out of reach for far too many Australians. However, growth must be balanced, sensible and sustainable. This has consistently been my view. Be it the preservation of the southern boundary of Gerringong or my opposition to major land rezonings in places like Berry, Cambewarra, Jamberoo and Kangaroo Valley, village character is the essence and flavour of our rich and unique local identity. This inimitable tapestry is as idyllic as it is picturesque; it is important to local residents, and it is important to me.

Yesterday in this place I moved a motion that seeks to oppose a proposed rezoning of rural land in South Kiama. The motion calls on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to reject this proposal. This proposal would yield around 444 lots on a series of properties west of the Princes Highway, between Saddleback Mountain Road and West Street. I want to use the time of this House this evening to outline why I am opposed to this development. Firstly, ad hoc rezoning should be avoided because Kiama needs a strategic housing strategy. The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 makes clear at objective 18 that this is needed to progress further development. Kiama Municipal Council is developing this strategy, which will overlay both housing and infrastructure needs for today and tomorrow. Objective 18 says about Kiama:

In the case of Kiama, the community has expressed a desire to meet the demands for new housing by increasing the supply available in existing areas and through the development of Bombo Quarry, rather than providing opportunities for housing expansion in other non-urban areas. Kiama is only likely to play a supporting role in regional housing supply and has a limited supply of identified new greenfield areas.

Endorsing ad hoc development in South Kiama without properly considering and contextualising impacts on existing and future infrastructure makes one wonder why we have regional plans if the Government is not going to honour this contract with our community. If the South Kiama proposal is ad hoc, where is development permissible? This year Kiama council has already worked with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to rezone land in line with the regional plan. I referred to the Bombo quarry earlier. Turning again to the regional plan, it is clear that the Bombo quarry is favoured for future development. The plan's objective 20 states:

Bombo Quarry is a 114-hectare regionally significant site long recognised for its potential reuse for employment and residential needs. The Quarry has supplied hard-rock resources to the Illawarra and Sydney construction markets since the 1940s, providing rail ballast, aggregate and road-based products.

As the Quarry nears the end of its operational life, it could potentially be transformed with new housing, workplaces or recreational areas.

In spite of several attempts to seek clarity from Transport for NSW on an end date for its use of this quarry, the date continues to mysteriously move. The community of Kiama shares the Government's vision for the development of the Bombo quarry. We simply ask the Government to do something about it. Now that Minister

Stokes is both transport and planning Minister, he is uniquely placed to ensure that this document—his planning document—is actually delivered in partnership with a plan supported by locals.

I regret to advise the House that I am deeply disappointed with the assessment by Transport for NSW of the traffic impacts of this development. Its assessment was unsatisfactory and unprofessional. It appears Transport for NSW has relied on a report undertaken more than five years ago, in July 2016, which was drawn up during school holidays, when traffic is significantly lighter. This report must have been compiled by someone whose favoured mode of transport is a unicycle, as the report goes on to deny the need for any additional egress from or ingress to the M1, with the recommendation that the current road infrastructure, subject to minor amendments, is adequate. This is absolute nonsense. The existing road network, including South Kiama Drive and Saddleback Mountain Road, barely copes now, particularly at peak times. A rezoning of this nature will gridlock Kiama. We will not need additional car parking in the CBD, as that is what residential streets will become, thanks to this myopic and incomprehensible response from someone who, clearly, has no understanding of the Kiama community.

I acknowledge the position adopted by Kiama council, which has unanimously opposed this proposal. Council members are the democratically elected local voices of our community, of all political stripes and colours. Whilst the department of planning gave the community a hearing, it appears the department has only directly heard from the applicant behind closed doors. What they said, we do not know. How they convinced the department to recommend this outrageous proposal is beyond me. I ask that the Minister inform our community why the department was so easily convinced in the light of a tsunami of evidence that would lead any reasonable person to oppose this proposal. In the interests of transparency and accountability, I call on the Minister to release this detail provided by the applicant in its meeting with the department of planning.

Other local infrastructure, like water pipes and sewerage, is just not cut out for this scale of development. It was not that long ago that Easts and Kendalls beaches were closed because of run-off and sewerage concerns. Infrastructure must be a forethought, not an afterthought. I do not want to see the beautiful green vistas around Kiama become a mash of Colorbond and concrete. Kiama is special. I will not sit back and allow an application of this nature to pass without the most strident of comment and diametrical opposition from me. Our community submitted hundreds of letters of objection. Surely, Minister, these views must mean something to you, as they do to me. *[Time expired.]*

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:34):** Over the past couple of months I have borne witness to a good friend on her journey through the highs and lows of the modern New South Wales housing market. As a first home buyer—one of thousands across the State—she has saved for the deposit and spent hours scouring the internet, attending inspections and reading the building and strata reports, looking for a modest but affordable first home. Sydney is the third-least affordable city on the planet in which to buy a home, but housing affordability is no longer a Sydney-centric issue. A decade of failed policies to address housing affordability from this tired Government has meant that affordability problems have spread into regional New South Wales and into every type of property tenure. Living outside Sydney no longer saves people from eye-watering property price growth.

According to CoreLogic, over the past year median house prices in regional New South Wales have risen by more than 27 per cent. In September the median house price in regional New South Wales was more than \$655,000. In Sydney house prices are up nearly 30 per cent over the past year, with the median house price rising to more than \$1.3 million. Over the same period, wages in New South Wales have increased by a miserable 1.5 per cent. Let that sink in. House prices are up nearly 30 per cent; wages are up 1.5 per cent. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures record a more than 110 per cent increase in house prices and just a 26 per cent increase in wages over the decade this Government has been in power. Over the period of the COVID pandemic alone—that is, in the 90 days for which data is currently available—house prices in Sydney went up by more than \$580 a day.

At the same time, in regional New South Wales house prices were increasing by around \$380 a day. This year's price increases, while high, are not a one-off. That has left many wondering what on earth they have to do to get into an affordable house. Rightly, people feel abandoned by the Liberal-Nationals Government, which they now realise is not interested in looking after people's interests—just its own. While Ministers blame low interest rates, additional household savings, a wealth effect from a lack of escape spending and the Federal taxation system, members opposite cannot avoid their own culpability in helping create the current situation of unaffordable housing. The new Premier, who upon assuming office declared housing affordability to be "a real focus for this Government", is the same person who has made the great Australian dream a torrid nightmare. He says regularly that past performance is an indicator of future performance, so people know what is coming. That is right: no action and higher house prices.

The Cabinet, which has put politics before housing, cannot dodge its responsibility for the current situation. A Government that invests in transport projects in the Eastern Suburbs and the North Shore but does not sensibly allow housing density to increase along those same multibillion-dollar transport routes cannot dodge its responsibility for pricing families out of dream homes. And what is the Government's big solution? It is a task force and a Cabinet committee. After a decade in office this Government is running up the white flag on housing supply and affordability. For a Government that claims to believe in how markets operate, it lacks a rudimentary understanding of exactly how they do. Demand is up. That is partially due to the availability of cheap money and funding support for the construction sector, but they are only immediate contributors; demand has been strong for some time.

But while demand is up, supply is not. Over the past five years the average number of completed new homes in Sydney was 36,330. That was mostly driven by two years with 40,000-plus completions. If that level of home completion is generating double-digit percentage increases in house prices, what is going to happen in the years ahead? Even under its "high growth" scenario, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment forecasts average annual new home completions to fall by around 6 per cent a year. The new Premier is spruiking an even bigger Sydney. His recycled Government cannot even keep pace with housing the people we have right now. How will it deal with hundreds of thousands more? For much of the past decade this Government has talked a big game on housing affordability and has failed at every turn.

The Coalition's first Premier, O'Farrell, promised to fix it and failed. Its second Premier, Baird, pledged to fix it and failed. Its third Premier, Berejiklian, vowed to fix it and failed. Now its fourth Premier, Perrottet, hopes that imposing a lifelong property tax is going to fix it. Yet property prices are increasing year after year, plunging key workers into housing stress and drowning them in debt, and leaving working families living in overcrowded homes with long commutes from western Sydney. In regional areas people in the hospitality and tourism sectors cannot afford to rent or buy anywhere near where they work. The member for Tweed would know all about that. Why has this happened? It has happened because this 10-year-old Liberal-Nationals Government has simply given up on a generation of young Australians, who will never be able to afford their own home, and mangled the great Australian dream.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:39):** The future is clear. Many members of the community are engaged with achieving zero emissions by 2050. Members need to take action to ensure that our children and our children's children have a planet to live on. The arguments from environment organisations have targeted coal as the perpetrator of climate change; across the planet, that opinion does not hold water. I agree that we have to lower our emissions, but the people of Heathcote understand that coal has and will have a place in the economy for decades to come. The Bulli coal seam, which a large proportion of the Heathcote electorate sits on, produces the world's finest steel coking coal and is valued by all the economies that are not signed up to emissions reductions, such as India, China and the like. The elephant in the room is this question: How can Australia and New South Wales have an unlimited energy supply? The answer is staring us in the face: nuclear power generation.

I have lived in the shadow of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's reactor, the only nuclear medicine reactor in the Southern Hemisphere, which supplies nuclear medicine to the world. Having grown up so close to a nuclear reactor, my opinion is that we need to consider nuclear energy as part of Australia's energy mix in the future. This country has a third of the world's uranium, so we do not have a supply issue. Australia is currently investigating a depository for nuclear waste, with a short list being made. Australia's economy will boom if it has clean energy in concert with a combination of power generation, with nuclear as the safe, clean base load power source making energy cheaper and more reliable in the future. Australia is at a crossroads. We need to urgently put all sources of power generation on the table.

Nuclear power should not be feared. Those who oppose it will roll out Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Fukushima, but those incidents, although very serious, were very rare. Since the 1950s approximately 5,000 deaths have been attributed to nuclear power, most of them being industrial accidents. On the other hand, deaths have been caused by solar and wind power. In 2021 alone 440 people died worldwide because of solar rooftop panels. Wind turbines also have a dubious history of industrial accidents, with an average of 57 deaths every year since 1990. Technology has moved forward in leaps and bounds over the past decade, and nuclear generation is accepted across the world as the answer for affordable energy. As a clean, efficient and abundant power source with minimal impacts on the community, nuclear power should be placed on the table and considered through thorough and rigorous investigation. Australia is looking for some kind of magic pudding to supply base power with zero emissions. We do not have to look any further than nuclear power.

In 2021 the hysteria around nuclear power is unfounded. Around the world many countries are successfully using nuclear power as their base load, France being one of them. On the other hand, in 2022 Germany will shut down the last of its nuclear power generators; it will be a country to watch to see how that will affect its economy.

Australia is in a prime position to move toward zero emissions earlier than 2050 if we adopt the answer staring us in the face. We could consider moving zero emission targets forward, leaving the rest of the world in our wake. Just imagine having the capability to have safe, clean, abundant, dispatchable energy, enabling our economy to boom and encouraging clean, green industries to Australia. Members in this place can lead the conversation to re-engage with what was a leading force in Australia's past: nuclear energy and nuclear science. Join with me and lead from the front.

### **PARKS FOR PEOPLE PROGRAM**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:44):** The COVID-19 pandemic and recent lockdowns have reinforced the importance of parks and public spaces in communities. Public spaces provide numerous benefits, including the expansion of green infrastructure, the promotion of public health and wellbeing, the revitalisation of communities and the facilitation of community engagement, as well as economic development. I therefore welcome the planned multimillion-dollar upgrade to the County Road Reserve in Belrose, in my electorate of Davidson, as well as the current initiative to receive community feedback during the planning process as part of the New South Wales Government's \$50 million Parks for People program.

The program will help to "Green our City", so I commend the Government for its financial commitment to improving public space and enhancing the quality of life for people in New South Wales. Earlier this year, the New South Wales Government proposed to upgrade County Road Reserve and invited Belrose residents to comment on the proposal. In response, the Belrose Open Space Corridor Association [BOSCA], an association of Belrose residents, carried out face-to-face consultations with residents who live near County Road Reserve. They all agreed with the plan to upgrade the reserve. Many residents are pleased that the plan is now underway.

The proposed developments by the New South Wales Government, working closely with the Northern Beaches Council, so far include an upgraded sports field, a discovery and learning walkway to the existing bush track, a multi-use building, a natural amphitheatre and an accessible car park with 40 spaces. The planning process has progressed to the next stage, where the State Government has invited further community feedback and ideas regarding the draft concept design. Consultation is taking place between the New South Wales Department of Planning and local residents, including BOSCA, and includes methods such as an interactive design board and an online survey.

The initiative has provided locals with the chance to ensure their park needs are met now and for the future, as they are the experts in understanding what they need. We have since seen many wonderful and inclusive ideas for County Road Reserve, including an upgraded sports field, bush trails and sensory learning activities. I have long supported dedicating and enhancing this land for public recreational use, and I have previously written to Ministers and the Northern Beaches Council regarding the reserve. In 2014 I wrote to then Minister for Roads and Freight the Hon. Duncan Gay on behalf of then Warringah councillor Jose Menaro-Pires and the local community to express my support for a timely land transfer to Warringah Council, now the Northern Beaches Council, on the basis that the land would be maintained as a community recreational open space.

I have also previously corresponded with the Northern Beaches Council regarding the current plans for the reserve and its role in providing information during the planning process. Northern Beaches Council Mayor Michael Regan has encouraged the community to have its say in developing the concept design during multiple planning phases. I acknowledge everyone who has been involved in this process, including the New South Wales Government, the Northern Beaches Council and the members of my local community, who have been actively involved at every stage and will greatly benefit from this proposed upgrade into the future.

### **SYDNEY FOOTBALL STADIUM UNDERGROUND CAR PARK**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:48):** I have been advised by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, not by Venues NSW, that Venues NSW proposes to build a 1,500 space underground car park at the Sydney Football Stadium. This is located within my electorate, and I find it extraordinary that Venues NSW did not have the courtesy of affording me a briefing. The proposal makes a mockery of the Liberal Government's planning process. The State significant approval for the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment required, under condition D50 of that consent, the developer to consider alternative means of mass transport in and out of the stadium. The developer was also required to consider a timeline for the progressive removal of on-grass car parking at Moore Park East.

It was a reasonable determination in the State significant consent because the New South Wales Government has spent more than \$3 billion on the CBD and South East Light Rail project—which I have called the "ghost train"—which came in at \$1.6 billion over budget and over a year late. It was specifically designed as a people mover to remove people efficiently from significant events at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium complex in Moore Park. What is the point in spending billions of dollars on a light rail if it does

not have the effect of removing pollution-guzzling cars from our already congested streets or from these arterial pinch points around the Centennial Parklands area?

With the introduction of the light rail, which is said to be able to move people every two minutes to Central station from the Sydney Cricket Ground area, why is public transport not the appropriate mechanism by which to move people in and out of this area? Anyone who has been to events at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium complex in Moore Park knows that when there is an event it is impossible to clear the traffic. Why should the residents of my electorate, and the people of eastern Sydney, have to continue to give up open space for a car park? My electorate and the City of Sydney local government area have densities increasing at a rapid rate, and the people are crying out for every blade of grass and green space. This is publicly owned land, which belongs entirely to the people. It is open space public land. Get all the cars out of Moore Park, and get people to and from these significant events by public transport.

The success of a venue depends upon being able to move efficiently people in and out and away from a venue. That is why ANZ Stadium in Homebush is so successful. This is something that Tony Sheppard, the Chairman of the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust, and I have discussed on a previous occasion. It is clear, from what the City of Sydney council has been told, that Venues NSW has no intention of removing all the vehicles from Moore Park. It only wants to remove the vehicles from around Kippax Lake to an underground car park. The solution to accessing the Sydney Cricket Ground precinct efficiently and effectively should not just be a transport solution. To create a successful venue you need public transport. Three billion dollars has already been invested in that process.

Venues NSW does not need another \$100 million of public money for a car park for the benefit of its corporate visitors. The planning Minister should enforce the conditions of consent, reject any proposal to vary the consent and not fork out any more public money for this facility. Visitors can get public transport to and from that facility. That is why the Liberal Party has spent \$3 billion on a ghost train.

#### FLUSHABLE WIPES

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:52):** I speak today about an environmental issue that I am passionate about. It is one that has been brought to my attention by members of my community. Earlier this year the Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society, led by Kim Wagstaff, brought me up to speed on the issue of flushable wipes, which are posing a significant risk to our sewerage system and our environment. Recent Clean Up Australia Days have seen a number of these collected on the riverbanks of the Georges River. I am extending my support for Australian water authorities to provide guidelines and criteria for what makes an item acceptable to flush or not to flush, which is currently underway. This will ensure that plumbing and sewerage flow is not affected by the recent clogging caused by flushable wipes in the community.

I draw the House's attention to the environmental side effects of flushable wipes, as their microplastic fibres pose a threat to our marine environment. These wipes are made up of cellulose and pose a risk to wildlife when ingested. They can also become a choking hazard. With the evidence stacked up against flushable wipes as an alternative for toilet paper, I bring this to the attention of Parliament. While recent actions have been undertaken by the judicial system to increase accountability and to take direct action for misconduct, more must be done. The natural environment is our most sacred resource, and I certainly want to see greater regulation of the material make-up of supposedly flushable wipes. As some members may be aware, this issue was before the Federal Court in 2019 due to residential complaints about sewerage blockages on public and private property. Although the case was not successful due to inconclusive evidence, it shed a light on the importance of the issue not only in my electorate but also throughout Australia.

As a Government, we cannot spot-fix the cases of blockages where they arise, but we must look at the broader solution and propose legislative changes, increase individual understanding or change the Federal standard on the matter. The Water Services Association of Australia says that it spends in excess of \$15 million a year cleaning up the effects of flushable wipes in our community. I am sure that the scale of this issue is not something at the front of mind for many people, but I believe that the issue has escalated over many years and we must do what we can to fix it. The costs are passed onto consumers and it is an expense that we are all paying for.

On behalf of my local community, I am pleased to have addressed this issue in the House today to start the conversation about how we go about tackling the overarching issue of flushable wipes, which is a big issue in the environment and across our riverbanks. We must regulate the materials and substances used within those products to protect our water movement and, most importantly, to protect our precious environment. I thank Kim Wagstaff and the Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society for escalating the issue to me and bringing it to my attention during Clean Up Australia Day. I look forward to continuing this conversation in the future.



### COVID-19 AND KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:55):** In a recent conversation, Professor Gordon Parker, AO, who is the founder of the Black Dog Institute, emphasised to me that social harmony results in positive mental health outcomes for individuals within our community. If that is the case, then the people of Ku-ring-gai have certainly been doing their part for social harmony. The Ku-ring-gai community has displayed an outstanding spirit throughout the pandemic, coming together to support one another despite the challenges we have faced. From individuals caring for one another to grassroots and community-led initiatives to playing their part in statewide programs, on every level Ku-ring-gai has stepped up and responded emphatically in the shared fight against COVID-19 and its impacts on all facets of life. The community worked together through that difficult time to bring us the hope for a better future that we now have. They have done so without leaving anyone behind and with care and support for each other, and with a shared sense of belonging and responsibility to each other.

Ku-ring-gai has an abundance of volunteers, each making a difference by giving of their time and expertise. The benefits of those efforts are felt socially and economically. The Centre for Volunteering's inaugural *New South Wales State of Volunteering Report* revealed the extensive scale and depth of the value of volunteering in New South Wales. In 2020 more than 4.8 million people volunteered in New South Wales, contributing more than 1.5 billion hours cumulatively. In particular, as the pandemic hit, statistics show that total volunteering hours increased, showing the great community spirit of our volunteers.

As the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, I have been fortunate to remotely attend many award ceremonies around the State, for regional as well as metropolitan areas, run by the Centre for Volunteering, which has celebrated our community volunteers. I was fortunate enough to also attend the ceremony dealing with a volunteers in the Ku-ring-gai local area. On a local level, I thank each and every person from Ku-ring-gai who has volunteered in all capacities and on all scales. Their work has aided countless people. Volunteers say to me that for every person you help, you gain an enormous amount in return, as well as the opportunity to meet great people and form friendships. I am confident that our volunteers have found community service to be personally fulfilling.

I extend my thanks to the volunteering organisations of Ku-ring-gai. They are numerous and it is difficult to mention them all. They cover all areas: aged care, meal delivery services, local sports teams, service clubs, Scouts and Girl Guides, gardening, driving or doing tasks for our seniors. The impressive vaccination rate is a strong demonstration of Ku-ring-gai's community spirit. Almost everybody over the age of 16 years has come forward to be vaccinated in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai local government areas, and the 12- to 15-year-olds are now coming forward in large numbers, too. Parts of both those local government areas form the State electorate in Parliament that I am honoured to serve. Not only does the Ku-ring-gai electorate have one of the highest vaccination rates in the State but it also was one of the first to reach and surpass the 70 and 80 per cent double vaccination targets. It now has some of the highest vaccination rates in the world. Those rates could not have been achieved without the support of our local healthcare workers, whom we acknowledge and are grateful for. Ku-ring-gai's community-led organisations have undertaken initiatives, projects and services to help vulnerable people and multicultural communities through COVID-19 and its impacts.

Recently, the New South Wales Government recognised two of those local organisations under the Empowering and Supporting Local Communities Grant program whereby they shared over \$23,000 in funding. The grant supports and maintains their critical work. The Dae Hahn Culture School in Turramurra has assisted, connected and supported migrant and refugee communities and seniors with vulnerabilities. Its programs include providing COVID-19 information in Korean, boosting social connections in COVID-safe ways and providing training in technology. The initiative boosted social networking, mental wellbeing and understanding of the health advice. The North Shore Sikh Association of Sydney in Turramurra has provided support for emerging communities including migrants, refugees, international students and seniors. The initiatives have encouraged social and emotional supports, assisted with social isolation and provided practical supports in the form of meals and the sourcing of vaccination information and bookings. Such practical care was integral in providing connection and support at a time when it was most needed. The hardship of the pandemic has certainly been met with great support and I am proud of our local organisations who have provided critical services. I am proud of, and grateful to, the people of the Ku-ring-gai community for their active engagement in many ways throughout the pandemic and in demonstrating the remarkable community spirit we share.

### PORTERS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:01):** I inform the House of a new school that will open in my electorate next year, the Porters Creek Public School. As a former teacher and principal, I know that any dollar spent on education is a great investment in any community. The newly appointed principal, Robyn Christie, has been doing a sterling job with her leadership team, which includes business manager Julie Griffiths, and assistant

principals Kelly Becton, Brooke Maasepp, Alicia Page and Rachel Perry. They have been getting ready for next year, including remote transition, because of COVID, from kindergarten for some students. The whole community is really excited about the school.

As a former principal, I know what a huge job it is to take over a school but it is an even bigger job when it is a brand new school because the principal has to start from scratch and set the whole ethos. I am quite impressed with the school's motto, which is "Connect, Empower, Innovate, Excel", and the school has chosen a mascot, Pugsley the Platypus. Porters Creek Public School takes its name from Porters Creek, which is the last great freshwater wetland left on the Central Coast and which is home to platypuses. The students will be learning about their local environment and hopefully they will run into a local Pugsley or two, which will be really exciting for them.

The school has been delivered at a cost of approximately \$38 million, which makes me really pleased. When I was first elected to Parliament in 2007, I saw two brand new schools, the Woongarra Public School and the Warnervale Public School—so, Labor did build schools—and in 2022 my electorate will have the Porters Creek Public School. The school is in a hugely growing area and really needs the extra educational infrastructure. The school's enrolment initially will be 460 students but eventually the school will cater to 1,000 students. The student enrolments will come from the surrounding areas, which are growing at a million miles an hour.

The school will have 20 classrooms, an administration block and staff building, a hall with a covered outdoor learning area [COLA] and an outside-of-school hours care facility, a library with two special programs rooms, landscaped external play spaces and a mini sports field. It is located straight across from the Warnervale Oval, which will give students somewhere to go when they need to stretch their legs. Robyn Christie, the newly appointed principal, said:

I feel so blessed and thrilled to be the founding Principal of Borders Creek Public School! I've had many wonderful opportunities throughout my 20-year career as a teacher and a school leader, working in Western and South-Western Sydney, in Newcastle, and now, here on our beautiful Central Coast.

She is also proud of being able to call herself a local resident for the past 12 years. It is good that she will be working close to home now and she will not have to commute as far—I know what that is like; it has its advantages and it has its disadvantages because you are running around with the kids and family all the time, but in most cases that is a good experience. Even the young people who sometimes you had to suspend still like you when they meet you down the street; they know that you have their interests at heart.

This will be a fantastic facility. I know that all the assistant principals—Julie Griffith, Kelly Becton, Alicia Page, Rachel Perry and Brooke Maasepp—are very, very experienced members of school leadership teams and they bring a great ethos to the school. I am looking forward hopefully, now that COVID is over, to having a tour of the site. I was certainly involved with the community team that was set up and chose the name of the school, and obviously chose the principal to start off with. It is going to be an exciting time in our community to have a fourth primary school. It is just up the road from where I live so I will be going past there all the time. My challenge now is to get a footpath that goes all the way from Warnervale school to the railway station and which will go past Porters Creek.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:06):** It is great to see the member for Wyong so happy today. I share in his enthusiasm. Porters Creek Public School is an absolutely outstanding addition to the education system on the Central Coast. It is a \$38 million investment by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, delivering a school that will provide 460 students with a state-of-the-art learning facility, and the opportunity to future-proof it to take up to 1,000 students. As the member for Wyong pointed out, it is a rapidly growing region and it is great that the Government is able to provide state-of-the-art classrooms and learning facilities to these young students. I understand why Robyn Christie is so excited. To be the principal of a brand new school is a very, very exciting opportunity. We are all looking forward to seeing day one, term one, next year with Porters Creek Public School opening up. I commend the Government and the education system on the Central Coast for delivering this fantastic school for the children of Porters Creek.

#### KEITH'S CLOSET

#### MILPERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:07):** Huge congratulations go to Keith Donnelly from my electorate of East Hills, founder of Keith's Closet, on winning the Westfield Eastgardens Local Hero 2021 award. During Keith's time as a nurse he recognised that mental health patients often have difficulties attending to their personal hygiene, with most having limited access to a change of clothing and basic essentials such as underwear, toiletries and sanitary items. So he went on a mission to change that. Keith's Closet is, however, not just about clothes. It is about breaking down barriers, reducing stigma and providing support for those who are suffering at

the hands of mental illness to give them a sense of purpose, self-worth, value and hope that they can live their life to the full and achieve whatever they wish to achieve.

Keith's Closet was officially opened in January 2019 at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, and is situated in the heart of the Kiloh Centre mental health facility. Keith and his team transformed a seclusion room into a boutique-style space, with a walk-in wardrobe—complete with full-length mirrors—and a fitting room filled with messages of love and affirmations. Recently Keith's Closet commenced an outreach service to patients, with homewares including beds, fridges, washing machines, bedding and kitchen supplies. This service is already growing significantly and providing essential items to our mental health patients. The service has also expanded in physical size, with a recent call-out for warehouse space to house the donations.

My local community of East Hills has totally backed Keith in with his initiatives. I recently visited an old Picnic Point High School friend of mine, Amanda Griffiths, who had managed to group together some beautiful items to donate to Keith's Closet for its outreach service to help with clients in need. Amanda is one of many local residents who have donated new and quality items to the cause. In June, Revesby Workers Football Club, under the stewardship of Kellie McFarlane and her volunteers, hosted a charity gala day to raise funds for Keith's Closet. It was a great team effort, with lots of sponsors, parents and kids getting behind the cause. There were some great games of soccer played, fun had on the jumping castle and rides, and the sausage sizzle was pretty good too.

This event raised close to \$8,000 and I thank all the community members who attended for getting behind this great cause. Those funds and the \$10,000 grant won from the Local Hero award will help our Local Hero, Keith Donnelly, and his team bring more Keith's Closets to other hospitals and mental health facilities, including to Bankstown hospital, and continue to help mental health patients get back on their feet. I congratulate our East Hills Local Hero, Keith Donnelly, and his team on all the great work they do.

I also congratulate Milperra Public School, which, on World Cerebral Palsy day on 6 October, based all its online learning around cerebral palsy awareness to celebrate and advocate for people living with cerebral palsy. Last year the school conducted a number of fundraising activities in the renamed month of "Step-tember" and raised close to \$1,700 for the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Step-tember is an initiative of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance where participants undertake to walk at least 10,000 steps each day in the month of September. The school's inspiration for being involved lies with its student Emily, who has cerebral palsy. When Emily was born she did not take her first breath for 47 minutes. She suffered four seizures and her heartbeat was not heard for six minutes. Once she was stabilised, Emily was transferred by air ambulance to the Royal Hospital for Women, where they cooled her to 33.5 degrees to help reduce the swelling to her brain and give her the best chance of recovery. This happened for 72 hours and then she was slowly warmed again and did not have any more seizures.

However, an MRI showed damage to an area of her brain that would compromise movement. Physiotherapy started when Emily was one month old and a diagnosis of cerebral palsy was made before Emily turned one. The school created four teams to achieve its goal of raising funds to help people living with cerebral palsy get the specialised support services and equipment they need to build their independence, enhance their wellbeing and live their best lives. Congratulations to the Milperra Public School community on aiming high to help their fellow student Emily and other people with cerebral palsy.

## SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:11):** Keeping people in poverty is a choice, as is failing to maintain and provide housing that people can afford. This year has been very tough and, unlike 2020, reduced income support this year has meant that a large number of people have found themselves facing a global pandemic while also living in poverty and relying on the kindness of strangers to get them through. Food insecurity has been exacerbated and, as the Premier recognised in response to my question on Wednesday, community need has been met by charities and volunteers packing, delivering and helping thousands across the State with food hampers. That is unacceptable and an unsustainable response.

We know that Liberal governments like to privatise and outsource, but this Government has outsourced its responsibility to ensure that people have enough money to pay for their most basic need—food. Watching the compassion of individuals and organisations in my own electorate of Newtown and across the State stepping up to fill the gaps is heartwarming. We cannot forget that they are doing this because of the failures of successive governments to address poverty and food insecurity issues. The next most basic need is shelter, which has also been neglected, and the current housing crisis is demonstrating how long and big this problem is.

Last weekend the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government made its big housing announcement as part of its road map to economic recovery. It was a media release that promised much, including the spend of \$183 million, but in practice it will deliver very little. The funds for new housing, as opposed to existing plans, will deliver only an additional 400 new social housing dwellings and we have no time frame and no indication of

exactly when or where these homes will be located. Compare that number with the 800 households currently living in temporary accommodation in motels and hotels around the State. How long will those households, subjected to living in temporary accommodation in motels and hotels, be in limbo before they can access social and affordable housing?

There are about 100,000 individuals on the public housing waiting list with simply no prospect of getting a home for years. The announcement last weekend was 400 new dwellings at some yet-to-be-determined time and location in the future. Women are highly represented in the people accessing specialist homelessness services in New South Wales, with over 40 per cent having experienced domestic violence and urgently needing homes for themselves and their children. In comes the Liberal-Nationals Government this week to announce more refuges. Of course, any money for domestic violence services is welcome but, again, this commitment falls well short of what is needed to fund an overworked and under-resourced domestic violence sector.

Almost two-thirds of the jobs lost during the COVID-19 emergency in New South Wales were jobs held by women. Huge numbers of women are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness across the State, particularly older women. The housing crisis in this State can be solved, but not if we do not tackle it in a way that reflects the scale and size of the problem. This week the New South Wales housing Minister waxed lyrical in this place about everything the Government was doing in relation to housing. The Minister talked up \$2 billion made by selling off public housing dwellings—seriously, boasting about making a profit from flogging off people's homes. The New South Wales housing Minister is responsible for the most outrageously under-maintained housing in the State: public housing. The fact that the New South Wales Government has 100,000 social homes might sound good to announce in question time, but what about the size of the waiting list?

This number needs to be virtually doubled right now just to stay abreast of demand. Earlier this year in the Illawarra I spent time with people who are subjected to deplorable housing conditions. The maintenance debacle is not just an inner-city—Newtown, Redfern, Surry Hills—problem. The mould, the roaches, the rat infestations, the broken drains and the unkempt common areas are issues across this State as a result of the failures of the New South Wales housing Minister to actually address this crisis. Our social housing system is in tatters due to a lack of resourcing. In a wealthy State in a wealthy country such as ours no-one should be too poor to live and no-one should be subjected to the types of living conditions that this Government expects people to live in because of its failures to invest in public, social and affordable housing.

#### **AUSTRALIAN BOTANIC GARDEN MOUNT ANNAN MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:17):** Via video link: Tonight I inform the New South Wales Parliament of the successful completion of the Wollondilly Macarthur Mountain Bike Club's project to restore the mountain bike trail at the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan. The Australian Botanic Garden is one of the greatest assets in the Camden electorate and the Macarthur region, with features including the brand new Plant Bank and Herbarium—just to name a few. The garden has hosted other captivating exhibitions such as the Hello Koala Trail, an award-winning public art project that encompassed culture, heritage and environmental themes, and AI Fairy Tales, which revealed paths of fairytales. Over the years the Australian Botanic Garden has hosted weddings, formals, family photos, parties and functions. However, the garden was in need of a mountain bike trail upgrade.

The mountain bike trail within the Australian Botanic Garden has been a three-year project driven by the Wollondilly Mountain Bike Club with an aim to restore the trail for the community and to give south-western Sydney a dedicated and authorised mountain bike trail. The trail was progressively restored by club members and an enthusiastic group of volunteers, with the first four-kilometre section reopening in December 2019, another three-kilometre section opening in June 2020 and the final four-kilometre section opening in December 2020. Following the opening of the first section, the volunteers have continued to make many improvements to the trail. Across the whole project, 89 individual volunteers contributed to nearly 1,600 hours over 35 separate trail days. I pass on my acknowledgement to the volunteers who have made this project such a success, working through heat, dust, rain and cold with the vision of a mountain bike trail for the community.

The trail has proven to be a huge success. Utilising 416 hectares of rolling, grassy hills with a mixture of horticulture through the Cumberland Plain woodland—most of which is endangered—has made the trails truly captivating. The mountain bike trail is said to be an asset to the Australian Botanic Garden, boosting visitation but also utilising shrub-covered unusable land. There are four featured trails within the garden that captivate all age groups. They include: a kids loop and a family loop, which is suitable for beginners and gets the most use on weekends; an intermediate trail, which is a small step up; and an advanced trail with bigger jumps, more downhill and more speed. As each section opened, the number of riders increased pre-lockdown—serving the locals and attracting riders from across Sydney to visit the garden and the region. Often over 200 riders per day—ranging from new, young riders to families and all the way through to experienced and more advanced riders—can be

found on the trail, enjoying the features and thrills or simply enjoying a ride in the lovely surroundings. It has been estimated that over 20,000 riders per year are utilising the trail.

The mountain bike trail in the Australian Botanic Garden is the only authorised trail system in south-western Sydney. State Government assistance through the Premier's grant, combined with the NSW Sports Grant and IMB Community Grant, provided the much-needed funds to support the project. The funding enabled the club to purchase the required hand tools for trail building, purchase materials to make trail features and engage an excavator contractor to do the heavy earthworks. I thank the Wollondilly Macarthur Mountain Bike Club for its ideas, creativity and all the work it has contributed to making this happen. I offer a special thankyou to Andrew Steele, the club secretary, and finally the volunteers, without whose work the trail would not be here today. Thank you for making the mountain bike trail at the Australian Botanic Garden a wonderful asset for the community.

## **WARNERVALE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:21):** My community has been waiting for a long time to get an answer about the Warnervale railway station, or the North Warnervale railway station. Planning documents put out by the State Government in 2013 state:

### **2.4 Proposed North Warnervale Train Station**

A new railway station, transport interchange and commuter car park (the station proposal) are proposed within the railway corridor adjacent to the proposed retail and commercial core of the town centre. This is approximately 440 metres from Sparks Road.

The station proposal is designed to accommodate long distance commuter trips to Sydney, and shorter trips to Newcastle, Wyong and Gosford. It will be designed to allow for two additional tracks in the future. The forecast is for the station to cater for 1,600 customers daily and up to 6 trains per hour.

The station, by providing an important transport link, would provide an "anchor" for development of the site

The documents go on to talk about how the station will integrate with the current rail system. The key is an anchor for the site, but the site is already under construction. Most of the residential development is well underway and some private proponents have developed the land for commercial and retail use. The town park at the top of the hill is ready and should be available for use very soon. For a number of years I have asked questions about this proposal. We must get an answer about what will happen. The document put out by Regional Development Australia Central Coast in a section entitled "What is needed?" says that the State Government is to complete the necessary planning processes and adopt a program to fund and construct the town centre railway station or, alternatively, the State Government is to provide \$10 million for an upgrade of the existing Warnervale railway station.

This is a key point. A new station was proposed at North Warnervale, which is where most of the housing development was to occur. But since then a large residential development by AVJennings has been approved, and construction has started near the old Warnies Cafe. On the Old Country Music Park site, which is 1.2 kilometres from the existing station, the Central Coast Council has a proposal for a university/education/sporting precinct. What we need is a commitment from the Government as to which one will proceed—either the brand new North Warnervale railway station next to the town centre or will the station stay where it is and be upgraded in that vicinity? We need an answer because a whole lot of people in that vicinity are waiting with development applications. They need an answer about where it is going. That includes Woolworths, which is looking to build a store and about 20 shops at the town centre. I am looking for a commitment from the new transport Minister to either one or the other—box A or box B.

At this stage it probably will not require funds to build anything but a decision needs to be made so we have certainty about where it will be as it will have an impact on the local road system, et cetera. If the current station remains where it is, right next door is a railway crossing. Recently in Wollongong there was an accident at a railway crossing. If the station is to remain there some action needs to be taken in that vicinity. If it is to move to the new site it would give Woolworths more comfort in going forward with its development.

The station is not just a railway station; it is also a bus interchange. The original proposal was for that to be integrated. There is a cutting there and the bridge over the top would integrate straight into the bus interchange. I am looking for a commitment from the Minister as to which option he believes to be the best because, as I said, people are up in the air on this issue. Even though the Government's report from 2013 said that there would be up to six services an hour, since then express trains have been brought in and that may not be appropriate; one train every hour may be better. We need to be given that sort of information.

## **INNER WEST NATURALISED WATERWAYS**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (19:26):** Via video link: Tonight I will discuss the importance of water in our community. From the sparkling Sydney Hunter to the mighty Cooks River, Sydney has always been a city

about water. We manage the urban water cycle and protect our social, economic and ecological environments. But all those years of water management that were in place when Sydney was built has seen the natural landscape dramatically altered, vegetation and soil replaced with a hard impervious surface on the buildings. That has led to the development of unique urban climates that are different from those of surrounding natural environments. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the creeks and canals of the inner west. Small waterways like Johnstons Creek, Orphans Creek, Whites Creek and Hawthorne canal are the lifeblood of our local environment, nourishing the ecosystems and providing habitats for native plants and wildlife. They have been paved over, dug up and been turned to concrete eyesores that cannot sustain any plants or animals.

After a century as a concrete canal, we have been part of the successful effort to transform Johnstons Creek at Annandale into a naturalised sandstone-based waterway. I acknowledge the fantastic work of Sydney Water and its contractors, who have led this project, and I thank the City of Sydney for its support. After two years of work, the naturalisation of a key part of Johnstons Creek is almost complete. What has been created is a beautiful, tranquil rewilded place with clean water, spaces for native animals to hide and thrive and a wonderful canopy of native trees and plants. It is no longer an industrial canal; instead it is a place where local people can relax and enjoy nature. Already on Johnstons Creek there are turtles, waterbirds and even canoers, who are back to enjoy the upgrade. Waterway naturalisation projects have so many benefits. They create habitat for native fish and reptiles. Concrete canals are an ecological wasteland and do not support any plant or animal life. Sandstone boulders and bases provide pockets for fish to hide in and help to create a more natural ecosystem that encourages fish and other wildlife.

It is a more cost-effective alternative to concrete canals. When canals come to end of their life, it is more efficient to replace them with sandstone rather than refit the traditional concrete. Despite having a similar initial cost, these sandstone naturalised canals can last up to 150 years. That is 50 years longer than the life expectancy of concrete canals, making them a more cost-effective and better ecological outcome. More than that, it can provide better flood mitigation and stormwater management, because these canals can be constructed to manage and mitigate floods. These canals improve water quality. Naturalised waterways can be constructed with wetlands and sedimentation filtration and biological uptake systems to remove pollutants from stormwater. These wetlands also provide habitat for native birds, fish and reptiles. They create beautiful neighbourhoods. Removing the concrete eyesores and replacing them with naturalised creeks and canals with native plants and clean running water creates beautiful spaces in our neighbourhoods where nature provides. The addition of tree ferns and other flora can help make our creeks a destination in the community.

Finally, we need to ensure that more of our local creeks and canals are returned to their naturalised state. I will be working with this Government, with Sydney Water and with local councils in my area to take advantage of these benefits to improve our local waterways. I will join with our local community, our petitioning campaign and our community awareness campaign to make sure we can continue to drive this positive, cost-effective change within the inner city and across our great State.

#### **MAITLAND ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:31):** Despite the obvious economic impacts that the inability to trade and work has had on Maitland and the rest of the Hunter area, the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals Government has failed to provide appropriate access to financial and other supports, like the small business grant, to small businesses in my electorate. The eligibility requirements for the small business grants were totally irrelevant to businesses in Maitland. The initial eligibility requirement was that businesses had to have suffered a 30 per cent decrease in income between 26 June and 17 July. That prevented many of the small businesses in my electorate from accessing that grant for some time. The Hunter region went into lockdown on 5 August so the scope of dates was completely irrelevant.

Business owners have complained to me and said that one of the alternative options they had was to compare their figures with a period that took in the long weekend in June. So they had to show a 30 per cent decline in business over 10 days as opposed to nine days when they had already suffered a 10 per cent loss because they were not trading on a public holiday. Such a lack of thought and foresight went into the eligibility of these businesses and it was not adjusted. Many businesses were told by their accountants and by Service NSW that they were not eligible when they could not get onto the website. When Sydney went into lockdown many businesses went into decline because they were relying on Sydney tourists and visitors to use their services. Even after businesses went through all the hoops and barriers to apply for a grant it took many weeks before any money was paid into their accounts.

The inequity that occurred with vaccine supplies is really impacting now. When the rest of the State was at 70 per cent double vaccination rates, Maitland was only at 50 per cent for a single dose which meant that one in two people was not vaccinated. JobSaver payments were immediately dropped by 30 to 40 per cent and businesses could not employ staff who were not double vaccinated. We had a win with the decision made by the

former Deputy Premier but that decision kept changing. People in those regions had to fight to find out whether they were allowed to trade and the Government's support was decreasing every day.

In fact, on the weekend before trade commenced a business owner said to me, "I don't even know what I am going to do. I have changed my roster six times this week, depending on the mood of whichever member of the Government as to whether we could trade." The lack of the Pfizer vaccine in the regions disproportionately impacted people who are at the age of employment. So it really did impact our workforce. Another issue is that even though we were able to get an exemption for workers with one vaccination, there were still no customers. That has become a real issue. A further issue is the lack of understanding for people who are unable to access quick response [QR] codes because they do not have a smartphone.

Just this morning a woman told me that her doctor provided a written vaccine passport on the GP letterhead because she could not access the passport on her phone. Of course, the business she attended could not accept it because the document was not from the Australian Immunisation Register, which has a five-week waiting period to print out vaccination certificates. That poor woman was trying to get essential clothing, underwear, which, as she said to one of my staff, might not be essential when you are 21 but it is when you are 81. I have even found that women were not able to access incontinence underwear or period underwear for feminine hygiene because it is not deemed as an essential service. The whole debacle in the reopening of the Hunter has created really big problems for my community. The cessation of JobSeeker will occur on 30 November and still the community is no closer to having any certainty. Before I came into the Chamber I saw on Twitter that there is now another change in relation to gyms. The New South Wales Government has let businesses down. It needs to up its game.

#### *Bills*

### **ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

#### **Returned**

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

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

### **3BRIDGES**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of 3Bridges in supporting my electorate throughout the lockdown. I want to highlight Rhonda Brown who runs their Social Support Group. Rhonda took the initiative to create specialised DVD packs to replace sessions that would have been normally conducted in person. Containing trivia questions, exercise routines and music and dance sessions, these DVDs helped clients maintain much-needed social engagement and mental and physical stimulation from their own homes. Together with Simon Boutros, Katie Farr, Joshua Outland, Maria Arango, Andrew Flamer-Calderra, and Donna Taylor, the team worked to put together these DVDs and package them along with snacks, puzzle books and a newsletter. Residents benefited from a food delivery program headed by Sam Khattib and overseen by Leighton Pollard of the Youth and Community Services Team. Working alongside St. George Motor Boat Club, Georges River College, OzHarvest and the local Woolies, hundreds of our residents received care packages which included milk, pasta, rice, fresh fruit and veggies and other essentials. Thank you to those community organisations, Rhonda's team, Leighton's team and all the staff at 3Bridges who have come together to deliver high quality support for community in the most difficult of circumstances.

### **KINGSGROVE COMMUNITY AID CENTRE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I acknowledge the incredible work of Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the leadership of CEO, Ms Anne Farah Hill the centre supported the community with daily phone calls, food hampers and vouchers, and offering access to mental health clinicians and emergency public housing. I appreciate the hard work of Mrs Gurmeed Nelson who oversees their Aged Care Staff and the preparation of the food hampers and vouchers. I acknowledge Ms Kim Perry who oversaw the call centre, Mrs Rose Caltabiano, Mrs Ramona Khoury and Mrs Georgia Dionisiou for their support of people with disabilities in accessing services remotely, and Ms Katina Papadakis and Fence Singovski from Hurstville Public School who provided supervision and care of children for those parents working on the front line. I know Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre is indebted to its governance board which continued to meet and support the centre during the pandemic. During this difficult period, it is organisations like Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and others who have demonstrated that they are the true backbone of this community. I commend for them for efforts.

### SALVATION ARMY HURSTVILLE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I recognise the work the Salvation Army has provided through its Hurstville office during this pandemic. Sherrie Nicol and the Hurstville Corp have been amazing in the way they ensured essential services were provided to those most in need. With regular Salvos stores closed, their team was still able to aid with furniture during the pandemic, door-to-door delivery of food hampers and regular COVID-safe face-to-face support. I wish to highlight the pastoral care that the Salvation Army has been able to provide during the pandemic. Assistance is not always material or financial, and COVID has brought with it a rise in homelessness, insecurity, loneliness, domestic violence and substance abuse. I know many community members looking for faith and connection have found guidance and support via their Pastoral and Compassionate Visits program. I commend the Salvation Army, along with its associated ministries and services, Salvation Army Moneycare, Doorways and the St. George Community Support List for the critical work they have provided for our community in this difficult time.

### ADVANCE DIVERSITY SERVICES

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I wish to acknowledge the crucial work of Advance Diversity Services [ADS] during the pandemic. They are providing support to more than 500 older people every week, including meal preparation, medical management and nursing care, along with sourcing and delivering much-needed face masks to those in need. I acknowledge their role in facilitating access to the various COVID-19 Government grants, assisting those with limited language skills and providing them access to crucial financial support needed during this difficult situation. I particularly note their work in combatting domestic and family violence, which I understand has increased during the lockdown. I also note their work in combatting racial hatred experienced in Asian communities due to the onset of COVID-19. Their anti-racism bystander workshops have educated the community on the adverse impact of racism, offering advice on intervening and recognising racist behaviour. It is these workshops that foster and promote community harmony. I commend Antoinette Chow and all the staff at ADS for their work in supporting the community in Kogarah and for delivering high quality support to our most vulnerable people.

### ANNE LLEWELLYN

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales)**—Anne Llewellyn is a dedicated volunteer in the Bathurst community and richly deserves the accolade of being named a Local Living Legend. Her dedication to pursuits ranging from education, music, aged care, gardening and theatre are well documented. Anne has participated in numerous eisteddfods throughout her teaching career and also volunteers her time with school choirs, managing venues, organising competing groups or help with scribing for adjudicators. She auditioned the Kelso School Choir in the Combined Choral Concert at the Sydney Opera House and was instrumental in running the music program "Music Aviva" in the schools. Anne also organised and ran the Bathurst Bicentennial Celebration Mass Choir in 2015. As if this isn't enough, Anne volunteers as a singer at local aged care facilities across the city. She is still an active member of the Allegrì Singers, a local Bathurst singing group, and is also President of the Alumni Association of All Saints' College. Her compassion for others is evident and Anne has been a carer to her elderly neighbour who suffers from dementia. And last, but not least, for several years Anne has been a driving force helping to organise the Bathurst Spring Spectacular Garden Festival.

### MARGARET BOWER

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales)**—I would like to congratulate Margaret Bower for her recent addition to the list of Bathurst Living Legends. Margaret is a proud fifth generation Bathurstian and has immersed herself in community life. She was a member of the Bathurst TAFE faculty for more than 25 years in the School of Hospitality and catering and taught at the Bathurst and Oberon campuses as well as being instrumental in teaching cooking skills to students at disability support organisation Glenray. Margaret is held in high regard as an artist in the field of sugar art or sculpture and has taught many people skills in artistry in cake decorating and has been a successful exhibitor in this field, gaining numerous awards and accolades for her work. A 1996 foundation member of the Probus Club of Macquarie (Bathurst), Margaret has held many positions over the years including president, vice-president and welfare officer and was made a life member of the club in 2019. As well as being a devoted volunteer at several nursing homes in Bathurst, Margaret is also an active member of the Bathurst Baptist Church and acts as an ambassador for welcoming new residents to the city.

### NEW POLICE OFFICERS FOR CASTLE HILL

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the three new probationary constables that will shortly be starting their policing careers within my electorate of Castle Hill. The



three recruits have all graduated as part of class 349, and join the ranks of one of the most important institutions to exist in our State. Over the length of their careers, the officers will no doubt encounter some troubling, difficult and dangerous situations, and yet, knowing this, they have still decided to spend their career keeping us safe, and for that the whole State is grateful. The NSW Police Force continues to go from strength to strength, with Class 349 totalling 226 recruits—part of the NSW Government's commitment to welcome 1,500 new police officers in this term of Government. The NSW Government is also investing \$60 million into the Police Academy at Goulburn, to ensure that future recruits get the best possible training for their work in the field. My best wishes go to the new recruits, both in my electorate and across the State, and I wish them the best for their future careers.

#### **BERNIE MULLANE COMPLEX**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Hills Hornets Basketball Association, specifically acknowledging their work in the upgrade to the Bernie Mullane Complex in Kellyville, within my electorate of Castle Hill. I recently advised the House of the transfer of the ageing complex to the Hornets for their upgrade – similar to their upgrade of the Dural Recreation Centre. I am delighted to provide an update, and confirm that the association has been successful in receiving a \$220,036 grant, as a part of the NSW Government's Greater Cities Sport Fund. The fund is a \$50 million commitment over two years by the Government and assists sporting organisations and councils in order to build and upgrade sporting facilities for the good of the community. The Hornets will now be able to resurface the two indoor courts, which will be conducive to wheelchair basketball, and install four glass backboards. I would like to thank all those involved in securing this grant, especially Steve Burke, Zoe Burke, Russell Graham, Mitzi Crawford, Lyle Vallance, Marinette Impreso, James Murray, Olivia Nicholls and Damien Power.

#### **KENTHURST PARK UPGRADE**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the wonderful Hills Shire Council, of which my electorate of Castle Hill is almost wholly confined. I would specifically like to recognise their work in obtaining State funding for the upgrade of Kenthurst Park. The upgrade will include the extension of the playing fields, and will create an additional full size playing field for soccer and cricket, which I am informed will include floodlighting, drainage, irrigation, retaining walls, turfing and fencing. The upgrade to the park is helped in part by a \$511,000 grant, as a part of the NSW Government's Greater Cities Sport Fund. The fund is a \$50 million commitment over two years by the Government and assists sporting organisations and councils to build and upgrade sporting facilities for the good of the community. The Hills' council's playing fields are among the best in Sydney, and much of this can be put down to the hardworking mayor, Dr Michelle Byrne, a swathe of good councillors, and the professional senior officers, including Michael Edgar, Mark Colburt, Cameron McKenzie, John Dean and David Reynolds.

#### **PEGGY MCKENZIE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Peggy McKenzie of Wentworth for her outstanding contribution to the community. Peggy is a supporter of local news through her voluntary role as an editor of the *New South Western Standard Bulletin*, a weekly publication produced by a group of committed volunteers. Interviewed weekly by ABC Radio, Peggy helps keep the shire on the map and locals across what is happening in the area. For over 15 years, Peggy has been involved with the Wentworth District Racing Club in many different roles, including as luncheon coordinator and host, past president and current secretary, and member of the Fashions on the Field Committee. Peggy is a supporter of the Wentworth Historical Society and runs weekly classes as a qualified Tai Chi instructor for Arthritis. She is a "Friend of the Library", as well as a friend to many. I congratulate Peggy on her outstanding work within and for the Wentworth community.

#### **MONTANA NORRIS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Montana Norris of Dareton for her community service and school spirit. Described as very focused and a determined goal setter, Montana is Coomealla High School's vice-captain and an active member of the School Representative Council. She has assisted in the coordination of the year 12 graduation and year 6 transition and orientation programs, and spoke at the Wentworth Remembrance Day Ceremony. She recently presented a whole school initiative to the executive. Montana is well respected by her peers, and the younger school community. She sets high standards for herself academically, and has been able to balance her schooling with a part-time job in Dareton. Not only is she a dance student, Montana is also a committed dance instructor and was 2021 Wentworth Shire Council Young Citizen of the Year Award recipient. I congratulate Montana on her achievements, and wish her all the very best for her future endeavours.

**ALAN MCKENZIE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Alan McKenzie of Wentworth who was awarded Citizen of the Year 2021. Over many years, Alan has served the Wentworth Show Society and many other community organisations. Never afraid of hard work, Alan has always made himself available for community working bees and other voluntary work that benefits the community and showcases the region. Alan has also been involved with the Wentworth Tractor Rally Committee, demonstrating his knowledge and passion for tinkering with vintage vehicles and steam engines. He coordinates the exhibit at the Wentworth Show with his team of volunteers which is always a crowd pleaser. In his spare time, Alan supports his wife Susan with her community work. When he is not volunteering, you will probably find Alan working on old vehicles in a shed. I congratulate Alan on his volunteer work within the community which brings together volunteers through a strong network of friends.

**MR AND MRS ELLIS SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I would like to acknowledge two of my Menai constituents, Brian and his wife Yvonne, for their upcoming sixtieth wedding anniversary. They were married on 28 October 1961 at St Jude's Anglican Church in Randwick. Sixty years of marriage is a momentous milestone and I would like to congratulate them on their diamond anniversary. I trust they will celebrate this special occasion together with family. I wish Brian and Yvonne many more years of love and good health together.

**CATHARINA BOGARD 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—It is with great pleasure that today I acknowledge Mrs Catharina Bogard on her 100th birthday, which she will celebrate on the 24th October 2021. I am sure Catharina will celebrate this momentous occasion accompanied by her closest friends and family. I take this opportunity to again extend my sincere congratulations to Catharina and wish her good health and happiness for the future.

**ALLAN, MARGARET AND STEPHEN GREGSON**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise a local family, Allan, Margaret and Stephen Gregson. Recently, Allan and Margaret were acknowledged during National Carer's Week, as they have been full-time carers for their son, Stephen, since he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was six years old. During National Carer's Week, people across Australia who provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability are recognised and celebrated. The support and care they provide is inspiring as they help to provide opportunities and allow people with disabilities participate in activities they enjoy. Stephen Gregson is also a local legend, as he is a Paralympian, and made it to the final in backstroke at the Seoul Paralympics., the same Paralympics my uncle competed in. He was also recognised for his sporting achievements when he was awarded Young Citizen of the Year in the Liverpool area. I would like to congratulate Allen and Margaret Gregson for being recognised during National Carer's Week and commend Stephen Gregson for all his inspiring sporting achievements.

**PAMELA MCCPHERSON OAM**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I acknowledge Ms Pamela McPherson for being recognised earlier this year as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List with a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for her services to netball. Ms McPherson has been involved in netball her whole life, and was the recipient of the Australian Sports Medal. She was a member of the City of Sydney Netball Association between 1979 and 2005. She has held various executive committee roles across a number of different clubs in the local region, but more recently offers her services as a coach to the under 12s representative team at the Campbelltown District Netball Association. She became a National B Badged Umpire but after two knee replacements, she had to retire to coaching, which thankfully is something she is passionate about. Once again I would like to congratulate Ms McPherson for her amazing achievement and would like to thank her for her dedication and service to the local netball community.

**ST GEORGE BASKETBALL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Despite a very interesting season last year given the COVID pandemic, the team at St George Basketball and their players still achieved some outstanding results. The club also benefited from an injection of funding from the NSW Government with \$2,000 dedicated to coaching so that all players could be at the top of their game. During the beginning of the pandemic, the club began posting training videos on their YouTube channel to keep players active and their skills up to the highest standard. I would like to commend the Waratah Youth Red team for making it all the way to the grand final with an unfortunate 88-85 loss in the final minutes. Congratulations to the following players from the team who won some fantastic awards from the organisation: Nicholas Zoras- Clubman of the Year; James Turner- Best Defensive Player;

Daniel Manikarious- MVP. I would also like to thank award-winning coaches Arthur Lamos, Chris Georgopoulos and Reuben Challis as well as the club president, Ray Barbi, for their ongoing support to the team. Wishing you all the best for next season.

#### **ST GEORGE MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Today I acknowledge St George Meals on Wheels and their CEO, Nahed Soliman, who continually provides an outstanding service to our community and to those in need of support. Meals on Wheels particularly focuses on providing meals to those who are elderly and less mobile to ensure that they are getting the food that they need when they need it. Every month I visit my local branch at the Peakhurst Bowling Club to give back to our community. This is always a highly worthwhile experience and it always feels great to give back to those in need. This service has been running for over 60 years and every year they deliver over 4.5 million meals in New South Wales alone. To achieve this, there are 150 local teams across the State who create and pack meals year round. I wish the entire organisation all the best for many more years of hard work and I look forward to volunteering for them again shortly.

#### **NATIONAL CARERS WEEK**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I take this opportunity to thank those carers within the Maitland community who are providing care and support to family members, loved ones and friends. They are part of the estimated 2.65 million citizens who provide unpaid care with an estimated contribution of over 42 million hours each and every week to other members of our communities. To highlight this vital contribution to our communities the theme of the recent National Carers Week 2021, which ran from 10 to 16 October, was "Millions of Reasons to Care". The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value and importance of the care and support that unpaid carers provide. While most of us have experienced significant personal stress during these times, carers have faced the added challenges of continuing to provide physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual care for another. I take this moment to thank carers for their commitment, effort and action, often at great personal cost. Carers make significant contributions to our lives and our economies as they provide care without payment. Carers often go unrecognised in the midst of these many and remarkable contributions they make. I deeply thank the carers within our communities and commend their continued work.

#### **YOUTH EXPRESS LAPTOP DONATIONS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I acknowledge the work of Youth Express during the recent COVID lockdown. Home-schooling comes with many challenges, but access to devices and internet services that enable our children to gain an education should not be one of those challenges. Youth Express has been successful in assisting just over 65 families in Maitland with access to digital devices and internet services during lockdown. This was achieved through donations and support from the local Maitland Business Chamber, Maitland Rotary Clubs and community. Youth Express then worked closely with the local schools to identify and reach out to families and children in need of support. In the last decade, computers and internet services have taken a central position in the classroom and in the last two years, they have become an essential part of a child's ability to access education, due to COVID lockdowns forcing families and students to undertake their education online. Thank you to the team at Youth Express for ensuring that Maitland children in need are provided with the assistance and support they need to access and continue their education.

#### **DR ADRIAN ZAMMIT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I congratulate Dr Adrian Zammit on his recent appointment as Deputy Director General-Business Excellence with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries. I thank Adrian for his dedication and commitment to managing environmental issues across the State in his previous role as chief executive officer of Landcare NSW. Landcare NSW represents the interests of 60,000 Landcarers who have been elemental in transforming the landscape, engaging the range of stakeholders to work together at a local level on local issues. The past few years have been particularly challenging for the Landcare community with significant drought, bushfires, floods and the current coronavirus pandemic negatively impacting our State. I thank Adrian for his commitment and leadership throughout these challenges. Under his leadership, Landcare NSW has ensured that local communities have worked together during these times of crisis to provide lasting environmentally sustainable and productive solutions for the management of land. As the former shadow Minister for Primary Industries, I enjoyed working with Adrian and the Landcare team and I thank you for highlighting the inspiring work that the Landcare movement continues to do for our environment. Wishing you all the best in this next phase of your career.

#### **MAITLAND HEALTH STAYS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—In early 2022, the new Maitland Hospital is due to open. Many people in my electorate of Maitland are looking forward to the occasion. One of those people is Trevor Lynch.

A member of the Rotary Club of East Maitland, over the years Trevor has worked on many projects and programs that have had a profound positive impact on people's lives. Trevor's most recent project is the Maitland Health Stays Project. Alongside a number of other Rotarians and community members, who hope to see Crisis Accommodation as part of the new Maitland Hospital. Trevor tells me the Maitland Health Stays Committee, which was formed to support the project, have things well underway. The concept plans are drawn up and discussions are happening to secure land close by to the new hospital site. To date, Trevor has worked tirelessly to seek information, and he has researched other crisis accommodation models throughout New South Wales that provide family and carers of patients with a place to stay when they need it most. Thank you for your vision and forethought, Trevor. I know a lot of people are behind you on this and I hope the much-needed funding to support this project is acquired.

#### **CAMBEWARRA SCHOOL OF ARTS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I would like to acknowledge the community of Cambewarra and the Cambewarra School of Arts that is seeking funding to enable the refurbishment of the tennis courts, the installation of child safety fencing, and waste water drains. The School of Arts is used by locals for a wide range of causes not least of which for Cambewarra residents and ratepayers meetings but also a range of community activities including child care. The School of Arts also has a very popular tennis court located on its land. First opened in 1879, the Cambewarra School of Arts is not owned by Shoalhaven City Council and I have enjoyed working with the Cambewarra School of Arts Trustees to secure grants in the past. The Cambewarra community does not ask for much – and I am always happy to help local community groups who need support. I would like to acknowledge trustee and public officer Mr Christopher Thaler for his hard work and effort in putting together this grant application. My thanks to all the residents that have signed our community petition, which is supporting this request for funding.

#### **BERRY-SHOALHAVEN HEADS RUGBY LEAUGE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—As a local MP, I love working hard and getting results when it comes to securing vital funds for local community projects. I would like to acknowledge all the players, past players, volunteers and supporters of the Berry-Shoalhaven Heads Rugby League Football Club. The Berry Shoalhaven Heads Rugby League Club is seeking funding for the purchase of urgently needed equipment. The equipment will be used to strengthen the club's post-COVID recovery and support the mental health of young people in our community. This is not a cost, but an investment in an important community activity and I strongly support this request for funds. I would like to thank local residents who have signed and supported our community petition which supports this funding request. I would like to commend the tireless efforts and hard work of my friend and board chair Joe Rogers who has put together an application for the Community Building Partnerships Program funding and I strong support this application. I believe there is strong community support for this wonderful local sporting organisation and I wanted to place on the parliamentary record the efforts of Mr Rogers and our local community in this regard.

#### **ALBION PARK ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The Albion Park Anglican Church is seeking funding to enable the refurbishment of the toilet amenities. The funding will enable the refurbishment of the male, female and disability access toilets. I would like to acknowledge all members of the Albion Park Anglican Church and local residents that have strongly supported our local community petition which supports this call for funds. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and tireless efforts of Mrs Beryl Nash who has put so much work into seeking these funds. I commend her for her efforts particularly with respect to a superb funding application. I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding church team of Rev. Robin Vonk, Natasha Hansen and Val O'Regan. Over the years I have enjoyed working closely with Albion Park Anglican Church to secure many grants for both their Men's Shed and community preschool. Both ministries are strongly supported by our local community and demonstrate an outstanding investment of New South Wales Government funds. I pray that this request for funding is successful and for the continued strength and success of the Albion Park Anglican Church community.

#### **GATEWAY COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—As a local MP, I love working hard and getting results when it comes to securing vital funds for local community projects. Gateway Community Garden, which is located on Woodhill Mountain Road and is auspiced by the Uniting Church in Berry, is seeking funding for infrastructure which includes the erection of a rabbit proof fence, a pergola and a concrete slab for an existing tool shed. I would like to thank local residents who have signed and supported our local community petition which is seeking to support this funding request. I acknowledge Mr John Brentnall for his efforts and work towards securing these funds through the NSW Government Community Building Partnerships program. I acknowledge and thank the Berry Uniting Church community for their generosity of spirit and commitment to our wider community. I also

acknowledge Berry Uniting Church Minister Rev Andrew Watts for his tireless efforts in serving our community through religious ministry. I pray that this application will be successful.

#### **DAVID KIRK**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—Today I recognise David Kirk, a proud Worimi man from Karuah who contributes so much to his community. A long-fought issue in Karuah has been the perilous state of Mustons Road, a dangerous road leading to Karuah's Aboriginal community and estates beyond. In the absence of the local council and State Government, David has rolled up his sleeves to clean up and improve the safety and visibility along the side of the road with his own bare hands. David also assists many vulnerable local residents by mowing their lawns for free in his own spare time. David has shared his impressive art skills with the community via a number of local art projects and groups. He has created totem poles depicting Worimi stories for Karuah Public School, donated hand-carved digeridoos to local fundraisers, restored local gravestones and created new gravestones for Indigenous community members laid to rest in Karuah cemetery, and he has also taken care of local sacred sites on behalf of the community. David, you are a true champion for the Karuah community. On behalf of the people of Port Stephens and the Parliament of New South Wales, I recognise and thank you for your many contributions.

#### **PORT STEPHENS' INDIGENOUS WOMEN PAVING THE WAY**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—I wish to acknowledge in the Parliament of New South Wales three women within Port Stephens' Indigenous community who are achieving wonderful things. Nicki Ridgeway, a proud Gamilaroi woman living in Raymond Terrace, works passionately for her community. In her role as School Learning Support Officer [SLSO] at Karuah Public School, she is supporting student education programs and ensuring that the space remains culturally safe for young Indigenous students. Sharon Taylor, a strong Wiradjuri woman living in Seaham, works tirelessly to build capacity for Indigenous people in her work as an Aboriginal Health Educator for the Health Education and Training Institute [HETI] and Ministry of Health. Renae Lamb, a fiercely passionate Wiradjuri woman from Karuah, is a wonderfully talented artist, performer and entrepreneur, striving to share her culture on as many platforms as possible to ensure Indigenous people have a voice in the arts. These women are just three of many in my electorate of Port Stephens on Worimi Barray country who are working tirelessly to pave the way to ensure that young Indigenous people have strong, confident and passionate role models to follow. I thank them for their important and meaningful contributions to our community.

#### **KEVIN STOKES**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—In Port Stephens, there are many places of beauty where locals and visitors can immerse themselves in nature, but the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens is a family favourite. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of many volunteers, land which was donated by Hunter Water decades ago has been transformed into a place of peaceful contemplation and conservation. One of the garden's founding fathers, who was there at the very beginning and whose passion for plants germinated ideas and seeds, was recently recognised as the Hunter's Senior Volunteer of the Year and the Hunter's Volunteer of the Year for 2021. I congratulate Kevin Stokes for this well-deserved recognition and thank him for his foresight, advocacy and hard work. Under his leadership the gardens have withstood many challenges—from droughts, floods and financial hardship. Kevin's continuous and continuing volunteer service to the gardens of 36 years is a remarkable. He has been a board member the entire time contributing in all possible ways, from design to delivery, grant applications to conservation. Thank you, Kevin, for your gift to our community and our environment, creating a very special and lasting legacy for generations to come.

#### **TRIBUTE TO NOLA LAWLER**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—Our community of Port Stephens has recently lost an impressive and selfless woman, Ms Nola Lawler, who is well known for her tireless advocacy and fundraising for locals battling breast cancer. Nola sadly passed away at the age of 89, surrounded by family, on 14 September. Impressively, Nola had spent the last 20 years assisting hundreds of local women through the Tomaree Breast Cancer Support Group. Nola founded the group in 2001 with only \$100 and a small group of friends, with the sole purpose of providing practical help to women on the Tomaree peninsula battling breast cancer. The support group is now a large incorporated association which assists local women when they need it the most, in the most practical of ways - assisting with transport to get to appointments, house cleaning, lawn mowing, child minding and advice. There are countless women and families in our community who owe so much to Nola. On behalf of the people of Port Stephens and the Parliament of New South Wales, I offer sincere condolences to Nola's family and friends, and pay tribute to Nola Lawler for her remarkable and meaningful contribution to our community. Vale Nola Lawler.

**MARGARET HARRIS - SUTHERLAND SHIRE LITERARY COMPETITION**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate Gynea Bay resident Margaret Harris who recently competed in the 2021 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition. Her work, titled 'Bob's on the Job', was praised by the judge as "delightful", awakening the universally observed experience of 'the unbreakable bond that exists between a boy and his beloved dog, and what happens after the dog has passed on'. Margaret won the Shire Resident's 1st prize award in the technical 'Short Story' category, attesting to her proficiency in succinctly writing with near impaw-sible skill; you would have to be barking mad to disagree! Receiving the first prize speaks to Margaret's literary talent. I wish her all the best for her future literary endeavours.

**FELICITY CONNEELY - SUTHERLAND SHIRE LITERARY COMPETITION**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate Caringbah South resident Felicity Conneely who recently competed in the 2021 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition. Felicity won the Shire Resident's 2nd prize award in the challenging 'Free Verse' category, speaking to her versatility in writing with agility and flexibility. Her work, aptly titled 'Fragments', takes the reader on a journey through processing grief and the fragmented world which loss creates in the mind. Felicity's writing was commended by the judge as 'enriching the reader's understanding of the protagonist's experiences or mental state' through her creative descriptions, demonstrating an ability to 'map out grief'. To win second prize is a testament to her artistry as an author. I wish Felicity all the best for her future literary endeavours.

**EMAN SOLIMAN - AUSMUMPRENEUR AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate Caringbah resident and businesswoman Eman Soliman who was recently recognised as an award winning 'AusMumpreneur'. The 2021 AusMumpreneur awards recognise the vital contributions of Australian mums and women to the economy, whilst simultaneously challenging traditional business stereotypes. Eman was a finalist in seven categories, ultimately winning the Gold 'Overcoming the Odds' Award and the Silver 'Multicultural Business Excellence' Award. Eman is the Chief Executive Officer of her business, EduTech Australia, which specialises in delivering digital innovation within educational contexts. Her skills have also been globally recognised. In May of this year, Eman was selected as Australia's first Social Inclusion Ambassador as part of the Women in Tech international non-profit organisation. Her leadership ability has been further lauded by the United Nations Association of Australia for EduTech's focus on sustainable education development. I commend Eman for her proven entrepreneurial skillset and resultant awards.

**KAY THURSTON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Pupils say she was a "really great principal" who made "everything fun", while colleagues marvelled at her energy. But after almost four decades as an educator, Kay Thurston closed the books on her teaching career in June. Mrs Thurston was principal at Lake Albert Public School for the final four years of her career, bringing her full circle as this was where the Wagga Wagga-born educator completed her first practical work placement. Mrs Thurston's first permanent teaching position was in Queensland, but every job since then has been in the Riverina. In her career she taught at Illabo Public, Junee Public, Turvey Park, Koorringal, Kapooka, Junee North and lastly Lake Albert. But her teaching was not limited to the classroom, as Mrs Thurston was also an aerobics instructor for about 20 years. Her boundless energy, a teaching career that began in the 1980s and experience as an aerobics instructor allowed Mrs Thurston's Lake Albert pupils to farewell her in unique style. Attired in their best 80s styles, students and teachers gathered for assembly when a flash mob broke out, with dancing quickly following. I wish to thank and congratulate Mrs Thurston for her contribution to our community.

**GOLDEN CROW AWARDS 2021**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges especially for business. It was pleasing therefore to see, in August, the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber hold its annual Golden Crow Awards. Although the pandemic forced the event online, it provided the chance to recognise local business. Congratulations to the people's choice award winner, Craft Brew & BBQ; outstanding employee Mackenna Powell of WFI Insurance; outstanding young business leaders Joshua Paul of Alan Harris McDonald and Damon Schmetzer of Barista Damon; outstanding business leader, Emma Grant of Selby Watson & Co; employer of choice, Riverina Oils; excellence in innovation, Riverina Oils; excellence in sustainability, St Vincent de Paul Society; outstanding community organisations, The Personnel Group; outstanding start-up, Prefabulous; excellence in micro-business, Cobrapparel; excellence in small business, Bedrock Landscape Supplies; excellence in business, WDF Professional; excellence in workplace health and safety, Charles Sturt Campus Services Ltd; excellence in business ethics, BaptistCare Watermark Village; excellence in training and development, Passion

Hair and Beauty Art; outstanding tradie Paul Hopper of PAH Innovative Construction, and finally, Golden Crow Award winner, Riverina Oils. Congratulations to all finalists and winners and the Chamber.

#### **STEPHANIE WHITE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For the past nine years, Stephanie White has been running a family day care business in her Wagga Wagga home. Mrs White has just been recognised in the Excellence in Family Day Care Aware for the second time in just three years. Having been named a winner in 2019, Mrs White was last month again named as one of 24 winners in NSW and ACT who secured a regional award. Mrs White, who is a mother of two school-aged children, runs the service from her home, which was built with family day care in mind. There is a big playroom, backyard for outside fun and multiple safety features. Mrs White was shocked and humbled to be given a second title, especially so soon after her first win. It is particularly thrilling for her because the nomination has come initially from the family of one of the children in her care and was then recognised by the board of Family Day Care Australia. I wish to congratulate Mrs White on her second award win. The provision of quality day care is vital for our community and I commend Mrs White for her dedication and hard work.

#### **PENRITH COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)**—The Penrith Community Kitchen (PCK) is a not for profit organisation that has now been supporting those less fortunate in the local Penrith area for over 20 years. Driven predominately by Gai and Derek Hawthorn the PCK had to adapt and swing into action to reopen in a COVID safe manner to continue supporting our community. With donations from the community and funding from St Marys Town Centre, Penrith City Council and Liquor Accord the PCK set out to pack hampers and cook meals for families and individuals in need. PCK have packed and distributed 1,700 hampers and cooked 1,400 meals during the recent COVID restricted period. Thank you Gai and Derek and also thank you to Kris Gauci, volunteers from Our Community Cares, Cathy Craig and other volunteers of Penrith Community Kitchen, Cllr Tricia Hitchen, representatives from Penrith City Council, Marlene Shipley and, the staff from the PCYC Penrith who all banded together to get this job done.

#### **COL PRICE - GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Glen Innes Severn Council Emeritus Mayor Col Price – a founding councillor, mayor and deputy mayor, serving the district for seventeen years after the 2004 amalgamation of the Glen Innes Municipal and Severn Shire Councils. Col's years of service began with merging two struggling councils to form a financially viable entity capable of surviving state government's Fit for the Future program. During his term Council purchased the old quarry, renamed Eerindii Ponds, for water storage despite some opposition from those who feared it would be too much of a financial burden. However, the ponds kept the town off the highest level water restrictions longer than other nearby communities during the 2019 drought, a major accomplishment. Col's service as a councillor was not always an easy call as he reminisces on some difficult decisions and advises that councillors need courage to stay the course. I congratulate Col Price on being a major part of the development and success of Glen Innes Severn Council. I commend Col for his integrity and offer my appreciation for his long standing service to the community.

#### **GEORGINA POOLE – 2021 MY MOREE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Georgina Poole for her entry in the 2021 My Moree Photography Competition which won the Grand Jury Prize. Georgina depicted her photo of a community picnic on the completely parched Mehi River at Moree's Mary Brand Park. The judges recognised her portrayal of the spirit and strength of the community during a highly challenging time. The My Moree competition, sponsored by the Moree Plains Shire Council and the Bank Art Museum Moree [BAMM] is a popular competition, running for three successful years, and is very competitive. This year there were 400 entries, 160 of which were selected to be on display at the BAMM. I congratulate Georgina on winning the coveted Grand Jury Prize. I commend Georgina on her exceptional talent in capturing both emotion and spirit through photography, providing an uplifting experience for the art enthusiast.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF BRISBANE WATER OLD PHONE AND LAPTOP DONATION DRIVE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I thank the Rotary Club of Brisbane Water who are collecting no-longer used phones or laptops from residents to provide to community members escaping domestic violence to help them get back on their feet. I encourage the Central Coast community to reconsider throwing out their old phones and laptops and think about donating them to the Rotary Club of Brisbane Water. Research indicates that there has been an increase in domestic violence rates during the COVID-19 lockdown and demand for support and assistance needs to keep pace with this increase. My sincerest thanks and appreciation goes to the Rotary Club of

Brisbane Water for consistently answering the call to those most vulnerable in our community and working to make the Central Coast an even better place to live.

#### **BERKELEY VALE HYDROGEN POWER**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to congratulate today the team at Star Scientific, on their new collaboration with Central Coast Industry Connect to deliver carbon-free food manufacturing on the Central Coast. This Berkeley Vale based company is creating incredible opportunities for local businesses to embrace new technologies- which will transform the food manufacturing industry. The Central Coast is home to some of Australia's most iconic food brands, and it is great to see that they will be among the first in the world to take advantage of hydrogen power, to produce their goods with as little environmental impact as possible. I would like to thank Star Scientific's Global Chairman Andrew Horvath, and the rest of his team, for their efforts to reach this stage. It is so wonderful that this technology is going to be utilised for the first time in the same place that Star Scientific was founded- right here on the Coast.

#### **WOY WOY SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL PEN PALS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—The lovely students of Woy Woy South Public School have started a pen pal arrangement with Hammond Care Nursing Home in Woy Woy. This arrangement will see students swap notes, pictures, stories, and jokes with the residents of Hammond Care Nursing Home. This is a heart-warming initiative, especially during such a terribly difficult period COVID-19 has imposed on our wider community. It is so important that our youngsters understand and build a positive relationship with elderly residents in our community. There is a wealth of knowledge and stories just waiting for someone to listen and our elderly residents are more than happy to pass on their life experiences and wisdom to younger generations. I look forward to this initiative continuing for many years to come. Well done Woy Woy South Public School principal, Matt Barr, and the whole team at Hammond Care Nursing for organising such a community-rich program.

#### **THE MAN WALK BOWRAL**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—A group of men in the Southern Highlands are walking and talking each other through the good times and bad, to lend an ear to men and boys and to support mental health. The Man Walk Bowral was initiated by Ash Druery in 2019 and despite setbacks, has a growing number of participants who regularly get together to "walk, talk and support" one another. Lockdowns meant the group walks couldn't go ahead for a time, but this month they are back at the crack of dawn, meeting at Bowral Pools every Tuesday at 5:45 and 6:45 am. Any and all men are welcome to come along and start the day right: walking around the picturesque Highlands and getting whatever is on your mind out in the open. We know that opening up and talking to others about our worries and struggles is critical for our mental health. The Man Walk provides the space and opportunity for men to do just that, in a non-judgemental and relaxed setting. I am pleased to see such a positive and simple initiative promoting good physical and mental health habits in Wollondilly.

#### **WORLD TEACHER'S DAY**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—October 29 is World Teacher's Day, and would like to take this opportunity to recognise Razorback resident Megan Atkinson, who was recently awarded the 2021 NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence in teaching at Elderslie High School. Ms Atkinson is Elderslie High's most prominent agriculture teacher and over the last 25 years has developed a first rate school farm. Ms Atkinson initiated the school Animal Nursery Program, which runs petting nurseries for small children on weekends throughout the year. Elderslie students participating in the program not only get hands-on experience with farm animals, but also have the opportunity to volunteer their time running the nursery and showcasing their animal handling skills. Ms Atkinson is also in charge of developing displays for Agriculture Shows, which afford students the opportunity to connect with the agriculture community. With Ms Atkinson leading them, Elderslie students have won many parading competitions over more than 20 years. Teachers are tasked with forming the minds of the next generation. I extend my thanks to Ms Atkinson for her dedication to her students, and the dedication of all the wonderful teachers in Wollondilly.

#### **BOWRAL BLUES CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Summer is nearly here and all across our state local sporting clubs are resuming their training. In Bowral, home to the great Don Bradman, it brings me particular joy to say, "Cricket is back baby!" The Bowral Blues Cricket Club has resumed training leading up to their first round of competition in November. The Blasters cricket festival tomorrow will mark the start of the season with a day of drills and skills for kids as young as five. It is a great opportunity to introduce cricket to a new generation of batters. The Blues have both junior and senior grades competing in friendly rivalries against local schools around the Southern Highlands. They cater for all levels and skill sets with first, second and third grade teams. There is also a Dads n Lads team, which provides a fantastic opportunity of helping young boys grow in their skill and



love for the game of cricket, while allowing dads to relive the glory days. I thank Club Captain Brett McCaulay for his dedication and I wish The Bowral Blues all the best for the coming season.

#### **OUR COMMUNITY PANTRY BARGO**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Our Community Pantry in Bargo is a community food rescue initiative which works to raise awareness and counter food insecurity and waste by providing affordable groceries, essential household items, family meals and free fruit, vegetables, milk and bread to those in need. Founder Paula Zaja started the organisation in 2017 which now supports over 4,000 families across Camden, Macarthur, Wollondilly, Wingecarribee and the Goulburn regions. She works with Food Bank NSW and ACT who supply her with perfectly good food that for various reasons would otherwise be headed to landfill. With this food, OCP puts together hampers for a fraction of what such items would usually cost. During the 2019-2020 bushfires, Ms Zaja and the OCP team organised and coordinated donations of food, clothes, toys, toiletries and more for families who had lost their homes. These donations proved to be a lifeline to those in crisis who had lost everything. The work of OCP features in the recent documentary film "A Fire Inside", which details the stories from the Black Summer bushfires. I thank Paula Zaja and the OCP team for the wonderful support they provide to our community.

#### **BUILD FOR A CURE – CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge the Children's Cancer Institute for their ongoing "Build for a Cure" collaboration where an entire house is built in Western Sydney with absolutely everything donated. On 16 August, the build began in Mulgoa Sanctuary Estate located in Glenmore Park, and with all the land sites completely sold out, the house will be a sort after piece of property. This brand new family home will be built with all proceeds from the sale going towards childhood cancer research into safer and better treatments for children with cancer. Build for a Cure began in 2014, where a plot of land was donated to the Children's Cancer Institute with the intent that a house be built in 21 days and sold with all the proceeds going to research. Each year the land has been generously donated by different partners with all the tradesman volunteering their time and labour to deliver a house ready for a family to move into. Congratulations to all those involved in Build for a Cure. Thank you for everything that you are doing. I can't wait to see the result!

#### **KALAN TURVEY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate Glenmore Park apprentice, Kalan Turvey, on his impressive achievements to which he has been awarded a Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship. The three-year annual scholarship support apprentices who are experiencing financial or personal hardship, demonstrate a high aptitude for vocational education and training and show a commitment to their training. The program allows Kalan to display his apprenticeship skills and help him further his career. This will support him to engage fully in education, training, skilled employment or a combination and allow him to contribute positively to the community. Congratulations Kalan on your outstanding accomplishment, I wish you all the best for the future!

#### **NEPEAN AREA DISABILITIES ORGANISATION (NADO) LIMITED**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—A big congratulations to Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation Limited [NADO] for being recognised as the winner for Employer of Choice in the Australian Business Awards 2021. This award recognises organisations that develop workplaces that maximise the full potential of their workforce through established policies and practices which demonstrate effective employee recruitment, engagement and retention. NADO's team culture has shown to be one of equality, diversity and collaborated fuelled by a passion for helping those most vulnerable within our community. People are at the heart of the organisation and their focus is based on supporting and equipping these individuals with the right skills so that they can fulfil their goal of helping people with disability live a more independent life. This award is a testament to the team's hard work and dedication to continue providing high quality support services to the community. Congratulations to NADO for the amazing work you do, you should all be so proud of yourselves!

#### **MATILDA MOBBS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate Glenmore Park student, Matilda Mobbs, for her excellent achievements winning 7 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal at a club event and has qualified to compete in the National Age Championships in multiple events and dreams of one day representing Australia at the Paralympic Games. Matilda was selected by the Club Captains of Nepean Aquatic Swim Club to award her the Female Swimmer Award because she has shown above other athletes in the club, is always determined to push herself in training and in competition. Despite being diagnosed with Spina Bifida from a young age, Matilda has always been passionate about swimming. She broke a 16-year long state record in June and is now the NSW State 13 Years and Under S8 400m Freestyle SC record holder for her time of 7.14. Matilda's swimming idol and

Australian Paralympic Athlete Ellie Cole also had a special message for her on television during the recent 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games which blew Matilda away and only enforced her determination to continue doing what she loves. Congratulations Matilda, good luck and I look forward to hearing of your future success!

#### **TRIBUTE TO ROSEMARY PEART**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)**—I pay tribute to the incredible life, dedication and achievements of Rosemary Peart, who passed away on Wednesday 1st September at the age of 84. Rosemary was a trusted and well known travel consultant and business woman who operated in the St George community for over 30 years. She forged a path for women in business when she opened Ramsgate Travel Service in April 1983 on Rocky Point Rd and Ramsgate Travel Service still operates in the same premises today, nearly 40 years later. Throughout her career, as her agency flourished, Rosemary received many travel awards for her success in both the travel industry and in business in general. Many thousands of people owe their unforgettable travel experiences to her efforts and her legacy will live on in their memories. I recognise Rosemary's dedication and service, and acknowledge the St George community is poorer for her loss. Thank you Rosemary for enriching the lives of so many members of our community with your passion for travel. Rest in peace.

#### **LOCAL STUDENT WILLIAM BAILEY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)**—I was recently contacted by local student Will Bailey - a 10 year old student at The Scots College, Bellevue Hill in my electorate. I really welcomed Will emailing me with his request to build more bike jumps for their mountain bikes in the local area. Will explained that he and his friends wanted a place to ride their mountain bikes and 'jumps' or 'ramps' to be set up for them in local parks. I then spoke to Will by phone and he took me through his idea and told me about his Change.org petition on the issue which has already garnered over 100 signatures. I was really glad to hear that local students like Will want to be active and enjoy our wonderful natural open spaces. I look forward to taking up his request with our Local Council to see what can be done to help. I thank Will for taking the initiative to raise with me something so important to him and his friends. I also hope to hear from more of our local young people on local issues that are important to them.

#### **TURRAMURRA MEMORIAL PARK UPGRADES**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**—I am pleased that major upgrades to the Pavilion at Turramurra Memorial Park are nearing completion. Turramurra Memorial Park is the home ground of the Ku-ring-gai Junior Cubs Rugby League and Old Barker Rugby Club, a Division 2 club with 1st and 2nd grade, Colts and Women's Seven teams in the NSW Rugby competition. The Park is also utilised for athletics and by countless community recreational users. Demand is growing, with an increasing number of people eager to participate in community sports as well as to engage in fitness activities. Upgrades to the Pavilion include a new canteen, scoreboard and storage areas. Moreover the addition of accessible and women's facilities will aid equitable participation for all. I have had the opportunity to speak to Karen Penrose, the Old Barker Rugby Club Inc president. She is excited about the upcoming opening. This project has been made possible by Old Barker Rugby Clubs' successful application under the Greater Sydney Sports Facilities Fund and I thank the Club members involved for their tireless commitment and hard work to achieve this wonderful outcome for our community.

#### **BREAK THE CYCLE GLENQUARIE**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—Break the Cycle Glenquarie has been at the forefront during lockdown, assisting local families with emergency food relief, non-interest loans and the growing cost of energy bills. I would like to acknowledge Break the Cycle Glenquarie's efforts during this challenging period and I thank everyone involved for helping those in need. Since 16 June 2021, Break the Cycle Glenquarie has provided more than 200 food hampers, granted 35 non-interest loans and assisted more than 100 people with energy bills. This fantastic effort was achieved within tight COVID-19 restrictions and with the centre operating at reduced capacity. South-West and Western Sydney residents will continue to endure the economic and social costs of the pandemic, which makes Break the Cycle Glenquarie's work extremely important. The Men's Shed, part of Break the Cycle Glenquarie, closed its doors during lockdown. I am confident that the Men's Shed will return with even more vigour and that its volunteers will once more enjoy the companionship they have all been craving. I am honoured to call many of the good people at Break the Cycle Glenquarie friends, and I look forward to visiting again soon to extend our community's sincere gratitude.

#### **WYONG FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)**—The Wyong Family History Group was formed in 1983 at a meeting that was held in the rooms of Wyong Shire Library on the 3rd June 1983. Now in 2021 the group have gone on to release a series of five books called People of Wyong. I congratulate the Wyong Family History Group on this achievement. The books include historical facts, older media material from local newspapers, personal interviews

with residents of the area all covering the history of Wyong. I wish the Wyong Family History Group more success as doors reopen on October 26th at the Wyong Family History Group's rooms at The Cottage in Wyong.

#### **WYONG WRITERS**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)**—I would like to commend Wyong Writers on their continued efforts to engage community members and run their programs as well as promote competitions successfully via zoom and other means during the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns. Wyong Writers is a branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers which was formed in Sydney in 1928. Wyong Writers have continually ran programs which have had qualified guests attending to help the growth of the writers from Wyong Writers. Wyong Writers also promotes writing competitions which allows non-members to enter. Well done Wyong Writers on your work and efforts during the most difficult of times.

#### **TROY MARTIN**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)**—Congratulations to Troy Martin of Kanwal for participating in the Ride For Sick Kids Fundraiser ran by Ronald McDonald House Charities [RMHC] Northern NSW which was in September 2021. Troy aimed for 100km and ended up reaching 300km. Troy aimed to raise \$500 and raised \$542. Overall riders raised over \$250,000 for Ronald McDonald House Charities. RMHC Northern NSW has provided support to more than 81,000 families through its Ronald McDonald Houses, Family Rooms, Family Retreat and Learning Program for over 30 years. Well done Troy for your efforts in raising funds for Ride for Sick Kids.

#### **MICHAEL KAY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)**—I would like to congratulate Michael Kay a resident of Jilliby on becoming the 2021 Central Coast Adult-Volunteer of the Year. Michael is a volunteer at the Jilliby Public School P&C. Michael organised the transport for students at the school to help them participate in all sporting, community, and cultural activities. Michael raised funds for a bus, he then purchased the bus. Michael also fitted the bus out. Michael now also drives the bus. The bus is also being used to helps other schools, such as Peats Ridge and Wyong Creek. Congratulations Michael Kay on this title as it is well deserved.

#### **LOCAL PHARMACIST AND DOCTORS- PART 1**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)**—Speaker, I would like to thank the wonderful local pharmacists, doctors and medical centres that have helped my community reach over 90 per cent first dose vaccinated, and almost 80 per cent double dosed. Your tireless efforts in the COVID vaccine rollout, and in assisting our multicultural community by providing accessible translated COVID information. These health professionals include: The doctors, nurses and allied health professionals at Canterbury Hospital, Associated Medical Centre Campsie, Campsie Pharmacy, Campsie Centre Medical Clinic, Dr A and J Bassil's Surgery Campsie, Campsie Family Medical Centre, Campsie All Care Medical Centre, Campsie Medical and Dental Centre, Seoul Family Medicine clinic, Campsie, Dr Boulis' Surgery, Campsie, Campsie Day Surgery, Campsie Medical Practice, Campsie Healthcare Medical Practice, Cincotta Chemist, Campsie, Baik surgery, Campsie, Southern Doctors Clinic, Campsie, Clemton Park Family Medical Centre, Canterbury Plaza Medical Centre, Belmore Pharmacy, Belmore Compounding Chemist, Belmore Respiratory Clinic, Belmore Medical, Mediconsul Simpsons Pharmacy, Bridge of Belfield Pharmacy, Benaroon Medical Centre, Primacare Family Medical Centre Roselands, Priceline Pharmacy Roselands

#### **LOCAL PHARMACISTS AND DOCTORS- PART 2**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)**—Speaker; As I have told the House before, I would like to thank these local pharmacists and doctors: Nas Medical Centre, Roselands, My Health Roselands, Terry White Chemmart Roselands, S and Y Houfani Family Medical Practice, Dr Foong's Surgery, Earlwood Family Practice, Earlwood General Practice, Harpers Pharmacy, Earlwood Medical Centre, Earlwood Health and Medical Centre, K and L Oey Family Medical Practice, Chapel Street Pharmacy, Kingsgrove, Bridge of Belfield Pharmacy, Clemton Park Priceline Pharmacy, Priceline Pharmacy Canterbury, All Saints Pharmacy, Mina's Pharmacy Hurlstone Park, Day and Night Pharmacy, Campsie, Dr Bernard Tse's Surgery, Campsie, NEMA Medical Centre, Campsie, Southern Womens Care, Campsie, Campsie Station Pharmacy. Thank you once again to these amazing health professionals, whose efforts in the community have allowed us to get through restrictions, and to see our loved ones once more.

#### **LOCAL PHARMACISTS AND DOCTORS- PART 3**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)**—Speaker; In my previous statement to the House, I have thanked local pharmacists and doctors for their assistance in the vaccine rollout. I would also like to take the time to acknowledge the community led response which led us to achieve pop-up vaccine hubs, including: Belmore Drive thru vaccination clinic, All Saints Belmore Vaccine hub, Canterbury Hospital Vaccine clinic, Morris Iemma

Indoor Sports Centre, Orion Function Centre, Campsie. As a result of these vaccination hubs, my community of Canterbury went from 20 per cent first dose of the vaccine in June, to over 90 per cent now. We could not have achieved this result without the help of community organisations and leaders including: The Canterbury Bulldogs, Dr Jamal Rifi, Canterbury-Bankstown Council, All Saints Parish, Belmore, The Lebanese Muslim Association. Thank you once again to the volunteers, doctors, pharmacist, nurses and all other allied health professionals for your outstanding efforts throughout the lockdown. Your incredible work in our community have allowed us to get through some of the toughest restrictions, and to be able to see our loved ones once more.

#### **PINK RIBBON DAY 2021**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)**—Speaker; Pink Ribbon Day is a day to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer. I am a proud supporter of Pink Ribbon Day, and the messages of advocacy and awareness for breast cancer conveyed on this day. As a survivor of breast cancer, I know how devastating this disease can be. With breast cancer being the second most common cause of cancer deaths in women, breast cancer affects 1 in 7 women and 1 in 700 men. 55 Australians are diagnosed with breast cancer every day, that's over 20,000 people per year. Early detection is key. Since the lockdown, the Government made the decision to temporarily shut BreastScreen clinics across NSW. Because of this, this Pink Ribbon Day is especially important to remind everyone, particularly those more vulnerable, the importance of routine breast screenings. I urge everyone, particularly women aged 50 years and older, to book a breast screen. Every test can save lives.

#### **RAPID RELIEF TEAM AUSTRALIA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I take this opportunity to thank Rapid Relief Team AU for their contribution to the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program during the June 2021 lockdown. The team provided a generous donation of boxes of non-perishable food items which were distributed along with other essentials to the community members in the Fairfield Local Government area who were in self-isolation for COVID-19 or who were impacted financially by the pandemic. Rapid Relief Team is a global organisation who is always there to support the needs of people in a crisis. They provide assistance to emergency services and to both government and non-government organisations in challenging times. During the 2020 bushfires, the Rapid Relief Team AU volunteers were on hand to bring hope and support to affected people in their time of need. Their care and compassion extended to the Fairfield Electorate during the June 2021 lockdown and the community was extremely grateful for the donation of the food boxes. I commend the efforts of Rapid Relief Team AU for their faith-based acts of care and compassion and thank them for their contribution to the Fairfield Electorate Care package Program.

#### **NAFFCO AUSTRALIA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to acknowledge the work of the team at NAFFCO Australia who reached out to assist with the COVID-19 effort via a donation of essential sanitiser products. NAFFCO Australia trade as Shield Engineering Group and are based in Wetherill Park. They made a generous offer to assist the community with locally produced hand sanitising and health care products. This generous offer was extended to the local Fairfield Electorate community organisations working with the most vulnerable during the lockdown. I would like to thank owners Mr Ahmad Al Khatib; Mr Ali Al Khatib and Mr Alex Chlone and their staff for providing the community with the Shieldme products. I acknowledge their generosity and commend them for providing vital community services during the June 2021 lockdown period.

#### **SAFENET NOOH**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I commend the efforts of Safenet Nooh during the June 2021 lockdown and for their contribution to the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program. Safenet Nooh was established in Syria in the 1970 and expanded their enterprise to Australia in 2007. In a long-standing partnership with overseas manufacturers as well as a local manufacturing component, Safenet Nooh provides the community with high-quality food products such as olives, pickles, spices and gourmet food. Their contribution to the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program in the manner of a donation of a spices and food package was much appreciated and added a Middle Eastern touch to the other items in the care packages. I thank the team at Safenet Nooh for their generosity and commend their efforts in continuing to service the community throughout the lockdown period and beyond.

#### **FOOD ANGEL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I would like to acknowledge the team of volunteers at Food Angel for the tremendous work they did throughout the June 2021 lockdown. Food Angel has been a fixture in the Fairfield community for quite some time, providing food hampers at an affordable price for those members of the community who are struggling financially and finding it hard to make ends meet. During the June 2021 lockdown, Food Angel volunteers worked around the clock to service the community, with ever-increasing numbers added

to their list of vulnerable people. The lockdown saw job loss and loss of income in the Fairfield Electorate with more families experiencing increasing difficulty. Food Angel recognised the need and began distributing free food hampers from their Wakeley hub. Food Angel also participated in the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program, assisting to distribute goods to people in need. I wish to thank Food Angel for their compassionate care of the community throughout this challenging time and I commend their hard work and dedication to the Fairfield community.

#### **NUSWIM SWIMMING CLUB**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Bio Island Junior Excellence Program was established in 2007 to recognise, reward and incentivise junior swimmers who are on their swimming journey, learning and refining as they develop into senior swimmers. Swimmers aged from 9 to 13 years, who accomplish times set by Swimming Australia, qualify at gold, silver, bronze or blue standard, depending on their best performance/s during the season. All approved swim meet results are loaded into the Swimming Australia's Swim Central and used as results towards an overall award for each individual swimmer. Congratulations to the following NUSwim Members who achieved gold, silver, bronze or blue standard: Alexis Petrovic, Alice Jeffery, Amie Stephensen, Andie Widseth, Annabelle Hughes, Appin Paterson, Ashton Bullock, Ben McGovern, Cade Rimanoczy, Chelsea Lange, Cooper Marks, Daniel Edwards, Edward Waerea, Elise McGregor, Ella Mounter, Flynn Rimanoczy, Grace O'Shannessy, Hamish Lawrence, Hanna Mounter, Holly Bamford, Isabelle Mackay, Jack Martin, Jacob Samokhin, Jake McGregor, James Pyne, Jarrah Newham, Jasmine Seidel, Joshua Dalgety, Lewis Cox, Millie Bourke, Monique Edwards, Penny Vogt, Saibra Paterson, Sarah Murray, Shanuk Wickremaratchy, Taj Williams, Tom McGovern, Tyler Bright, Victoria Robinson, Will Blake, William Jeffery and Zoe Armstrong.

#### **PAPA AL'S BAKEHOUSE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—In April, Papa Al's Bakehouse at Mayfield was named The Daily Telegraph's best bakery in the Hunter for 2021. Owner Julianna Luxton bought the bakery seven years ago and although she grew up in her family business running cafes and large catering events, she knew nothing about baking. Julianna and her son, Cameron, both attended TAFE in Newcastle where they learnt about baking. The family owned business has always been popular with locals, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and trade slowed, they decided to diversify. The business was originally a wholesale bakery and when COVID hit they lost most of their clients. Due to the large amount of stock they held, such as flour, sugar, fats, yeast and oils, they started offloading it at wholesale prices to the public. There was also demand among the public for their baked goods, so using her knowledge from her wholesale background, Julianna took on home deliveries, which now takes in areas down to Swansea, Morisset, up to Cessnock, Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Medowie. Congratulations to all involved with Papa Al's Bakehouse being named the best bakery in the Hunter for 2021.

#### **PETER GEORGE IRWIN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Many deserving Australians were recognised in the Queens Birthday Awards for their contributions to community and country. Wallsend local, Peter George Irwin was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to tertiary education, to geography, and to the community of Newcastle. He led a long and distinguished career in the education system, with such highlights as Chair of the Higher School Certificate Syllabus Committee for Geography, the Head of the Department of Geography at the University of Newcastle, and the founder of the P.G. Irwin Prize for Undergraduate Geography Studies, as well as many other positions in both the secondary and tertiary systems. In addition, he authored five and co-authored seven geography books. He has also contributed greatly to his local community, holding committee positions in the Mayfield Uniting Church, Newcastle District Methodist Homes for the Aged, and Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust of Australia, among several others. He was recognised with the naming of Irwin Hall in his honour by the New South Wales Synod of Methodist Churches. Peter has spent a lifetime contributing to academia and to the Newcastle community. I congratulate him on his much-deserved appointment.

#### **THE BIG THREE – 150KM TREK**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—When Luke Alexander decides to get involved in a fundraiser, he goes big. In 2019 he walked from Newcastle to the Central Coast to raise money for his mate, Ash Tresseder. This year, Luke, Ethan Coker and Nathan Hill decided to do a fundraiser for the Mark Hughes Foundation to raise awareness of brain cancer. Their challenge - a 150km, 3 day walk from Sydney to Newcastle, arriving for the NRL Beanie for Brain Cancer Round 15 match at McDonald Jones Stadium. They initially set a \$60,000 target but smashed that, raising more than \$106,000. Thank you to these amazing people who trekked the 150km and helped fundraise to achieve this goal. Well done to Luke Alexander, Ethan Coker, Duncan Sandie, Ben Merriman, Ryan Gallagher, Stu Laundry, Chris Lawrence, Jay Lenton, Daniel Hughes, Daniel Smith, Akuila Uate, Sharn Coombes, Aaron Gorrell, Rhali Dobson, Robyn Gilmour-Norris, Kellie Collins, Sharni Cooper, Alex Cooper,

Matt Skelton, Adrian Duncan, Billy Peden, Todd Lowrie, Nathan Hill, Donna Dobson, Brent Collins, Ben Giggins, Pat Matautia, Mark Hughes and Ryley McKay who all took part in some or all of the walk.

#### **ALLAN SHELDON TAREE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise Taree Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) President Allan Sheldon who was recently recognised as the VRA Rescue NSW Officer of the Year. I would like to congratulate Allan for his outstanding contribution to the community through his volunteering where he is the Taree Rescue Squad Captain, President, and Regional Coordinator. Allan is a tow-truck driver by occupation and has volunteered for the VRA for 24 years. He is known for his professionalism, care and compassion where he oversees six squads and once cut a young woman from a motor vehicle accident who now raises funds for the Westpac Helicopter, a cause which Allan has also embraced. Allan has accepted a string of awards, has made use of his mechanical skills as well, spending hundreds of hours building rescue trucks from top to bottom. I congratulate him for his most recent award which is undoubtedly deserved and thank him for his dedication to volunteering.

#### **TIONA HOLIDAY PARK**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise Margaret Shannon, business partner, Rob Jeffres and the team at Tiona Holiday Park who have just been given an award in the outstanding start-up category in the 2021 Mid North Coast Business Awards. Tiona Holiday Park had recovered from bushfires and floods, when COVID-19 forced the caravan camping ground to padlock its gates. Margaret Shannon and her team pulled together, bringing forward a raft of planned improvements and makeover projects to transform Tiona Holiday Park into a showpiece of upmarket accommodation options, including the treehouse glamping sites positioned in a magnificent stand of native cabbage tree palms. I congratulate the entire team on their remarkable efforts and recognition with this award, and wish them luck with the State Awards which take place later this year.

#### **TAREE WILDCATS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise Taree Wildcats U15s team who are the Premiers for their age group. The team came together at the start of the year to compete in the combined 15s and 16s competition and they ended up undefeated by a 15s team, earning them the Premiership. Finals could not take place due to COVID-19, however all players and their coach Michael contributed to an outstanding season where they didn't record a single loss which is a remarkable feat. Congratulations to the U15s team and I wish them success in future seasons representing Taree on the pitch.

#### **MAL NEALE, LISA RUPRECHT AND LORRAINE HOGBIN AT CLUB TAREE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise Mal Neale, Lisa Ruprecht and Lorraine Hogbin at Club Taree. Mal Neale started working at Taree RSL in March 1981 and over the last 40 years he has established himself as a greatly respected member of the community and an industry stalwart. Meanwhile, Lisa Ruprecht and Lorraine Hogbin have both recently been recognised for 10 years of service, having made an incredible impact at Club Taree. I thank Mal, Lisa and Lorraine for the service over the years.

#### **KEITH BLENCH**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—During lockdown the Macarthur region lost one of its treasured members of our community in Keith Blench. Keith was a member of the Macarthur branch of the NSW Justice Association. Keith's commitment to the organisation spoke volumes about the person that he was – dedicated, selfless and always willing to lend a hand and help those in our local and tight-knit community. The Macarthur branch has several desks throughout our community and Keith was a constant face at many of them. His contribution to the Macarthur branch well beyond what was required and that was something that his colleagues certainly recognised. He was often helping out with meetings and events to ensure everything ran smoothly and efficiently. In fact, his contribution was recognised at the branch's last meeting prior to lockdown restrictions being introduced in June, where Keith was presented with a Gift of Time certificate for his contribution. I would like to offer my condolences to Keith's family and friends. There is no doubt our community is better for having volunteers like Keith in it. Rest in peace Keith.

#### **LIZ JENSEN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Teachers don't get into the profession for the accolades. They don't spend years of studying simply because it's a career they feel half-hearted about. Teachers do what they do because they are determined to inspire and help shape the youngest generations in our community. It's that drive that gets them out of bed every day. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School's Liz Jensen is the perfect example of a dedicated and passionate teacher. Liz was recently awarded the 2Day FM Teacher of the Week Award. Liz, a former student at the school, was nominated by one of her students Grace.

Principal Philip Barrington was quick to heap praise on Liz. He was quoted on the Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong website saying: "she is a phenomenal teacher and has had a huge impact on her students in short period of time". The Teacher of the Week award really is a wonderful accolade for a teacher that who has gone above and beyond – to support and nurture her students. Congratulations Liz on a very well deserved award and thank you for all your efforts at St Thomas More

#### GLENN COSSAR

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Reading has certainly been an activity that I and many others have indulged in over the past four or five months. Not much beats immersing yourself in a good book. I have said it countless times before but we are so lucky in Campbelltown to have so many talented people whether they be artists, sports people or academics. Glenn Cossar is certainly one of those special talents. Aside from a member of the dedicated team at Macarthur Lifeline, Glenn is also a skilful author. He recently presented me with a copy of his latest book, *In Search of Hope*. It's not easy task to be able to sit down and complete a book. It takes patience, skill and an unwavering drive to be able to start and finish a project such as a authoring a novel. But to those who know Glenn, they know he possesses all of those wonderful qualities required. Congratulations again mate on a wonderful achievement and a wonderful read. I look forward to the next the chapter in your literary career.

#### ONLINE SCHOOL STRIKE 4 CLIMATE

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I acknowledge the many Inner West students who participated in the online Schools Strike 4 Climate on Friday 15 October. The COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown has not dampened the passion and commitment of young people across Australia and the world for urgent and meaningful action on climate change. This year's Strike comes in the wake of the damning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] Report and with the United Nations COP26 climate conference scheduled for November in Glasgow. The IPCC has warned that temperatures are set to exceed 2°C in the 21st century. It is clear that countries, including Australia, must make significant cuts to greenhouse emissions if we are to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. I note comments that while Paris made promises, Glasgow must deliver action. Students participating in the Schools Strike 4 Climate continue to show leadership and principle and I warmly congratulate and thank students from the Inner West who participated in last week's actions.

#### COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Community and Cultural Connections Inc is based in Marrickville, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive services to seniors, people with a disability, their carers and family members. Like so many not-for-profit organisations, CCCI has seen a dramatic increase in demand for their services, right as they have had to pivot and adjust their programs and services to keep clients, staff and volunteers safe. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown, CCCI have offered emergency and crisis relief support, food parcels and essential goods, bills assistance and financial support, social connection and wellbeing support as well as digital connection, technical support and training. Last week alone, CCCI provided emergency food support to 143 households. Importantly, their much loved dance, art and mindfulness classes have been able to continue online, giving people the opportunity to continue doing the things they love. CCCI has also been central to the local health response, providing COVID-19 and vaccine information and support in multiple languages. CCCI has also focused on supporting people's mental health and wellbeing, keeping people engaged and connected. I thank everyone at CCCI, including Vi Pham, for their important work during the COVID-19 outbreak.

#### ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—October 17th-23rd is Anti-Poverty Week, with International Day for the Eradication of Poverty marked on October 17th. In 2021, through their A Pink Hi-Vis Recovery, NCOSS is drawing attention to the precarious housing situation faced by many women in NSW and is advocating for tangible policy changes that will improve lives across the state and aid NSW's economic recovery. More than 3.24 million people live below the poverty line in Australia, including one in six children. Far too many people across the State - and in my electorate of Summer Hill - face housing or food insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only made matters worse. One in ten of the 14 million people locked down in NSW, Victoria and South Australia over the past few months live in households relying on the lowest social security payments including Jobseeker, Parenting Payments and Youth Allowance. I acknowledge the important work of NCOSS and all those organisations in the Inner West community who have not only provided essential support to the most vulnerable, but have worked to raise awareness around persistent poverty and the policy changes required to fix it, including increasing income support and lifting investment in social housing.

### DRESS FOR SUCCESS SYDNEY

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Dress for Success Sydney is based in Marrickville and works to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. Like all organisations, the past few months of lockdown have been tough and Dress for Success has moved much of its work online, all while supporting staff and volunteers. We know the lockdown, including the loss of jobs, has impacted women significantly and as restrictions ease and women look to return to work or find employment, the need for the support services Dress for Success Sydney provides has never been greater. I note that during the lockdown, 21 per cent of men have been receiving disaster payments, compared to 14 per cent of women, that's a 50 percent difference, with women less likely to qualify for government support, more likely to lose their job and more likely to be doing unpaid household work. Dress for Success Sydney has run a series of online workshops including on Networking for Job Searching, Money Management and Communication Skills in the Workplace. I congratulate and thank Dress for Success Sydney on this important work.

### CAMDEN BECOMES GUINNESS WORLD RECORD TITLE HOLDERS

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Mr Speaker,

I am proud to inform NSW Parliament that Camden has made history after being recognised as a Guinness World Records title holder for the largest online quiz. Camden Council broke the record at on 10 October 2021 with an online Trivia event with 2,328 participants in the quiz for 92 minutes. Camden is now officially in the Guinness World Records for the first time ever. I offer my congratulations to Mayor of Camden, Cr Therese Fedeli and the team at Camden Council for organising such a memorable event which was an incredible end to the lockdown. Well done Camden, we are and always have been World Champions.

### CAMDEN ELECTORATE COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Today in NSW Parliament I want to recognise the astonishing effort of Camden in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Camden has shown high levels of COVID testing rates, complied with the Public Health Orders and on top of all this, we have lead the way in vaccination rates. I am not only proud to represent such a quality electorate but honoured as well. We have gotten through this together. Camden LGA currently as of Monday 18th October sitting at >95 per cent first and second dose vaccination. As of yesterday, Camden is the highest LGA in vaccination rates. Liverpool LGA currently as of Monday 18th October is sitting at 92.6 per cent first dose and 82.6 per cent second dose. The Camden community has not only shown resilience and strength, but leadership. Well done Camden.

### JACKSON ISAKKA

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to congratulate Jackson Isakka who won Darwin Crickets most prestigious award, the Ralph Weise Medal. Jackson had a stellar Darwin Domestic season with the Sothern Districts and the all-rounder yielded four 100s, two 50s and 17 wickets. This is an incredible achievement from Jackson, who I am proud to recognise and represent. Congratulations again Jackson, on your well-earned award.

### ZONTA CLUB AWARDS 2021

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would today like to inform parliament of the Zonta Club Award recipients for 2021. I congratulate year 12 students of Elderslie High School, Briannan who won the Zonta Club of Macarthur Young Woman in Public Affairs Award and Tiarne on her commendation for the Zonta Club's Achievement Award for Young Indigenous Women. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of these students especially through the impact of the lockdowns. This is an incredible achievement and I again congratulate these students on their well-deserved awards.

### PHOEBE DESMOND SIGNED FOR KNIGHTS' NRLW TEAM

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I would like to congratulate Phoebe Desmond of Singleton who has been recruited for the Newcastle Knight's National Rugby League Women's side. Phoebe, an employee at Bulga Coal will juggle her mining career and a football career. Phoebe has had a long standing involvement in grassroots rugby league in the Hunter Valley, as well as having played five seasons in the Sydney Metropolitan Competition for the Maitland Pickers, the Hunter Stars and North Newcastle plus playing for the Newcastle Maitland Knights in the NSW Rugby League competition. Again, I congratulate Phoebe on her selection for the Knight's team and wish her all the best for the upcoming NRLW Rugby League competition.



### UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL WINS VACCINATION CHALLENGE

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—A friendly wager among Upper Hunter electorate Mayors to increase COVID-19 vaccinations will now benefit a vital regional service. Upper Hunter Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Maurice Collison, challenged colleagues to be first to have 70 per cent of residents double vaccinated. Mayors, Cr David West from MidCoast Council, Cr John Connors of Dungog Shire, Cr Sue Moore from Singleton Council, Cr Rod Scholes of Muswellbrook Shire and Cr Douglas Hawkins from Liverpool Plains Shire, all agreed to contribute \$200 each with the proceeds donated to the charity of the winner's choice. Upper Hunter Shire started the competition with a 44.7 per cent of residents double jabbed closely followed by Mid Coast and Dungog Shire. Federal health data shows Upper Hunter surged to 76.7 per cent in just four weeks to win the challenge. Dungog Shire, Mid Coast Council, Singleton Council and Liverpool Plains Shire achieved the 70 per cent mark during last week. Mayor Collison will donate the proceeds to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. I congratulate the Mayors for the generosity and their councils for the efforts to vaccinate local communities.

### EMMA SINCLAIR

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Emma Sinclair. Emma has spent more than 100 days in hospital over the last year with a very rare brain tumour. Just over a year ago, Emma was flown to Sydney for emergency surgery and diagnosed with brain cancer. In September this year, Emma took her fight against brain cancer to the streets of Forbes, campaigning to fundraise for the Walk 4 Brain Cancer. Walk 4 Brain Cancer aims to raise vital funds for both research and awareness of brain cancer, and this year COVID-19 has forced participants to complete their treks independently rather than in big events. Emma walked 10 kilometres around Lake Forbes with her mother, local teacher Toni Edwards, a mammoth effort for someone still recovering and using a walker. Her effort has already raised more than \$8000. Emma's family members simultaneously also completing 10 kilometres of their own, with her sister Amy walking in Sydney from La Perouse to Maroubra and brother Tom trekking in Cronulla. I applaud Emma and her family for their fundraising and brain cancer awareness initiative. On behalf of the whole community, we wish Emma the best in her treatment and for a healthy recovery.

### JACK MORRISON

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Jack Morrison. Jack is a 17-year-old St Stanislaus' College student and Orange Emus' Rugby Club junior. The young prop's rugby prowess has caught the eye of Australian Schoolboys' selectors and he has been successful in being selected for the Australian Schoolboy's squad. Known as a hard-working and dedicated player, Jack will be a great addition to this national representative team. It's fantastic to see a local talent rise to the highest level of the game, and is a testament to the rugby club and teams which has supported and developed Jack's skills and abilities. Jack carries on a family tradition of rugby and achieving Australian representation of this sport. Jack's father, Bruce, also represented Australia in the Australian schoolboy rugby team in his youth. Jack is credit to his family, school, rugby club and our region. Congratulations on your selection, Jack, and I wish you every success in your rugby and life endeavours.

### BEN MCNIVEN

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Ben McNiven, of Orange. Ben is participating in the Top Blokes Foundation's Lift the Load challenge. Top Blokes Foundation's mission is to improve young male health and well-being. They work to increase resilience, empathy, and respect for self and others, and in doing so work to reduce the rates of suicides, mental health issues, antisocial and risk-taking behaviours. Their preventative, evidence-based group mentoring programs are delivered by qualified and experienced youth workers and have been developed especially to engage and educate boys and young men. Their goal is to mentor and develop their critical-thinking and decision-making skills, as well as normalise a definition of masculinity beyond strong and stoic to improve young men's relationships with themselves and those around them. Ben is raising the profile of the issue and fundraising while wearing a 10kg weight vest as part of the Top Blokes Foundation Lift the Load challenge, and raise at least \$2000 for the charity. Ben's goal is to walk 5km with the vest every day of October. Ben's idea is that he'll be metaphorically and physically carrying a load for the guys who mentally carry that load. I applaud Ben's initiative. Well done.

### GEORGE HURLEY OAM

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise George Hurley of Gympie who received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to football. Mr Hurley has a deep love of football which spans decades. As the former complex manager of Seymour Shaw Stadium, Mr Hurley coached football teams across numerous clubs including Miranda Magpies Football Club and Kirrawee Kangaroos Football Club. He is now a life member of the Sutherland Sharks Football Club which he joined in 1959. Importantly, Mr Hurley founded an education and training scholarship to support young players to pursue international careers without financial barriers. With respect to his personal life, Mr Hurley emigrated from London at age 17 and has been married to his beautiful

wife Valerie for over 63 years. Mr Hurley also served on Sutherland Shire Council and has been a member of over 30 committees including the St George Branch of the Royal Australian Air Force Association NSW for 15 years. I congratulate Mr Hurley for receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia and thank him for his contribution to our local sporting community.

#### OYSTER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Oyster Bay Public School's incredible teaching and support staff for their exceptional response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. When learning routines were disrupted, Oyster Bay quickly adapted to support students with engaging online content and provided essential equipment to those requiring support. Although the community were physically distanced, the outstanding teachers ensured that they remained connected. The staff organised virtual events including a Zoom disco, a Lego Masters competition, Indigenous weaving classes, and Book Week where students dressed up and decorated cakes to represent their favourite books. I take this opportunity to recognise Principal Wanita Bowles and Assistant Principals Christine Harrison, Deborah Stewart, Elizabeth Rudder and Brendan Sexty for their ongoing dedication to supporting local families. While this was undoubtedly a difficult year for students, the leadership team embraced the chance to encourage their peers at the school's Celebration of Learning Ceremony. I acknowledge 2021 Parliamentarians Owen Fulton, Brooke Carroll, Bradley Daniels, Joshua Watt, Piper Wilcox, Zoe Kohler, Sophie Talbot and Haley Hanley for this wonderful initiative. I thank Oyster Bay Public School's wonderful teaching and support team for helping local students overcome obstacles and continue to learn this year.

#### JACOB PEARSON

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Jacob Pearson of Alford's Point for his impressive fundraising contribution to the Cure 4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Year 8 student Jacob is a truly community minded member of the Sutherland Shire. Jacob raised \$5,025 for the Cure 4 Cystic Fibrosis Fundraiser by mowing lawns and generously donating over half of his earnings to this important cause. Jacob's incredible commitment continued as he ran the Sri Chinmoy Iron Cove 21 kilometre half marathon earlier this year as part of the Endeavour Sports High School's 'Cure4CF Army'. Leading the team was Endeavour Sports High School's Principal and Cystic Fibrosis Foundation ambassador James Kozlowski. Through Jacob's contributions, the Endeavour Army were able to raise \$33,141 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. It is important to note that Cystic Fibrosis affects one in every 2,500 children, most of whom will pass away by the age of 30. Sadly there is no cure available, but through the crucial work of people like Jacob, more research towards finding a cure becomes possible. I commend Jacob for his fantastic fundraising efforts towards this important cause and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### ILLAWONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Illawong Public School's incredible staff for their response to the challenges of COVID-19. Taking the challenges of COVID-19 in their stride, the exceptional teachers and support staff adapted again to provide opportunities for students to learn and grow. The teachers were devoted to keeping students connected and engaged through online initiatives. These included 'Go Bake My Day' challenges for families where students created videos to share with their peers, Father's Day breakfast with an online photo collage, a rock drop treasure hunt, science week experiments and personalised affirmation cards sent to every student. I commend the team at Illawong Public School for their dedication and passion for supporting local students in their learning. I take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Relieving Principal Daniyelle Tardent and all staff at the school including Katrina Scott, Sara Psaltis, Kirsten Pulford, Brielle Aryre, Tiarne Morelli, Haley Brunero, Tamara Wilkinson, Murray Baker, Leonie Jones, Cheryl Hudson, Susan Geddes, Allison Morris, Rita Lamotta, Jai Hook, Wendy Fradd and Mark Wilkinson. I thank all teachers and staff at Illawong Public School for their ongoing commitment to keeping students excited about learning through this difficult time.

#### RACHAEL HALL

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—I would like to acknowledge the bravery Rachael Hall has demonstrated during her health journey, twelve months ago Rachael was diagnosed with a condition called Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection also known as SCAD. Rachael alongside many others on October 17th 2021 participated in a five kilometre fundraiser known as SCADaddle, to raise funds for research into the condition SCAD where she raised about \$1000 for SCAD Australia. After reading about Rachael's journey and the sacrifices she has undergone I commend her on her terrific fundraising efforts and wish her all the best for the future.

**ABBIE KENT – YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Abbie Kent from Warialda High School for being awarded a Youth Community Service Award for exceptional service and engagement with her local community. This honour was conducted by the Order of Australia Association (NSW) Branch and presented by Patron, Her Excellency, The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales. Abbie's list of accomplishments is impressive ranging from local initiatives to international initiatives and including sport and speaking engagements. Abbie has made an extraordinary contribution to her community and served as an inspiration to others. She has earned the highest recognition available to NSW high school students. I congratulate Abbie on earning the Youth Community Service Award which serves as a tribute to her selfless service to the community. I commend Abbie for using her talents and her compassion for others, for being alert to the needs of the community and working for solutions.

**BONNIE CUMBERLAND – WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Moree school student Bonnie Cumberland for taking part in the Leukaemia Foundation's fund-raising event, the World's Greatest Shave. Bonnie parted with her remarkable long, red hair (25cm-plus) and donated the hair for a further contribution to Sustainable Salons who repurpose the hair into wigs for cancer patients. This awareness to help those struggling with blood cancer demonstrates not only Bonnie's compassion but her ability to see a need and act on it. It is the youth such as Bonnie who will make a difference in the world. I congratulate Bonnie for her successful donation to the World's Greatest Shave. I commend Bonnie for her resourcefulness and her empathy for sufferers of Leukaemia.

**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.

**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.

**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.

### **BLACKTOWN, THE HILLS AND PARRAMATTA SES UNITS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to acknowledge the Blacktown, Hills and Parramatta local SES units for the work they have put in around the Seven Hills Electorate during the recent weather events brought on by the storms. The suburb of Toongabbie experienced flash flooding in the recent heavy rainfall which the Parramatta SES always to actively and assisted those in need of help. The Hills Shire Council experience the most insurance claims each year due to damaging weather events, so I thank the work of The Hills SES unit in responding to cases around Baulkham Hills in the Seven Hills Electorate. The Blacktown SES unit were called out to a large number of cases caused from the recent Hail on parts of Western Sydney. I thank the Blacktown SES unit for responding to cases over such a large region, and acknowledge the work they continue to put in for the Seven Hills Electorate. The local SES units always do a great job in helping the local community through whatever circumstance we are faced with, so I thank them again for their commitment to the local communities across the Seven Hills Electorate.

### **RSL FAR WESTERN METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL RECRUITMENT LAUNCH**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—In June I had the pleasure to attend the launch of the RSL Far Western Metropolitan District Council recruitment campaign. Sub-branches play a crucial role in connecting Service Personnel, Veterans and their families with local communities across Western Sydney and in the Seven Hills electorate. This campaign will ensure that sub-branches can continue to play their role in our communities for generations to come. The Far Western Metropolitan District provide a support network for those of our Veterans that suffer from mental health issues, striving to give them a peace of mind. During my time as Parliamentary Secretary responsible for the Centenary of ANZAC and Veterans, I had the privilege of attending a number of these events across New South Wales. I thank them for their service for the betterment of our community. I also acknowledge the great efforts of the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville sub-branch at the Seven Hills RSL down the road from my office. The sub-branch is made up of a terrific group of men who are always fundraising for worthy causes.

### **LUA PELLEGRINI – NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Toongabbie local, Lua Pellegrini, who was appointed as a member of the 2021-2022 NSW Youth Advisory Council. The NSW Young Advisory Council is made up of young people aged 12-24 who offer advice to the NSW Government and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services on issues of importance to young people. From a pool of 585 applicants across the State, Lua is to be congratulated on being chosen to be one of the representatives for the youth from Western Sydney on the Council. Lua has also been named one of the Chairpersons of the council. It is fantastic to see young people putting themselves forward to serve as a voice for their peers, particularly Indigenous Australians. I look forward to following the journey of the NSW Youth Advisory Council and Lua over the coming 12 months and once again recognise and congratulate them for their efforts and service.

### **TOONGABBIE PUBLIC SCHOOL HALFCUT DAY 2021**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I acknowledge the efforts of Toongabbie Public school staff and students for their participation in HalfCut Day 2021. Each year thousands of Australians participate in raising funds towards ongoing conservation efforts in the Daintree rainforest. In exchange for donations, participants will shave, braid, or dye or alter half of their beard or hair. For every \$2.50 raised, 1 square metre of land will be purchased in the Daintree Rainforest for preservation. It is no secret that I love Australia's natural wildlife and habitats. The Seven Hills Electorate is home to some truly breath-taking reserves from the bush-walks around Toongabbie Creek and through Northmead and Winston Hills in particular. The "Toongabbie Public School Pollinators", as they have named themselves, set a goal of raising \$2500 towards this excellent cause. Even though

an uncertain time of the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions, it is fantastic to see community groups like this effecting positive change for themselves and Australia. I thank the Toongabbie Public School staff and the students from across Constitution Hill, Old Toongabbie and Toongabbie for their work.

#### **DALE WIDDERS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I recognise Dale Widders from the St George Dragons Australian Rules Football Club who is the Vice President, affectionately known as their "energiser bunny." Dale is the Ground Manager at home matches, the organisation's volunteer activator, the barbecue and scoreboard co-ordinator and the Team Manager for their Premier Division side. He is an absolute asset to the organisation for his ongoing commitment and continued dedication to helping and improving the Club. Last year, I had the opportunity to present Dale with a Sporting Achievement Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards recognise some of the many hardworking groups and individuals across our community who go above and beyond to make our community even better. Thank you again for everything that you do. I wish you all the best for the year ahead and I look forward to seeing some fantastic football at Olds Park this season.

#### **DOROTHY DIXON**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, last year I had the privilege of acknowledging an outstanding local individual, Dorothy Dixon from the Rotary Club of Hurstville, who is a dear friend of myself, my wife Adla and both of my sons. Dorothy was the first female President of the organisation and she has also been a volunteer with the Salvation Army for over 30 years. To this day, she still regularly volunteers at the Rotary Club's bookshop in Oatley. The 'Mulga Road Bookshop' is run by members of the Rotary Club and it is a charity that has been running since 2011. I sincerely thank Dorothy for everything that she has done to make the bookshop as successful as it is today. Last year I had the honour of presenting Dorothy with a Senior Volunteer Achievement Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards recognise some of the many wonderful individuals and groups from across the region who go above and beyond to make our community even better. Well done Dorothy.

#### **UNGARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I extend a huge congratulations to the Year 12 class at Ungarie Central School who are nearing the completion of their schooling life. Year 12 students William Batty, Kadee Gerard-Scali, Michelene Izzard, Rachel Spencer and Prue West from Ungarie Central School have been farewelled from their school in the lead up to their HSC exams. These 5 individuals are among thousands of year 12 students from the Cootamundra Electorate who have finished attending school and now are in the final preparations and studying phases before their HSC exams. The last few days of school for these students come with many highs and lows as they remember their last 13 years of schooling and think about life ahead of them. It brings joy and sadness and is a time for them to thank and farewell the individuals who got them to where they are today. I wish William, Kadee, Michelene, Rachel and Prue along with all the other year 12 students in my Electorate and across the State all the very best of luck with their HSC exams and their future endeavours.

#### **ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It is with great pleasure and honour I warmly welcome the newly announced Principal of St Joseph's Primary School, Grenfell, Mrs Melissa Hotham. Mrs Hotham will commence her duties as Principal of St Joseph's Primary School in 2022. Melissa and her family are relocating to Grenfell and are already playing an active role in the small country town. Mrs Hotham's vision for St Joseph's is to inspire, challenge and encourage students and staff to strive for success. The Principals and Teachers within the schools in the Cootamundra Electorate play a critical part in the lives of so many children and families. Principals and teachers seek to inspire students in all aspects of their lives and motivate them to set goals and achieve them. The St Joseph's Primary School in Grenfell is extremely lucky and fortunate to be able to have a new Principal joining their school community. I wish Melissa every success in her new role as Principal of St Joseph's Primary School and I look forward to meeting and working with her in the near future.

#### **COOTAMUNDRA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – SHOP COOTA-GUNDY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to acknowledge and thank the work of the Cootamundra-Development Corporation towards helping small businesses through the pandemic. The regional lockdown was tough but that didn't stop residents finding innovative ways to keep our local businesses going. The Cootamundra Development Corporation launched its Shop Coota-Gundy initiative in August to ensure small businesses in the towns of Cootamundra and Gundagai could meet costs and still generate some income while in lockdown. This was set up by the corporation operating a raffle system with products/vouchers for purchase through an online Facebook group which now has over 2,600 members. In total, 57 business took part in the campaign and 400 draws were held where a phenomenal \$155,130 was injected back into our business economy.

Additional to this, \$6,280 was also raised for Cootamundra charities CanAssist and FoodBank. The initiative was a great way for local businesses to gain exposure among our small communities to gain more loyal customers. Well done to the Cootamundra Development Corporation for their creative thinking and thank you to the communities of Cootamundra and Gundagai for getting involved.

#### **BLAND SHIRE AND EVOLUTION MINING'S GRATITUDE PROJECT**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to say a huge congratulations to the winners of The Gratitude Project launched by the Bland Shire Council and Evolution Mining. The Gratitude Project was created to boost local morale by acknowledging and reflecting on the large number of outstanding individuals who have helped the community navigate through the pandemic. Members of the Bland Shire community were encouraged to nominate an essential worker, community volunteer or Good Samaritan. Each Wednesday for 4 weeks 10 names were randomly drawn as winners with each receiving a \$100 gift card to spend at any local business. The initiative also helped foster and encourage spending within the struggling businesses. I congratulate the 40 people who were drawn out as well as those who were nominated. I also extend a huge thank you to each of every constituent who has helped in any way to assist the community to get through these struggling times your efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed. Congratulations to all and thank you Bland Shire Council and Evolution Mining for creating such an amazing project.

#### **NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I recognise the work of the NSW Teachers Federation and their members within the Balmain electorate, for their advocacy for public school teachers, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Aside from the impact of lockdowns, NSW Public Schools are facing staffing shortages, unsustainable workloads and uncompetitive salaries. Lockdown has highlighted the importance and the difficulty of the work teachers undertake. I was grateful to meet with Will Kennedy, Bernhard Huber, Maria Wilson and Kyole Blakeney last month to discuss the findings of the Gallop Report and what can be done to address the issues facing NSW Public Schools. On behalf of the residents of the Balmain Electorate, I want to thank our teachers for all that they do for our children and our community, especially during these difficult times.

#### **NSW POUND AND SHELTER REFORM**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the important work being done by Animal Liberation NSW in advocating for pound and shelter reform in NSW. Alongside a network of local shelters and result organisations, Animal Liberation NSW has been working to address the cruelty, suffering and neglect issues in publicly funded pounds and shelters. Their work has made it clear that more needs to be done to avoid the large scale killing of impounded animals and ensure compliance in impounding facilities to avoid animal suffering. Our current animal welfare laws are inadequate to provide proper protection to cats, dogs and other animals who find themselves impounded. I would also like to recognise the efforts of local rescues and veterinary clinics in helping stray cats, dogs and other pets to find safe forever homes, including Balmain Vets, Inner City Strays, Glebe Community Cats, Wild Vet Glebe, Glebe Veterinary Hospital and Annandale Animal Hospital.

#### **SUTTON AND RYAN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Henri Sutton and Sean Ryan. Henri and Sean took part in this year's Shitbox Rally, and raising \$18,471 for the Cancer Council. The Shitbox Rally is an annual cancer research fundraising event. The funding is directed towards ground-breaking cancer research projects. Since the rally's inception, fundraising has been used for testing new drug combinations for pancreatic cancer, preventing people with immune deficiencies from developing lymphoma, finding new compounds to target the deadliest type of malignant brain tumour, developing a way to calculate the safest and most effective dose of radiation for prostate cancer patients, analysing the largest data set of melanoma genome sequences in the world, identifying a treatment to block the development and spread of neuroblastoma cells. This year the total raised by the rally initiative was \$2.9 million, enabling critical cancer research. Henri and Sean were one of 200 teams who travelled nearly 4000km, from the Gold Coast to Alice Springs. I congratulate Henri and Sean on their fundraising efforts for this noble cause. Well done.

#### **BRIAN MCANENEY RAY WHITE RURAL NSW ANNUAL AWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, recently the Ray White Rural and Livestock awards took place over Zoom to recognise the achievements of the top offices and individuals throughout the network. I would like to congratulate Brian McAneney, of Ray White Rural Dubbo, who not only was announced as the "Number 1 NSW Rural Principal", but also the nationwide "Top Selling Principal". Brian was part of the team that launched Ray White Dubbo in September 1991. He commenced with Ray White Rural Dubbo in 2012, following his passion in selling rural property. Brian believes that the award is also a credit to his wonderful team at the agency, who

deserve the praise just as much as he does. Ray White Rural Dubbo has experienced a mountain of success across 2020 and 2021, something which it will no doubt be striving to achieve again in the next 12 months of sales. Congratulations Brian on a fantastic achievement!

#### **WELLINGTON ARTS "THREATENED SPECIES" COMPETITION**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to commend all the artists who entered the Wellington Arts "Threatened Species" Competition and Exhibition. Wellington Arts received over 60 creative and colourful entries depicting Australian flora and fauna, with the exceptional talent of young and 'older' generations recognised and celebrated. Supported by Local Land Services, with a range of handouts and educational information for visitors, the difficult task of judging was undertaken by Libby McIntyre from Dubbo Rivercare. The Open and U16 yrs. art sections saw huge competition with very high quality artwork, entered by artists from Dubbo, Wellington, Stuart Town, Millthorpe, Orange, and even Sydney! A vibrant and cheery orange bellied parrot in flight took out the U16yrs entry, from artist Kate Napoli. Kate is a Glenhaven resident, the granddaughter of Wellington locals Vance and Jan Montgomery. It was great to hear that Kate, and her brother James, used their Creative Kids vouchers to purchase art supplies to create their entries. Gill Pedrana from Dubbo took out the Open section with a large framed Eastern Quoll drawing. Congratulations to all the artists who entered artworks, and I encourage everyone to visit the exhibition!

#### **LIFELINE CENTRAL WEST**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for us all. But for those who might already be struggling with their mental health, or who have experienced increased isolation, or lost work, family or friends, getting the right support can literally be a matter of life or death. Calls to Lifeline have jumped from an average of 2200 a day 2 years ago, to more than 3500 a day now. Every week, many hundreds of those calls are being answered by volunteers at Lifeline Dubbo. Lifeline Central West CEO Stephanie Robinson says they're always looking for more volunteers, and she's urging locals to take advantage of fully-subsidised courses through TAFE NSW! TAFE offers a range of courses like the Certificate III in Community Services, Cert IV in Mental Health and a Diploma of Counselling or Mental Health – fully-subsidised through our JobTrainer initiative to give students the practical skills to work in what is unfortunately a growing industry. I would urge anyone looking to retrain or upskill to take advantage of these courses. And of course a HUGE thank you to all of our Lifeline volunteers across NSW – you're all life-savers.

#### **MOLYCOP**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Manufacturers are often at the forefront of innovation, and Molycop steel mill is leading the charge for green steel by implementing Polymer Injection Technology at its Newcastle plant. The technology was developed in conjunction with the University of New South Wales, and sees hydrogen and solid carbon extracted from waste rubber, such as tyres, to make metal. This could remove dependency on coal for steel production as well as provide an avenue for the reuse of products that are discarded in their millions each year. The Green Steel initiative diverts these tyres from landfill and is another fantastic step towards sustainable manufacturing. It's wonderful to see Molycop and Newcastle leading the charge.

#### **MRS EDIE CARR**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—On my last visit to Broken Hill I had the pleasure of meeting the Senior Citizen of the Year for 2021 –Mrs Edie Carr. At 93 years of age her stamina and desire to continue helping others is remarkable. For thirty three years, Mrs Carr volunteered with Meals on Wheels, ensuring our aged citizens had daily access to a healthy, hearty meal delivered to their homes. For the last seventeen years, Mrs Carr has volunteered at an aged care residential centre, generously donating her time and skills to help her peers with daily living activities, adding that little bit of extra brightness to their lives. Mrs Carr has also been a very active sportswoman. She's played indoor bowls for fifty years, captained the Sturt Ladies Indoor Bowls Club to nineteen premierships and held leadership positions at Association and Club levels. She loves the competition and friendship that being involved in sport brings. In 2019, she was honoured with a Service to Sports Award and will continue to give back to the town that she loves.

#### **VALE PAULENE HERTSLET**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Brewarrina recently farewelled one of the town's most beloved daughter's Paulene Hertslet who passed in September aged 88. Paulene contributed enormously to the wellbeing of the Brewarrina Community, serving on council, running the hospital, and being involved in many community organisations. She first moved to Brewarrina during the 1956 flood. At the time she was a nurse and began work at the hospital. Paulene achieved much in nursing, including organising the first air ambulance evacuation from Brewarrina. She was a nurse with skill, ingenuity and integrity – able to provide expert care in the most difficult situations. She also helped found the Isolated Children's Parents Association in 1970/71 and served on state

Council. She was a shire councillor for 19 years from 1977 and she lobbied for the building of a Brewarrina community centre. In 1983, Paulene was Brewarrina's Citizen of the Year; she received an Australia Day Award in 1995 and her commitment culminated in an Order of Australia Medal in 1998 for service to the community through local government, health and aged care organisations. Paulene's contribution to the Brewarrina Community is invaluable and she will be sadly missed by all across the Western Division.

#### **HAZEL COYTE**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—I would like to recognise Hazel Coyte, who has hosted the White Elephant garage sales raising money for Cooina, a not for profit aged care facility in Coonabarabran, for more than 40 years. Mrs Coyte would donate all the funds raised to Cooina, which has gone towards items including televisions, beds, tables and chairs for residents in the home. Since the opening of the nursing home in 1979, Mrs Coyte has been volunteering, helping wherever she was needed and hosted many Christmas in July luncheons, always donating the proceeds back to Cooina. Mrs Coyte hosted the last White Elephant garage sale which raised \$800 for the facility, and has raised a total of around \$60,000 throughout the years, all going towards a great cause. I would like to thank Mrs Coyte for her generosity and dedication to supporting this great facility.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE COMMUNITY GARDEN CLUB**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Port Macquarie Community Garden and to congratulate them on their ongoing dedication to the evolving community space we fondly refer to as The Lost Plot. The Lost Plot is centrally located in Port Macquarie and was officially opened by Costa from Gardening Australia in 2014 to a crowd of over 800 people and the enthusiasm has continued to this day. The garden is managed by volunteers and is open to all ages regardless of ability. Primarily - people come to The Lost Plot to learn about growing food and to connect with like-minded people, share knowledge, skills and, most importantly have fun. All food is organically grown under permaculture principles with a range of crops grown in rotation. The hard working volunteers are seeking funding through a CBP Grant to replace six wooden garden beds, which have deteriorated over the years. These will be replaced by six mod box style wooden beds with wicking bed kits installed. I wish them every success with their application and look forward to viewing this vibrant space again soon.

#### **MIA BALES – REGIONAL FUTURE MATILDAS SCHOLARSHIP**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise rising football sensation Mia Bales from Lake Cathie for being rewarded the inaugural \$1500 Regional Future Matildas Scholarship for her standout performances on the field. Mia was one of seven gifted players recently to receive the Matildas Scholarship from Northern NSW Football for her remarkable efforts in representing Mid Coast in 2021. The 17-year-old has a long history in playing football, having joined the Lake Cathie Raiders in the Under-8s over a decade ago. From there, her passion and tenacity has shined on the footy field with Mia's sights now set on taking the next step from Mid North Coast to one day the Newcastle competition. After training in the Young Matildas camp, the talented right winger is committed to improving her skills and abilities, with firm ambitions to play for the Australian Women's National Soccer Team. The Lake Cathie Football Club is a family-orientated organisation that reaches across the Bonny Hills, Lake Cathie and the Lighthouse Beach area of Port Macquarie. They have teams comprising of Under 6's to Under 10's and Junior teams playing in the Football Mid North Coast competition. I congratulate Mia on her outstanding achievements in football.

#### **NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I rise to congratulate Hannah Stewart and Zac Morgan from Hastings Secondary College for their selection to attend the National Youth Science Forum [NYSF] - a 12-day program from 10th to 25th January 2022. It will be an amazing opportunity for Hannah and Zac to participate amongst some of the best and brightest young minds in the country while expanding their knowledge and skills on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics [STEM]. The program will consist of opportunities to explore cutting edge technology, engage with industry partners and research providers, learn more about STEM career pathways, tour science and technology facilities and network with former NYSF participants to further increase understanding of STEM-related study. Providing a pathway for Hannah and Zac to attend NYSF is the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie who has generously provided significant financial support to ensure the students are able to attend and experience this amazing opportunity in all things STEM. Rotary has always been an incredibly strong advocate for STEM education and I applaud their commitment and dedication once again to advance our student's learning in these subjects. I congratulate Hannah and Zac for being selected into NYSF 2022.



### HASTINGS VALLEY MOTORCYCLE CLUB

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club for their commitment to the sport of motorcycle racing in the Hastings Valley. I acknowledge the hard working and enthusiastic Executive Committee - President Greg Harris, Vice President Rick Gayler, Secretary Sharn Gayler, Treasurer Erica Parkes and Director for Special Events Katie Austin. Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club was founded in 1971 – celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year. Their diverse member base sits at around 250 riders ranging from 3 years of age to 60 years of age, with monthly meetings and events. The Club received exciting news recently with a successful bid to host the first qualifying round of the State Titles in February 2022. This event will bring around 500 riders plus crew and supporters, bringing upwards of 2000 people to the Hastings Valley next February. The Club is seeking funding through a CBP grant to replace three amenity blocks, repairs to the scoring tower and a purpose built learner & beginner track. It certainly sounds like Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club are in great hands and I wish them every success with their grant application.

### UGANDAN COMMUNITIES OF NSW, QLD, VIC AND ACT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—It was wonderful to join the Ugandan communities of NSW, Qld, Vic and ACT on 9 October for the 60th celebration of Ugandan independence. Uganda gained its independence from the United Kingdom on 9 October 1962 and in October 1963 Uganda became a republic but maintained its membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. The latest Census in 2016 recorded 3,373 Uganda-born people in Australia, an increase of 26.1 per cent from the 2011 Census. About one-quarter of Ugandan Australians live in NSW and many call Western Sydney home. My thanks go to NSW President Margaret Conway and Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development [GLAPD] representative Emmanuel Musoni for organising the online celebration. GLAPD recognises getting settled in a new country can be difficult so their mission is to improve the lives of migrants and refugees from Africa and beyond in Australia and help them integrate socially, culturally and economically. They are based in Merrylands, in my electorate and I extend my thanks for the work they do in Western Sydney.

### COUNCILLOR OLA HAMED

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I recognise the hard work achieved during this pandemic by Cumberland Council's Councillor for Granville Ward, Ola Hamed, on her brilliant work to address a big issue in my community. As we all know, misinformation about COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine is rampant in our community. With the two LGAs in my electorate having been LGAs of concern, this has been dangerous for members of my community already confused by endless Health updates released by the government during the pandemic. Vaccine hesitancy has been putting them and their loved ones at risk. To address this Councillor Hamed organised an information session in August about COVID-19 and vaccinations online which I was privileged to speak in. A real highlight was Epidemiologist Dr Mohamed Assoum who presented an informative presentation about the myth that COVID-19 was just like the flu, along with guest speakers Dr Dagher and Dr Aboud. Over many weeks the number of COVID-19 cases peaked at over 5000 in Cumberland. The role of community leaders and doctors within the Arabic community breaking down vaccine hesitancy has been essential to the huge reduction we have seen in COVID-19 infections in the Cumberland area. Well done Councillor Hamed.

### TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Turbans 4 Australia was founded in 2015 by Mr Amar Singh as a way to teach others about the Sikh community and faith through charity work. The practice of equality, respect, benevolence and help extended irrespective of caste and creed exemplifies the spirit of Sikh people across the globe. In 2015, Turbans 4 Australia delivered around \$3,000 worth of groceries to farmers doing it tough in Dubbo. They drove seven semi-trailers full of hay to drought-stricken farmers in Coonamble. I understand in 2020 alone they packaged 30,000 meals for people in need and over 200 volunteers assisted throughout the year. Recently, they started a hamper drive from 14 Martha Street, Clyde in my electorate. Food hampers are being distributed from a food van while they work on fitting out their new premises, where they have secured a five-year lease. They also hosted a vaccination hub at their facility to encourage everyone – including international students and temporary, visitor and refugee visa holders to get vaccinated. I have come to know Mr Singh and his volunteers personally at the Hamper Hub. I thank Turbans 4 Australia for their hard work helping our community during our time of need.

### POWELL ST FAMILY PRACTICE

**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 Powell St Family Practice in Yagoona for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Kamal Doobinnia, Dr. Sulojini Balakrishnan, Dr Wendy Sorial and Dr Olataga Alofiyae-Doorbinnia for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Powell St Family Practice on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **BANKSTOWN FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE**

**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 Family Medical Practice in Bankstown for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Julian Chan, Dr Caroline Davidson and Ms Madelene Kamvounias for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Bankstown Family Medical Practice on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **ROCHESTER'S PHARMACY**

**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 Rochester's Pharmacy in Villawood for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Mr John Vu and Ms Jenny Nguyen for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend Rochester's Pharmacy on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **YAGOONA FAMILY HEALTHCARE**

**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 Family HealthCare in Yagoona for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Intisar Abdelgayoom, Dr Lina Aljumha and Dr Mouter Tommalieh, for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney is well on its way to a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend Yagoona Family HealthCare on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **DR KAREN DOUGLAS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate Dr Karen Douglas, who works across both Terrigal and Avoca Beach Medical Centres, for being recognised as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' 2021 NSW/ACT GP of the year. The RACGP celebrates extraordinary GPs across the country with their annual awards, and Dr Douglas really is extraordinary! Four generations of people on the Central Coast have benefited from Dr Douglas' high level of care and expertise throughout her 31 year medical career. Dr Douglas is a household name throughout my electorate of Terrigal. Over her three decades of work she has been particularly passionate about general practice access for all Australians, especially women, children, First Nations people and other vulnerable groups. I wish Dr Douglas the best of luck for the upcoming National GP of the year awards. I would like to extend a big thank you to Dr Karen Douglas and all of the dedicated health professionals across the Central Coast for their work in what has been an incredibly challenging two years.

#### **JACKIE SPROLL, NORTH AVOCA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Jackie Sproll who has been an integral member of North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club for almost three decades. Jackie first joined the Club in 1992 and over this time some of her standout achievements have included winning patrol person of the year in 2008/09, and managing the Club's largest age group, the U8s, as a 14 year old cadet in 1993/94! Jackie

also has the incredible legacy of being North Avoca's first ever female Patrol captain. Congratulations, Mister Speaker, in her current role as Director of Administration, I have been told that Jackie is making outstanding contributions to the Management Committee and in 2020 oversaw integral changes for the Club. This included moving the Club to online Registration, a new Website, finalising rollout of the Club's POS system and improving succession planning for key roles. The nearly three decades of membership have led to Jackie being nominated for life membership. Congratulations Jackie and thank you on behalf of the Central Coast community for your tireless work in supporting North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club and keeping North Avoca Beach safe.

#### **BEN BRADLEY, 2021 CENTRAL COAST VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**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. The recipient of the Club Volunteer Award went to Davistown RSL's Club Manager Ben Bradley. Ben is well known in the community and has participated in local events such as this year's Central Coast Cancer Council Dancing with the stars event where he raised \$33,000 for support services for cancer patients and their families. Ben has also supported communities groups such as Coast Shelter for their executive sleep out. I would like to thank all of the Central Coast Volunteers of the Year for their fantastic contribution to the local community.

#### **AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK, 2021 CENTRAL COAST BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to extend a huge congratulations to the entire team at The Australian Reptile Park, which was honoured with the "Excellence in Business" award at the annual 2021 Central Coast Business Awards. The Australian Reptile Park based in Somersby is an outstanding tourism business and even contribute to the health of our wider community through an anti-venom program. Mister Speaker I would also like to congratulate Industree Group who produce a range of PPE & safety products and were highly commended in the same category. The Central Coast Business Awards cover 10 different categories to recognise the ingenuity, strength and resilience of businesses in our region. Congratulations to all the finalists and I wish the best of luck to the Australian Reptile Park who will represent the region in the upcoming State Business Awards. This year the awards were run virtually to ensure the safety of everyone in our community and I want to acknowledge the work of Paula Martin, the regional director, and her team in recognising the outstanding contributions of many local businesses.

#### **BLUE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2021**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—The Blue Fringe Art and Literature Festival celebrates the creativity of people with a lived experience of mental illness - aiming to raise awareness and create positive conversations about mental illness and the benefits of creativity for mental well-being and resilience. "Blue Fringe is an opportunity to be heard, to be seen. It opens up conversations. It brings mental illness out of the darkness and into the light." That such incredible works of art and literature have been brought to life in such challenging circumstances is a real testament to the Blue Fringe Committee. Thanks to the Organising Committee for Blue Fringe - workers from Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, Belong Blue Mountains, Stride Mental Health and Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre and a very committed and passionate team of wonderful volunteers. Expressing pressures through art and literature is critical to well-being, particularly this year. It is a delight to announce this year's winners are both youth entrants. The Winner in the Participants Choice in Art – is Belle Balandin de Chalain for 'His Garden' and the Winner in the Participants choice in Literature – is Tehya Holmes for 'The Hearts Arrow'. Congratulations to everyone!

#### **GLENBROOK COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION – EVENING BRANCH**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—Earlier this year I had the pleasure of attending the Glenbrook Evening Branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) to join them in preparing Mother's Day pamper packs. The packs were for clients of Gateway Family Services in Blaxland. The lovely Heather Gwilliam and Alison Smith from Gateway Family Services also attended to assist with packing the boxes and they provided CWA members with an overview of the services they provide for clients. More than 90 boxes were filled with items such as soaps, creams, makeup, perfumes and hair products, which were kindly donated by CWA members and some of the local chemists. I would like to acknowledge these fabulous CWA members: Fiona Webster, Gail Moran, Gina Rickard, Jennifer Navin, Kate McDonald, Kathy Dwyer, Kerry Hogan, Kym McKinnon, Leanne Talbot, Cathy Drury, Rebecca Baker, Sandra Tarbey, Sue Cox, Karen Schulze and Julie Grazotis. Since then I have been advised that the Glenbrook CWA – Evening Branch has made a donation of \$300 to Gateway Family Services, Blaxland to assist them in caring for families impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown. Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved in these efforts of care and compassion.

**BOB LITTLE**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Bob Little of Maclean who after what must seem as a lifetime of operating his business in Maclean, has decided it is time to retire. Bob, and his wife Judith, have prided themselves on providing excellent service to the people of Maclean and to supporting their local community with many donations and sponsorships. Bob and Judith have been responsible for training hundreds of young people and providing them with a whole range of jobs during the time they have been in business. Bob and Judith have been an integral part of the Lower Clarence community and will be sorely missed. I wish them a long, healthy and happy retirement.

**RETAINED FIRE FIGHTER JASON ROBERTSON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Retained Fire Fighter Jason Robertson of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson who has been presented the National Medal. Jason was awarded the Medal to recognise his 15 years of service with Fire and Rescue. During his service as a retained fire fighter, Jason has served at several stations including Doyalson, Wyong and Kariong. Jason's service to these communities demonstrates that he is highly committed to safeguarding the health and safety of local community members. Being awarded the National Medal for 15 years of service with Fire and Rescue is an achievement that Jason should be truly proud of. This accomplishment shows that he is a hard working individual who cares about the wellbeing of others. I congratulate Retained Fire Fighter Jason Robertson of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson on his achievement and thank him for all the work he has done to make sure that the people of Swansea are protected from fire dangers.

**RETAINED FIRE FIGHTER ADRIAN HALTON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Retained Fire Fighter Adrian Halton of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson who was recently presented the 10 Year Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Adrian is a devoted member of the brigade who always does their best to protect the people of Swansea against potential fire threats and hazards. Adrian has shown this by participating in the brigade's quests to extinguish fires across the local area, especially bushfires during the summer period. By being involved in these events, Adrian has demonstrated that he is committed to making sure the health and safety of the local community is protected. Being awarded the 10 Year Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is a testament to Adrian's efforts and service as a fire fighter, which demonstrates that he cares about the people of Swansea. I congratulate Retained Fire Fighter Adrian Halton of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson on his achievement and thank him for his continuous efforts to look after the Swansea community.

**DEPUTY CAPTAIN STEPHEN DAY**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Deputy Captain Stephen Day of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson who has been awarded the 10 Year Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Deputy Captain Day is a highly committed member of the brigade who consistently does their best to ensure that the health and safety of the people of Swansea is not jeopardised by fire hazards. Deputy Captain Day has been involved in many of the brigade's quests to stop fires across the local area. In particular, he has been heavily involved in putting out bushfires in the warmer months. Being awarded the 10 Year Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is a tremendous achievement that recognises Deputy Captain Day's aspirations to constantly ensure that the people of Swansea remain protected from fires. I congratulate Deputy Captain Stephen Day of Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson on his achievement and thank him for his ongoing service and efforts in looking after the local community.

**FIRE & RESCUE STATION 292 DOYALSON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson who recently celebrated their 20th Anniversary of official opening in August. Station 292 Doyalson has played a vital role in protecting the people of Swansea against fire dangers over this time. As Doyalson and neighbouring suburbs are surrounded by trees and bushlands, one of the ways members of the brigade protect the local community is preventing and extinguishing bushfires during the summer months. The station's captain, Steve Tichonczuk is the only remaining founding member and has been a key figure and role model at the station since it opened. The efforts of Captain Tichonczuk and past and present members of the brigade have not gone unnoticed. Local community members constantly inform me of the great work they do in upholding the health and safety of the local community. I congratulate Fire and Rescue Station 292 Doyalson on their 20th Anniversary and wish them all the best with protecting the local community from fire hazards in the future.

### **SARA LEE FACTORY – LISAROW**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I rise to acknowledge and celebrate the 50th Birthday of Sara Lee factory in Lisarow. The Sara Lee factory celebrates over 50 years of production in Lisarow this year, opening on the Central Coast back in 1971. In 1971, the factory was opened on a citrus orchard, far removed from the booming industrial complex that sits there today. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to Sara Lee at Lisarow for the many years spent serving the Central Coast community, and providing us with delicious baked goods that have stood the test of time. Thank you.

### **PELICANS**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I rise to acknowledge the iconic pelican colony at The Entrance waterfront who have entertained and educated us on a daily basis for over 30 years now with their scheduled feeding time antics. Tourists both far and wide have been in awe of these large water birds who start gathering at the waterfront from mid-afternoon, rain, hail or shine for the dedicated volunteers with their small buckets of fish to appear at 3:30 pm. This small amount of feed does not impact the pelican's ability to fend for themselves as this ritual all started by staff at a local fish shop who fed them scraps at the end of the day. Council made the unfortunate decision to cancel the Pelican Feed due to the pandemic. I encourage Council to resume this popular attraction and hope that the pelican colony have remained loyal to us during these unprecedented times.

### **WOOLWORTHS – BATEAU BAY SQUARE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I rise to acknowledge and congratulate Woolworths on their efforts in maintaining the cleanliness and improving the presentation of Bateau Bay Square and its surrounds. It remains the responsibility of retailers to collect abandoned trolleys. In response to my representations, on 24 March 2021 Woolworths advised that they had removed all but 2 of their trolleys from the bushland area. Woolworths continue to be responsive when community members report abandoned trolleys, working to ensure the bushland and Bateau Bay area remain clean through their trolley tracker program. I would like to personally thank the Woolworths trolley collection team for offering such a great standard of proficiency and thoroughness, setting the bar high for their competitors, like Coles, to follow suit. Thank you.

### **JUDY TOWNSEND**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I rise to acknowledge and congratulate Judy Townsend on her hard work and dedication to the Bateau Bay area. Judy Townsend recently undertook the mammoth task of creating a safe, environmentally friendly bush path for people to walk between Shelly Beach and the recently upgraded Coastal Track to Crackneck Lookout. Ms Townsend coordinated the project with Council and bush care groups which saw local residents banding together for working bee's to remove noxious weeds and rubbish. A fantastic walkway has been established which ensures safe access for people who now no longer need to navigate the busy roads when completing the Coast Track. On behalf of our community, I would like to personally thank Judy Townsend for her passion and efforts to improve our local area. Thank you.

### **MARRICKVILLE WOMEN'S REFUGE ABORIGINAL WOMEN & CHILDREN'S CRISIS SERVICE.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)**—I was recently afforded the privilege of seeing firsthand the significant work of the Marrickville Women's Refuge Aboriginal Women & Children's Crisis Service in Tempe. To many, their unassuming building is just another turn-of-the-century terrace house. However, to the countless women and children, many of whom identify as First Nations Australians, the Service has been a sanctuary allowing them to escape domestic violence and rebuild their lives. The facility itself has seen better days. However, this does not stop the Centre's dedicated team providing pathways out of violence and poverty to the women and children who walk through its doors. I thank their Manager, Tracey Robinson, and her passionate team for the tremendous work they provide, not just for Inner West residents but for First Nations Australians in need throughout NSW.

### **ST CATHERINE GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)**—I wish to thank Father Athansios 'Arthur' Giatsos, for taking the time to share with me the response of St Catherine Greek Orthodox Church to the COVID-19 Greater Sydney Lockdown. St Catherine's virtual masses have provided a sense of regularity throughout the recent lockdown to worshippers who would otherwise miss out on receiving Christian sacraments. The Parish also conducted outreach to vulnerable members of their congregation, many of whom are elderly and speak limited English. In these ways, Fr Arthur and his team have helped ease the damaging isolation that came from such a close-knit community abruptly being unable to leave their homes. Under his leadership, Fr Arthur also affords young parishioners' paths to express their faith through youth Ministries. I am inspired by the perseverance and passion Father 'Arthur' undertakes his Christian vocation to serve my local Greek Orthodox community; not only in Word but also through his actions.

### **EASTERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)**—Like many community organisations, the Eastern Suburbs Football Association [‘ESFA’], has taken a severe hit during the COVID-19 pandemic and our state’s multiple lockdowns. Led by president, Nigel Singh, the ESFA have taken proactive steps to return over \$140,000 back to local football clubs. Many local sporting clubs rely heavily on their volunteers and members’ fees so that residents, young and old, can participate in club sports. Local sporting clubs are the breeding ground for future Australian sports stars including future Socceroos. The return of funds made by the ESFA will help local clubs navigate their way out of the lockdowns. While the COVID-19 pandemic may have put a premature end to this year’s season, at least the decision of the ESFA to return funds will be of some assistance to clubs, many of whom will be in a much better position for next year’s football season.

### **NORTHERN RIVERS 2021 NSW VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It was fantastic to attend the Northern Rivers virtual ceremony for the 2021 NSW Volunteer of the Year awards and see so many familiar faces. We couldn’t get together at the Lismore Workers Club like usual, but we zoomed in to say thank you online. Congratulations to the award winners, Dr Ian Tiley who has supported and empowered Aboriginal communities across three states through Communities First Development; Mark Wilson whose work in growing the Friends of the Koala Inc nursery has given this iconic local species a fighting chance at survival; President Helen Hamilton and the volunteer Management Committee of the Byron Bay Community Centre. Thank you to all the nominees and the Centre for Volunteering for organising the awards. I wish the Northern Rivers finalists well as they progress to the State Gala at the end of the year. I also would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues who participated, the Minister for Families Community, Disability Services, Alister Henskens MP – who gave an inspiring video address, Federal Member for Page, Kevin Hogan MP, and local government representatives Ballina Shire Mayor, Cr David Wright and Tweed Shire Mayor, Cr Chris Cherry.

### **MURWILLUMBAH COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to acknowledge on the parliamentary record the incredible work of the volunteers at the Murwillumbah Community Garden. This year, despite the ups and downs of COVID-19 the community garden has gone from strength to strength and is a hub of activity in Murwillumbah. The garden holds many events which are stand outs on the Murwillumbah calendar. These include the annual Australia Day planting event – sponsored by Tweed Shire Council and the recent special workshop "Insects and Organic Gardening" presented by David and Bronwyn Hancox. This workshop was made possible by a \$726 donation from IGA Tweed Valley. Workshops throughout the year are also sponsored by ITV who have given over \$2500 for education workshops to be run at the community garden. Another great initiative of the community garden is their composting program. Next door neighbours Mt. Saint Patrick College have been working with the community garden to compost their green waste. Initially starting with one class, now every class in the school composts their green waste in the community garden. What a wonderful initiative. I wish the executive President Pam O’Connor, Secretary Cynthia Vanderbook and Treasurer Barry Firth and the entire team well going forward.

### **MCGRATH FOUNDATION BREAST CANCER NURSES**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Mr Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and is a great opportunity in parliament to honour and thank our wonderful breast cancer care nurses that service the communities of the Lismore Electorate. Funded by the McGrath Foundation our local breast cancer nurses provide physical, psychological and emotional support to breast cancer patients and their families. The service is free and is accessible without a doctor’s referral. I want to acknowledge Sonia Byrne, Karen Hennings, Tammica Arnett and Monica Hogan from the Lismore Community Health Service. Jane Kelly at Tweed Hospital, Rachel Stevens at Armidale Hospital and Catherine Brophy at Grafton Hospital. All these incredible nurses work out of these regional centres and serve communities across the Lismore Electorate. Helping families get through the toughest of times. The McGrath Foundation says that the Lismore nurses have provided vital care and support to over 481 local families in their careers as breast cancer nurses. When you include the Tweed Valley, Clarence Valley, New England and Northern Tablelands region this number grows. I thank these nurses for their tireless work in our community. I encourage all members to thank their local nurses this Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

### **LISMORE ART CLUB – 61 YEARS STRONG**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—The Lismore Art Club held their birthday exhibition 'Celebrating 61 Years' at the Serpentine Community Gallery North Lismore recently. It was open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and Saturdays 10am to 2pm. Admission was free which allowed many locals to attend. I am so pleased that our recent lockdowns ended just in time for the exhibition to go ahead. It is great our community can celebrate such a wonderful event after going through a difficult time with COVID lockdowns. Local artists such as Margaret

E Brown, Meg Neilsen, Corole Sheppard, Linnea Hannan and Christine Miller were featured in the exhibition. Congratulations to the winner of the Northern Rivers Financial Advice award Margaret Brown with her piece 'Emily Gap' and Janet Hassal with 'Welcome an Inland Sea'. Christine Miller took out the People's Choice Award with her piece "Cherry-ish Every Moment" – sponsored by Sheila Turner Picture Framing. Thank you to the Lismore Art Club Executive - President Meg Nielsen, Secretary Linnea Hannan, Treasurer Kay McCheyne and Assistant Secretary/Webmaster Roger Jones for their incredible efforts with the exhibition and running the club. I look forward to the next 61 years of the Lismore Art Club.

#### **AMBER WHIPPLE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate Byron Bay Lifeguard Amber Whipple, for her years of service and dedication, winning the coveted title of "Lifeguard of the Year" at the 2021 Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence. Amber has been patrolling our beaches on the Far North Coast for six years. Moving to the region from Victoria, she brought with her a love of the ocean and passion for competing as a young Nipper. With a dream of becoming a paid lifeguard, Amber has fulfilled this personal goal, and become a leader and role model for young girls in the field, showing what is achievable in what has traditionally been a male dominated arena. With easing Covid-19 restrictions across the state but international travel limited, beaches on the NSW coastline are expecting big numbers over summer. With the North Coast region leading the way in the development and participation of girls and women in lifesaving, this summer will see an even split of male and female lifeguards patrol the Far North Coast Branch beaches for the first time. It gives me great confidence to know our beach goers are being protected by lifeguards of Amber's calibre.

#### **BALLINA COAST HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate staff and students from Ballina Coast High School for their commitment to the environment and the pro-active approach they have taken in working towards a greener future. In celebration of Landcare's 30th anniversary thirty students from Years 7-10, under the guidance of teacher librarian Andrew Playford, planted a variety of coastal trees donated by Ballina Shire Council, in Kingsford Smith Park. Landcare has played a huge role in changing Australia's approach to sustainable agricultural practices and environmental protection since its inception three decades ago; an ethos which has been shared with countless students during the 20-year relationship that Ballina Coast High school has with Landcare's local chapter. Using projects like this, and a hands-on, collaborative method to deliver curriculum has allowed student learning to go beyond the textbook. Mr Playford said that students are developing respect for the environment, have taken an active role in promoting messages of sustainability within the community, and that these experiences are contributing to a lasting benefit for the local environment. It is with great enthusiasm that I celebrate these budding eco-warriors and applaud the positive contributions they are making to their local environment.

#### **BEN ROCHE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge local sporting hero and role model Ben Roche, for his dedication and determination in raising awareness about Cerebral Palsy. Representing Australia 54 times over 17 years is a remarkable achievement, however the Pararoos captain's success goes beyond the sporting field. Ben was born with Cerebral Palsy, however from a very young age his parents supported him to reach for his goals without limits. Ben didn't let the challenges of his Cerebral Palsy get in the way of pursuing his dreams, and instead attributes overcoming obstacles as key to building his resiliency. In celebration and honour of World Cerebral Palsy Day, Ben recently participated in the Pararoos Undefeated Challenge, running 117 kilometres in the space of four days on various routes through Byron Shire. Ben achieved this goal by covering 6.5 kilometres every four hours, four days in a row, and all monies raised are going towards the Pararoos bid to compete in the 2022 World Cup in Spain. I applaud Ben for his tenacity, courage and determination, and we are privileged to have such an inspiring role model in our community.

#### **LENNOX HEAD EVENING VIEW CLUB**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate the Lennox Head Evening View Club on their 9 year anniversary celebration. The club is comprised of 70 members, and has supported our community by raising much needed funds to educate disadvantaged children. Through fundraising activities and social events in local communities, members raise money that goes directly to The Smith Family's learning and mentoring program. Their umbrella organisation, VIEW Club provides a voice, a sense of connectedness, and education for women in the community. The club empowers women to have their voices heard on issues of importance for the future wellbeing of Australian society, and supports members to find fun and friendship. Currently the Club sponsors two Smith Family, Learning for Life students and has recently taken part in the Winter Appeal that aimed at raising \$5.1 million by 30 June 2021. The activities of Lennox Head Evening View Club, and the Lennox Head View Club make a huge, positive impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged Australian Students. I applaud

the work of VIEW clubs in the Ballina electorate and specifically congratulate the Lennox Head Evening View club for reaching this milestone.

#### **VALE MAX WEBB**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—If you want to know the meaning of stalwart within a community, then you need only to turn to Max Webb. The Walbundrie community will remember Max for giving so much - putting his time and support behind the Football Club, fire brigade, tennis, cricket, and various other local committees. He was involved with the Walbundrie Show for more than 50 years, and its president for 23 of them. Max was born in Albury, went to school in Walbundrie and then onto St Paul's College at Walla Walla. He left school at 14 to work on the family farm. He met Carol his wife at a dance and they married in 1966 having two children Sandra and Chris. Max knew farming as less of a job than a way of life. Today we celebrate his life and work in our community. My heart goes out to Max's wife Carol, and the Webb family. Max Webb will be remembered for his service to the Walbundrie community, for his passion for farming and his dedication to his family. He will be missed. Vale Max Webb.

#### **AUBURN SWIMMING CLUB PARALYMPIANS**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn)**—I'd like to congratulate Ricky Betar, Tim Hodge and coach Clinton Camilleri from Auburn Swimming Club for their fantastic performances at the Tokyo Paralympics. Competing in the S14 classification, Ricky swam in freestyle, butterfly and backstroke events, making the final of the 200m freestyle and 100m butterfly, before taking home silver swimming the first leg in the mixed 4x100m freestyle relay. He's also achieved this whilst still preparing for his HSC exams. Tim, in his second Paralympics in the S9 classification, is also a multi-discipline star. He made the final in the 100m butterfly, finishing 5th, whilst claiming a bronze medal in the 100m backstroke and a silver medal in the 200m individual medley. He then backed up with silver in the 4x100m medley relay swimming the opening backstroke leg. Coach Clinton Camilleri was a vital part of the Australian Dolphins program in Tokyo who brought home eight gold medals, 10 silver medals and 15 bronze, including being coach/manager of Tim's 4x100m medley relay team. On behalf of the Auburn electorate, congratulations to Ricky, Tim, Clinton & the Auburn Swimming Club on a fantastic Tokyo Paralympics. You've done our community proud.

#### **ST IVES CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—I am pleased that a new Cultural and Environmental Education Centre is being planned by Ku-ring-gai Council near St Ives Showground, in my electorate of Davidson. The centre will provide a space for community workshops, seminars, functions and other events, as well as provide a focus for research and the protection of Ku-ring-gai's indigenous heritage. Importantly, Ku-ring-gai Council will liaise with indigenous consultants with knowledge of the local area to assist in delivering the project, and the centre will also reflect sustainable design principles. The project is part of a major upgrade in the area to encourage visitors and greater recreational use. I commend Ku-ring-gai Council and all involved in delivering this valuable project that will greatly benefit my local and the broader community.

#### **DAVIDSON VACCINATION RATES**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—I acknowledge the members of my local community for their great compliance and cooperation in response to vaccination targets, which has enabled my electorate of Davidson to hit high vaccination rates. On 20 October, the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area, covering a significant area in my electorate of Davidson, hit 93.6 per cent fully vaccinated and over 95 per cent who had received the first dose. The Northern Beaches Local Government Area, also covering a large area of my electorate, hit 82 per cent fully vaccinated and 93.9 per cent who had received the first dose. Finally, the Willoughby Local Government Area, covering the smallest area in my electorate, hit 87.2 per cent fully vaccinated and 94.8 per cent who had received the first dose. I thank my local community for their compliance and cooperation in hitting vaccination targets which has enabled the NSW Government to ease restrictions.

**The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 19:38 until  
9 November 2021 at 12:00.**