



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 18 November 2021**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 18 November 2021

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

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

## *Bills*

### COMPANION ANIMALS AMENDMENT (REHOMING ANIMALS) BILL 2021

#### First Reading

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

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Emma Hurst, MLC, advising that the member for Sydney will have carriage of the bill in this House. I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for a later time.

### ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

#### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

*Schedule of the amendments referred to in the Legislative Council's message of 21 October 2021*

#### No. 1 GRN No. 1 [c2021-113C]

Page 8, Schedule 1[28], proposed section 192A. Insert after line 29—

#### 192A Regulations relating to community-scale batteries

- (1) The regulations may provide for the construction and use of community-scale batteries, including provisions that deal with the following—
  - (a) authorising and facilitating the ownership and operation of community-scale batteries, or classes of community batteries, by specified persons,  
**Example**—Regulations could authorise and facilitate the ownership and operation of community-scale batteries by the following—
    - (a) local councils,
    - (b) distribution network service providers,
    - (c) incorporated associations,
    - (d) co-operatives.
  - (b) regulating service tariffs for energy flows between connection points where a community-scale battery scheme operates,
  - (c) exempting community-scale batteries from fees, charges or tariffs under this or any other Act,
  - (d) ensuring community-scale batteries do not compromise the energy security and reliability of the distribution and transmission systems.
- (2) The regulations may modify the application of, or disapply, a provision of the *National Electricity (NSW) Law* or the *National Electricity Rules* to the extent reasonably necessary to give effect to regulations made under subsection (1).
- (3) In this section, **community-scale battery** is a battery or series of inter-connected batteries with a storage capacity not exceeding 30 megawatts.

#### No. 2 OPP No. 1 [c2021-111G]

Page 35, Schedule 3[2]. Insert after line 12—

- (1B) An action by the Corporation under subsection (1A) must—
  - (a) be consistent with the obligations of the Corporation under a sustainable forest management certification scheme, including the following—
    - (i) restrictions on converting forested land to non-forest uses,
    - (ii) requirements to support local communities and timber processors with sustainable yield of forest products in the short, medium, and long term, and



- (b) not result in premature harvesting of timber or the net loss of timber or land available for forestry operations.
- (1C) The Corporation must ensure that any land used for forestry operations in substitution for land used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure—
  - (a) is a similar distance from local timber processors as the land for which it is substituted, and
  - (b) is of the same or greater productive capacity, and
  - (c) has the same or greater average annual rainfall.

No. 3 **OPP No. 2 [c2021-111G]**

Page 35, Schedule 3[3]. Insert after line 22—

- (1A) The land manager of a forestry area must not issue a permit under subsection (1)(b) unless the land manager is satisfied that issuing the permit—
  - (a) is consistent with the obligations of the land manager under a sustainable forest management certification scheme, including the following—
    - (i) restrictions on converting forested land to non-forest uses,
    - (ii) requirements to support local communities and timber processors with sustainable yield of forest products in the short, medium, and long term, and
  - (b) will not result in premature harvesting of timber or the net loss of timber or land available for forestry operations.
- (1B) The land manager of a forestry area must not issue a permit under subsection (1)(b) unless land used for forestry operations in substitution for the land subject to the permit—
  - (a) is a similar distance from local timber processors as the land for which it is substituted, and
  - (b) is of the same or greater productive capacity, and
  - (c) has the same or greater average annual rainfall.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (09:32):**

I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 2 be agreed to with the following amendments:

Omit proposed subsection (1B)(b). Insert instead—

- (b) not result in premature harvesting of timber that causes the Corporation to fail to meet a supply commitment to a local timber processor under a timber supply agreement, and
- (c) not result in more than 0.7% of forestry areas currently used for forestry operations with trees of exotic coniferous species being used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure, and
- (d) not result in a net loss of timber available for forestry operations, and
- (e) result in a net gain of land available for forestry operations.

Insert after proposed subsection (1C)(a)—

- (a1) has an area at least twice as large as the area used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure, and

The Government will move to amend the two Opposition amendments to the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The Opposition amendments introduced in the Legislative Council seek to amend the reforms relating to the removal of barriers to enable renewable energy projects in Forestry Corporation softwood plantations. Specifically, the Legislative Council's amendments include introducing a harvesting range of safeguards on timber supply. The Opposition amendments are supported by the Government, subject to an amendment to refine its restriction. The Government supports the intent of the Legislative Council amendments, which are designed to ensure timber supply is maintained.

However, the challenge with the current drafting, where the development must not result in premature harvesting of timber, is that there are trees of all different ages in areas that are suitable for renewable energy developments. It would be very hard to determine and ensure that all trees that are harvested to accommodate a renewable energy development are mature. The amendment as it currently is would effectively prevent any

renewable energy developments from happening. The Government is seeking to clarify this amendment by ensuring that premature harvesting does not cause the Forestry Corporation to fail to meet a supply commitment to a local timber processor under a timber supply agreement. The amendments proposed by the Government in this House will achieve the intent of the original amendments, whilst still supporting the New South Wales Government's goal of delivering cheap, sustainable power and benefiting the economic development of regional communities.

I stress that the change retains the Opposition's Legislative Council amendments to require that there would not be a net loss of timber or land available for forestry operations. The Government is seeking to strengthen the amendment by requiring any land used for renewable energy projects to be replaced with at least twice the area for forestry operations. In essence, the amendments ensure that the softwood plantation estate grows as a result of any renewable energy projects that are developed. In addition, we are also ensuring that no more than 0.7 per cent of Forestry Corporation softwood plantations can be used for renewable energy developments. Encouraging more renewable energy generation within New South Wales would support the Government's commitment to reduce emissions, whilst creating jobs and growing the economy.

Over the past 20 years Canada, Germany, Sweden, Wales, Scotland and Ireland have developed operational wind farms on their forest estates. Within Australia, proposals for forest wind farms within plantations are well progressed in Victoria and Queensland. The New South Wales Government has consulted with industry stakeholders to develop new drafting that would balance the need to safeguard timber supplies and forestry jobs with the need to have a framework that is practical to implement. Overall, these amendments ensure that the legislation will achieve its original policy intent, which is to unlock opportunities for the development of infrastructure for the generation and storage of energy from renewable sources within Forestry Corporation softwood plantations.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (09:36):** By leave: I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of legislative Council amendment No. 2:

Insert after proposed subsection (1C)(c)—

(1D) The Corporation will remain a State-owned corporation that must act in accordance with the objectives of the Act.

By way of background for the House, schedule 3 of the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill will amend the Forestry Act 2012 to enable the development of infrastructure for the generation and storage of energy from renewable sources that are located near available transmission assets within State forests' softwood plantations. I have received advice from several forestry industry stakeholders that has raised concerns regarding the potential loss of forest plantation areas due to the installation of the anticipated renewable energy infrastructure. I note that was the purpose for which the Labor Party sought amendments in the upper House, which were supported by all parties, including the Government.

The preservation of current timber harvesting volumes is a very important issue, particularly in the light of the current timber shortage, which has been exacerbated by the recent boom in home constructions. At the time I did foreshadow that I would move those amendments. Labor moved amendments Nos 2 and 3 in the upper House in order to protect New South Wales softwood timber plantations from the premature harvesting of young trees to accommodate hard renewable energy infrastructure, such as generators and wind turbines. While Labor wholeheartedly supports the production of renewable energy, Labor forced a change to the Government's legislation in order to protect struggling timber workers and jobs from the threat of renewable energy infrastructure being built on current timber plantation areas that provide vital timber supply for timber mills and workers.

Put simply, NSW Labor, supported by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, The Greens, One Nation and the Independents, forced the Government to change this legislation in order to protect the crucial timber industry jobs and the future of our regional communities. While Labor is fully supportive of renewable energy, the purpose of our amendments in the other place was simply to ensure the continued growth and supply of softwood timber upon which both consumers and workers rely so desperately, particularly in the midst of the current timber shortage. It is important to remember in relation to the amendments to the Forestry Act that none of the stakeholders was consulted prior to this legislation being introduced to the Legislative Assembly. The Treasurer took it upon himself to become involved in consultation only after the amendments were passed in the Legislative Council. It was only then that we were notified by a series of stakeholders that the Government finally had consulted with them. In fact, it led to hundreds and hundreds of workers signing a petition over their concerns with the proposed changes to the Forestry Act.

Another area of concern I raise is that no sites are nominated for the positioning of the energy infrastructure, which means that the changes we are making to the Act will impact softwood plantations across this State. It is important to remember that. I put to the Treasurer, or the energy Minister—whichever hat he has on today—that,

as I understand it, the Forestry Corporation of NSW was prepared to make those specific locations public and provide them in the bill but that that was refused by the Minister. That is what we have heard. I seek clarification as to whether that is correct.

I turn to the Government amendments that have been moved today. I note that this is the third set of amendments to the bill. The Government went to the Legislative Council with one set of amendments and then amended those amendments after they were passed in the Legislative Council. Now we have before the House another amendment to that amendment. We are dealing with a host of amendments. This Government cannot make up its mind on how to manage this renewable energy infrastructure in State forests. One of the proposed amendments seeks to insert the provision that an action by the corporation must not result in premature harvesting of timber that would cause the corporation to fail to meet a supply commitment to a local timber processor under a timber supply agreement. While the Opposition supports this amendment, we still have concerns that by removing Labor's unrestricted protection of timber from premature harvesting, the Government is sacrificing the growth and supply of the State's timber resources for the benefit of the Forestry Corporation and the commercial energy industry. The second Government amendment I wish to comment on states that an action by the corporation under proposed section 59 (1) (1A) must:

- (c) not result in more than 0.7% of forestry areas currently used for forestry operations with trees of exotic coniferous species being used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure

While the Opposition also supports this amendment, I make it clear to the House that 0.7 per cent of the relevant forestry areas is 1,600 hectares of land that could be made available to hard energy infrastructure for the benefit of the commercial energy industry. Again, the Government is refusing to advise where those 1,600 hectares are across this State. We do not know why it is refusing to make this public. I also raise concerns over what I believe is a conflict for the Treasurer. Again I ask, what hat is he wearing in this Parliament today? As Treasurer, he is the 50 per cent shareholder of the Forestry Corporation, yet he is also the Minister for Energy and Environment. As shareholder Minister for Forestry Corp, the Treasurer is obligated to make decisions in the best interest of the corporation. That explains why he is opening up the New South Wales timber plantations to the commercial energy industry. But that is in direct conflict with his obligation as the energy and environment Minister to protect the State-owned timber estate. All of this begs the question: Why is the Forestry Corporation so eager to assist the Government with its provision of renewable energy infrastructure? Why is the Government so eager to assist the Forestry Corporation in entering into the energy provision business? The Forestry Corporation's own website states that its purpose is to:

... manage more than two million hectares of State forests, including NSW's largest renewable timber production and plantation estate ...

Members must ask why the Government is moving these amendments today. We know that the Government had the Forestry Corporation on the auction block in December 2019. The bushfires then tore through the forestry estate and almost 30 per cent was damaged. Of course, in February 2020 the Government then announced that it was no longer looking for buyers, given the fires had burnt so many trees that private profiteers were no longer interested. This Government is preparing for another fire sale of a public asset in Forestry Corporation. Labor supports action on climate change. Labor supports renewable energy and sustainable plantation timber supply and is seeking to protect Forestry Corporation from any future privatisation. That is why I have moved my amendment to the Minister's amendment. I expect the Government to support my amendment.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (09:45):** I support the Minister's amendments to the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. As members have already heard, amendments were introduced during debate on this bill in the other place. Some of the discussion involved whether or not the reforms would enable appropriately removing the barriers that will enable renewable energy projects in Forestry Corporation's softwood plantations. I have spoken on this issue in this place before. Increasing our renewable energy opportunities, including on Forestry Corporation land, is obviously a goal that the Government supports. The amendments that were moved in the Legislative Council looked at introducing a range of safeguards around harvesting timber supply. The Government supports the premise of the Opposition's amendments in the Legislative Council; however, it has had to refine this restriction.

I note that the Minister has already spoken to this matter. While the intent of what the Opposition put forward in the Legislative Council is supported in essence by the Government, we want to make sure that we design this legislation to ensure that timber supply is maintained. With the current drafting, there is a definitional issue around the maturity of these plantations. We ask for clarification from the Opposition as to how it would determine the maturity levels that exist within these trees throughout the plantations, and how would it accommodate renewable energy development with that understanding of the maturity levels of the different trees? The amendment as currently proposed by the Legislative Council could, in effect, prevent any renewable energy developments from happening.

The member for Bankstown said that the Opposition supports addressing climate change and renewable energy, and I recognise that. It is a goal we are uniform on in this place. I acknowledge the member's contributions on that issue. Of course, the Government wants to work towards that goal as well. However, we believe that the amendment as currently proposed by the Legislative Council would risk preventing those renewable energy developments from occurring. The Minister has sought that clarification and is working through understanding whether or not this amendment would impact the Forestry Corporation's ability to meet its supply commitments for local timber processing. Obviously the Government continues to have the goal of delivering sustainable, cheap renewable power while benefitting the economic development of our regional communities.

What the Government has proposed will ensure that any land that would be used for renewable energy projects on Forestry Corporation land would in fact be replaced with at least twice the area for forestry operations. In essence, these amendments would ensure that the softwood plantation estate would actually grow over time by introducing renewable energy projects. Not only do we have the win of seeing new renewable energy projects installed in these locations, but we would actually see an increase in the softwood plantation estate during that time. The Government also has limitations on the proportion of the Forestry Corporation softwood plantation land that can actually be utilised for those new renewable energy developments, in order to ensure that we proceed with caution. That limit is no more than 0.7 per cent of the estate to ensure that the Forestry Corporation can meet its renewable energy goals as well as its forestry goals. We know that the initiatives in place will work to support the creation of jobs and also grow the economy while supporting our goals around renewable energy. That is happening across the globe, as the Minister and the member opposite have said. We know those estates have been introduced in many countries, particularly in relation to the introduction of wind farms on forestry lands.

The amendment will ensure that we can achieve our original policy goals in the legislation. Some of the original policy goals include ensuring that New South Wales has some of the cheapest, most reliable and cleanest energy in the world. That is the vision that all members in this place supported in the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap that the Minister introduced earlier this year. The amendment will ensure that the Government meets its commitment to provide reliable and accessible energy at the lowest cost possible for our regional communities. The amendment will unlock the asset base within forestry to make sure that different opportunities for renewables can be developed. I support the Minister's amendment. We know that we can compete with the rest of the globe, whether it is Canada, Sweden, Germany or the United Kingdom, and achieve those outcomes for New South Wales.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (09:50):** I speak in debate on the amendments to the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and thank the member for North Shore for her contribution. I know she is very passionate about climate change and led the debate on the bill on behalf of the Government. It is important that I make it very clear that Labor is supporting the Government amendments proposed today. We support the amendments that the Government is making to the Legislative Council amendments. We make it clear that we want to add a clarification by inserting a subsection that the corporation will remain a State-owned corporation that has the principal function of the sustainable management of the State's forestry areas. The Treasurer and the member for North Shore made it clear in their contributions that only 0.7 per cent of the State's forests would be used for renewable energy infrastructure. By that definition, the vast majority of the Forestry Corporation's core function will be sustainable management of the State's forestry areas. If only 0.7 per cent of State forests is allocated for the use of renewable energy infrastructure then 91.3 per cent should remain and the Forestry Corporation can continue carrying out its core purpose of ensuring that the State's forestry areas are sustainably managed.

I can see no reason for the Government to not support my amendment to its amendment. We have worked in a conciliatory way from the start in the Legislative Council. I worked with the member's staff outside the Legislative Council Chamber to adopt a unanimous amendment. I remind members that the amendments moved in the upper House were agreed to by every party in the Legislative Council, including the Government. In that same spirit I ask the Government to agree to this amendment, which is a completely acceptable amendment. If it does not intend to fatten the pig for sale or to privatise the Forestry Corporation then there is no reason it would not agree to the Opposition amendment moved today.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (09:53):** I make a contribution to debate on the amendments to the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill streamlines and cleans up some important legislation. It is worth acknowledging the importance of the bill, which looks at issues relating to energy emergencies, particularly cybersecurity matters, around the modernisation of our electricity grid and the importance and nexus between that activity and the work that may occur in various softwood plantations to install renewable energy facilities. The bill will modernise and harmonise the procedures relating to energy supply issues and emergencies. It is time for those emergency provisions to be updated because they have been operating unchanged since they commenced in 1987. The technology that is involved in renewable energies and the safety and security of our energy network

has dramatically evolved since then. The way in which the networks are now plugged into the grid allows them to potentially be victims of cyber attacks.

Given the recent demands on resources to respond to energy emergencies, it is critical that the emergency provisions relating to energy and energy resources are still fit for purpose and relevant. Those demands can be seen in the Black Summer bushfires of 2020 when multiple emergency agencies, including energy, had to work together to manage its impacts. Those changes will support the Government to implement the appropriate response plan when an energy-related emergency arises. The bill will also establish a consistent approach to how the New South Wales Government manages energy emergencies across the State's energy utilities sector. Australia and the world have seen an increase in cybersecurity threats, and critical energy infrastructure assets are not immune to cyber threats and attacks. Those threats are becoming more prevalent as the energy sector becomes increasingly digitised.

In its 2020-21 *Annual Cyber Threat Report* the Australian Cyber Security Centre noted that top-tier cybercriminals have a preference to hunt big game entities. Those entities are often high-profile, high-value targets that provide essential services or critical infrastructure such as our energy network and potentially those that could be placed in softwood plantations. The New South Wales Government must act so that our critical infrastructure is protected from cyber attacks. We need to put the appropriate arrangements in place to protect and ensure the continuity of our essential services. Our response to emergencies must continually adapt as threats evolve, and they evolve very quickly. The bill will allow quick action to be taken by ensuring that we have a single framework to respond to energy-related emergencies, whether it be electricity, gas or other fuels. As we saw in the devastating bushfires of 2020, an emergency can impact multiple energy sectors. One of the lessons learned from those catastrophic and unprecedented fire conditions is that the emergency framework in our energy sector needs to be more agile and efficient.

In 2015 and 2016 cyber attacks on Ukrainian power stations affected more than 200,000 customers. In May this year the United States' largest fuel pipeline operator was shut down for nearly a week, which created supply shocks in the US energy market and flow-on effects. Those types of attacks are becoming more common. We must do everything we can to prevent those kinds of attacks from curtailing our energy supplies. Whether it be for electricity, gas or pipelines, we need to ensure that the Minister has the appropriate powers to respond to cyber-related emergencies, which could avoid such crippling events like the ones we have seen in the US.

In 2017 Australia's former Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, in his Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market, recommended stronger security measures be put in place. While the national framework is currently being developed, the timing and outcome of those measures are uncertain. As I mentioned earlier, the sophistication and number of attempted cyber attacks on our critical energy infrastructure is growing rapidly and, frankly, we do not have time to wait. [*Extension of time*]

The sophistication and number of attempted cyber attacks on our critical energy infrastructure is growing rapidly and we do not have time to wait. It is appropriate and important for the bill to introduce backstop measures so that energy generators, networks and pipelines are required to implement appropriate cybersecurity arrangements to ensure continuity of our essential services. Those backstop measures can also be designed to support the cybersecurity framework that is currently being developed nationally.

The bill in its totality is incredibly important. As the Parliamentary Secretary acknowledged—she is now in the Chamber—in her second reading speech on behalf of the Minister, the bill sets in place a framework for the State to continue its terrific work of setting up to become a renewable energy superpower of the future. The volume of work that has taken place over a number of years with the various regulators to identify and activate renewable energy zones demonstrates the profoundly positive economic impact that renewable energy can have across New South Wales. Indeed, it has solved a number of the issues and discussions that have taken place around just transitions, and that is very important to the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (10:00):** I contribute to debate on the amendments to the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I am very pleased with the work that the Opposition has done in the other place to ensure the supply of forestry materials going forward. Certainly in my electorate the forest industry faces significant challenges in the years ahead, and the bushfires are a major cause of that. The country will suffer a severe shortfall of timber in years to come, so the preservation and extension of our forests is very important to prevent that. I am also interested in renewable energy. I have spoken before about the importance of renewable energy, which of course needs infrastructure. My electorate is currently dealing with infrastructure for Transgrid and transmission lines.

I am very keen for the Government to use public land wherever possible for transmission infrastructure. The original bill allowed for that by opening up the issues around renewable energy. The important amendments that have been accepted—and I thank the Minister and the Government for accepting the amendments that have

been proposed—will preserve and I hope enhance the forestry mass. But the amendment from the member for Bankstown emphasises the importance of the Forestry Corporation remaining in State hands and remaining as public land because, where public land is available and where possible, that land should be used for transmission infrastructure in this State. Soon there will be a nest of electricity wires across the State; the west of the State will be covered in them. It will have to go somewhere and we need it to go through public land. I welcome and support the additional amendment from the member for Bankstown. In the end there is a balance; the bill has the balance right. It protects the forestry industry, it keeps public land and it allows for transmission infrastructure to continue.

**The SPEAKER:** With the concurrence of the House I propose to finish this item of business.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (10:03):** My amendment addresses the concerns of stakeholders and will certainly provide some comfort to the many timber workers across our State and the many regional communities who rely on the industry to flourish.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (10:04):** The Government supports the amendment.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the amendment of the member for Bankstown to the amendment of the member for Hornsby be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the amendment of the member for Hornsby as amended be agreed to.

**Amendment as amended agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (10:06):** I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 3 be agreed to with the following amendment:

Omit proposed subsection (1A)(b). Insert instead—

- (b) will not result in premature harvesting of timber that causes the corporation to fail to meet a supply commitment to a local timber processor under a timber supply agreement, and
- (c) will not result in more than 0.7% of forestry areas currently used for forestry operations with trees of exotic conifer species being used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure, and
- (d) will not result in a net loss of timber available for forestry operations, and
- (e) will result in a net gain of land available for forestry operations, and

Insert after proposed subsection (1B)(a)—

- (a1) has an area at least twice as large as the area used for the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure, and

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE (EMISSIONS TARGETS) BILL 2021 (DIB)**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jihad Dib, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (10:10):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today is a really important day, a stake in the ground that puts the future of this planet front and centre. NSW Labor is pleased to introduce the Climate Change (Emissions Targets) Bill 2021, and I am honoured to lead on this very important legislation. As a former educator, I live by and have taught that actions speak louder than words. I recognise the action taken by school students in New South Wales and around the world to strike for climate action. Decision-makers have too often failed to practice the lessons that they preach. Words in the absence of action seem hollow.

As a former principal of course I could never endorse students leaving school but I understand that for many kids this issue is the single most important issue facing their generation, or indeed any generation. Our kids

are not interested in which party moves a bill or in the intrigue of the climate wars. A sensible middle ground must prevail that offers guidance to business, government, industry and community, as well as provides guarantees of action. Lazy politics and cheap rhetoric too often characterise climate action as a zero-sum game that pits city against region and worker against worker. The collective challenge of climate change only produces collective winners through action or collective losers through inaction. I have met and spoken with a number of people, including coalminers. They are not anti-action on climate change; they are pro jobs and they are rightfully worried about the future and where they fit into it. It is incumbent on Government to ensure that through the delivery of new high-skilled and well-paying jobs, as well as diversified local economies, climate action is to our collective betterment.

Today's bill represents in the clearest possible terms NSW Labor's commitment to real, whole-of-government action on climate change. It represents a point of differentiation between the current Government's words and a Minns Labor Government's actions. We will not just talk; we will deliver. We will not shy away from the challenges of reform or opportunities the future presents, which is why I am proud to support and lead on the Climate Change (Emissions Targets) Bill 2021. I urge members to put away any political differences and support this bill. The New South Wales Labor Party recognises climate change not only as an existential energy and environmental challenge but as the greatest economic opportunity of our lifetime to secure new well-paid jobs, lower power prices and energy security for New South Wales.

This is why, when the New South Wales Government announced aspirational targets of net zero by 2050 and a 50 per cent emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030, NSW Labor gave bipartisan support. These challenges transcend the lifetime of any one Parliament, any one Premier or any one Minister. Business and industry need certainty on climate targets. The concern about the new Premier's past comments describing climate action as "gratuitous waste" or giving coverage to climate sceptics could be put to rest by the Government supporting this bill.

My vision and the vision of NSW Labor for the Energy and Climate Change portfolio is a suite of policies that meet three challenges simultaneously. They are: to reduce emissions; to guarantee energy supply; and to support existing and new jobs in the energy and climate sector. The people of New South Wales can be assured that any policy developed and implemented by a NSW Labor Government will meet these challenges and seize the associated opportunities. The Climate Change (Emissions Targets) Bill 2021 is consistent with this objective. There are four reasons why it is imperative that this bill be passed. First, New South Wales currently does not have a credible or guaranteed path to net zero by 2050. Secondly, green investment is being jeopardised by Australia's international reputation. Thirdly, it reflects the widespread community support for net zero emissions by 2050. And fourthly, the rest of the world is acting and New South Wales risks being left behind. I will address each of these points in turn.

On needing a credible path, by its own admission the New South Wales Government does not have a plan to bridge its 2030 and 2050 emissions reductions targets. This legislation provides a framework for a guaranteed pathway to net zero by 2050. On the day the Premier was elected parliamentary leader of the NSW Liberal Party he said, "The great thing about this Government when it comes to meeting our net zero target is that we are completely on track without any policy change at all." Now, that is interesting, because in budget estimates hearings the Minister for Energy and Environment conceded that that was incorrect. He said, "Well, I mean, there will have to be additional policies."

The Government's own modelling shows that after New South Wales reaches a 47 per cent to 52 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030, on existing policy settings, our emissions plateau rather than continue to decline. More policies are necessary to bridge the 50 per cent reduction target by 2030, and the net zero target by 2050. The Government has conceded that those policies do not yet exist. This contradiction and absence of communication sits at the heart of why the people of New South Wales deserve a guaranteed pathway, irrespective of any individual decision-maker. The framework established by this bill will rely on independent experts to develop and advise on credible plans that will reduce emissions and achieve net zero.

New South Wales has emerged from some of its darkest days, battling an unseen mutating virus and actioning the advice of medical and scientific experts to reduce community transmission, to suppress the virus and to facilitate mass vaccination. Our collective success, reflected in 90 per cent double-dose vaccination, is predicated on reliance on world-leading medical and scientific advice. Day after day political leaders assured us they were following this advice. Our confidence in independent scientific expertise, underpinned by a collective commitment to action, serves as a model to address a different but no less urgent great crisis. Professor Matthew England from the University of New South Wales Climate Change Research Centre said acting early, listening to expert advice and mitigation were the keys to solving both crises. He has said:

We've seen all around the world that the nations ignoring the best advice of their scientists are suffering the most, and climate change is no different.

We have expert reports that have been tabled for the last three or four decades, but many nations are ignoring those, so I think that COVID-19 provides a wake-up call for what happens if you do ignore the best scientific advice.

Governments over the last two years have been required to ditch ideologies and forced into pragmatic, data driven and expert-led responses. After a decade-long climate war, New South Wales has demonstrated that it wants the politics taken out of climate action. Climate experts, scientists, economists and engineers should advise government on how to meet this crisis within parameters set by elected officials. It is imperative that we listen and communicate to people the requirements, the implications and the urgency of that advice. Targets that remain aspirational and not legislated are not credible and not guaranteed. I appreciate that Minister Kean has dismissed the difference between aspirational and legislated targets as "word games". Aspirations underpinned by hope and ambition are by their nature lacking the guarantee of success or certainty for investors that laws underpinned by modelled policies and expert advice provide. This is why this legislation is necessary to deliver a credible and guaranteed pathway.

In relation to attracting investment, legislating net zero provides necessary certainty to domestic and international investors looking to support so-called green jobs and green growth. This is critical to overcoming Australia's disastrous international reputation for climate inaction, which is costing us jobs and trade. In the lead-up to Glasgow, Australia's reputation on climate change was in tatters. The Climate Council of Australia has ranked Australia last among developed countries when it comes to climate action. The report, *From Paris to Glasgow: A World on the Move*, described Australia as "a global climate pariah." We are the subject of criticism from major European trading partners, Pacific neighbours and the United States. As my Federal colleague Chris Bowen said, the Federal Government's net zero plan is a set of slogans and heroic assumptions best summed up as a steaming pile of nothingness—and, indeed, my reflection is that it looks more like a prospectus than a plan.

Our national reputation has economic consequences for New South Wales's ability to deliver international investment in renewables. We are being hamstrung by an inept Federal Government and therefore we need to take clear and decisive action to attract investment. I do not hold Minister Kean responsible for this. I actually admire his efforts in bringing the need to act on climate change to the fore. I admire his willingness to criticise his Federal Liberal colleagues for their denialism, incompetence and inaction on climate change. The difference between the Minister and I is not our commitment to climate action but rather the support of our respective political parties to take such action. My State leader has not described climate action as "gratuitous waste." My Federal leader has not carried a lump of coal into the Parliament in a cheap political stunt. However, this is what the investors see. Our respective caucus rooms also stand in stark contrast with respect to support on climate action. In question time on Tuesday the Minister said:

... if we are going to get to net zero by 2050 we all must lead, whether it be State Government, Federal Government or local councils. We want to put in place policies that will not only allow for the Government to do its bit, but also allow for the private sector and for individuals to do their bit. We have been working constructively and in a multi-partisan way to achieve those goals, which are above politics and which are in the interests of our State and indeed our nation.

Truer words could not have been said, which is why I would expect and implore the Minister and the Government, in the same spirit of bipartisanship, to support this bill. Three global investor groups worth more than A\$62 trillion have labelled Australia one of the least attractive destinations for green investment alongside Saudi Arabia and Russia. Domestic investors are now taking their money offshore. Australian Ethical, the country's original deep-green fund manager, said it could be forced to invest more of the money it manages in offshore companies because of climate inaction in Australia.

Attracting this investment is critical to reaching net zero in New South Wales. The Government's own policies rely on attracting \$80 billion via the National Hydrogen Strategy and \$32 billion via the Green Investment Strategy. Such investment is in jeopardy if we do not distinguish ourselves and provide investor certainty by legislating the target and creating a credible path to net zero. Investors must know that New South Wales is open for business and ready for investment, no matter who the Premier is or who the Prime Minister is. In relation to widespread support, net zero by 2050 is an established position that already has the support of industry, unions, business and the broader community. The Business Council of Australia [BCA] has been calling for net zero by 2050 to be legislated by 2020. Chief executive Jennifer Westacott said of legislating net zero:

I think that would be a start.

I reckon if we could get the two political parties to agree to that and legislate it, we would have made a massive advance in this country because we would know where we're going ...

For business that does want to take action in this space, that would at least give us a kind of certainty about where we are heading.

As such, we call on the Government to provide bipartisan support and provide the certainty that is sought. The BCA's position is reflected in its membership. The number of major companies committed to net zero emissions has tripled in a year and includes the Commonwealth Bank, the ANZ, the National Australia Bank, Rio Tinto,



BHP, AGL Energy, Newcrest Mining, Transurban and Origin Energy. More than half of the market capitalisation of the ASX200 is captured by net zero commitments. Mirvac has become Australia's first property company to achieve carbon positivity for scope 1 and scope 2 carbon emissions. More importantly, 68 per cent of Australians support net zero by 2050. That includes 65 per cent of Coalition voters, according to an Essential poll conducted on 12 October 2021. This poll was not an outlier. A similar result was found by Resolve Political Monitor, showing majority bipartisan support.

A poll in the Hunter region commissioned by the Hunter Jobs Alliance showed two things: first, that people believe renewables and reducing emissions will be good for jobs in the Hunter; and, secondly, they have little faith in government to handle it well. That is why we need to be up-front and clear, not with press releases or glib statements about the end of coal but with legislation and certainty. In formalising this legislation, we have worked with numerous stakeholders, including the Climate Council and Labor Environmental Action Network. I thank them for the constructive way in which they have engaged with this process. NSW Labor has also consulted with unions—especially those with coverage of affected industries—ClimateWorks, the Nature Conservation Council and the Hunter Jobs Alliance, as well as others.

The bill is also built on many meetings with a number of other organisations and individuals over the past four months. This is not a flash in the pan or a reactionary idea. I acknowledge my predecessor, the Hon. Adam Searle, for the work that he put into developing the climate change policies that Labor took to the 2019 election and beyond. In relation to the rest of the world acting, I have never shied away from the premier State honouring its moniker and acting bigger, better and bolder than its counterparts. But the reality is that if we do not take this action, New South Wales risks getting left behind. The United Kingdom and New Zealand have legislated net zero by 2050. Other examples include Germany, Sweden, the European Union, Japan, France, Canada, South Korea, Spain, Denmark, Hungary and Luxembourg. Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have legislated net zero by 2050. Tasmania announced on 13 October that it will legislate net zero by 2030. South Australia has committed to legislating net zero by 2050. The Queensland Parliament has endorsed a target of net zero by 2050.

The Minister says that New South Wales is world leading on climate action. However, the reality is we are not even Australia's leader through our failure to legislate net zero by 2050. The New South Wales Opposition sees this bill as a test of the Government's support for credible action on climate. This is a test for whether the Premier and the Treasurer are serious about action on climate change. As I told my students many years ago, words matter but actions matter more. I intended to set out the key components of the bill. I will make a start on it. I am conscious that I have only limited time and I will have to come back to it next week. The bill sets out 2030 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in New South Wales. It provides for the monitoring and reporting of progress towards the targets and establishes principles that guide actions to address climate change.

Clause 5 of the bill sets out the guiding principles underpinning the legislation. These include: first, the critical need to act to address climate change; secondly, the need to act now to ensure the cost and impact of action is as low as possible, recognising both the economic and environmental cost of inaction; thirdly, the need to recognise the principles of fiscal responsibility; fourthly, the need to maximise job creation, both in low-carbon energy generation, as well as manufacturing and the supply chain for renewable energy in New South Wales—and NSW Labor will always be the party of jobs—and policy settings must have regard to maximising local jobs as global trends tell us that inaction now is tantamount to exporting future jobs overseas; fifthly, supporting the responsibility to ensure diversification of local economies, including the protection of jobs, industry and local procurement because every town and every city deserves a future; and, sixthly, the need for skills diversification and the critical role of TAFE, which is underpinned by government investment in TAFE not privatisation, in marked contrast to our Government colleagues.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That on Thursday 18 November 2021 standing and sessional orders be suspended to:

- (1) Permit consideration of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 immediately prior to the commencement of private members' statements.
- (2) Postpone the commencement of private members' statements until consideration of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 is concluded.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (GOVERNMENT GRANTS) BILL 2021****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 11 November 2021.**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (10:33):** I lead for the Government to oppose the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, which proposes to amend the Government Sector Finance Act 2018, commonly known as the GSF Act, to insert a new section that would require all entities responsible for deciding applications for grants of money by the New South Wales Government to disclose certain information to the relevant member of Parliament. In practical terms, the amendment proposed by the bill would mean that every member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly would need to be advised about each Government grant application made by entities and individuals within their constituency. That might sound fair on face value; however currently there are over 1,000 grant programs administered by over 50 government entities well exceeding over a million applications every year.

Given the current volume of grant applications processed by government entities, the proposed amendment is not practical and would significantly increase the administrative and reporting burden on government entities. It would significantly increase the cost to the Government, which in turn will be passed on to the New South Wales taxpayer. Implementing the changes proposed by the bill would likely necessitate the introduction of additional processes, changes to existing systems and practices, and additional staff. In that context, the burden imposed on the Government and the taxpayer becomes clear. It would also be necessary to introduce additional steps into grants administration processes, for example, to determine the information to be disclosed to the relevant member of Parliament. That would extend the time frame for processing and finalising grant applications, which would cause further unnecessary delays in the delivery of many of these programs to the people of New South Wales. The administrative burden may also negatively impact the value for money assessment that underpins many grant processes.

Personally, I do not think one member of the Parliament would oppose the Community Building Partnership grants. The due processes applied to those grants, the great value for money the State gets from that grant application and the local people in the community combining with community groups creates fantastic outcomes for the community. Rather than taxpayer money being tied up in bureaucracy, it is distributed quickly, efficiently, fairly and appropriately on behalf of community groups, getting great outcomes for our communities. The administrative burden of the proposed amendment, and the resulting cost increases and time delays would be substantial and would not lead to improvement in the grants administration process. That would increase the cost burden on the Government and the taxpayer, and is primarily why the Government is opposed to the bill.

The Government already has governance measures in place for grants administration and is currently considering how those measures can be enhanced. The Government has recently announced a review of grants administration in New South Wales, led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in partnership with the Productivity Commissioner. The purpose of the review is to deliver value for money for the New South Wales taxpayer by ensuring that the administration, assessment and assurance of grants programs is in line with best practice. The New South Wales *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration* provides detailed guidance to entities to establish sound systems and processes for governance, accountability and transparency in grants administration. As part of the review of grants administration, the guide will be updated to reflect best practice grants administration.

It is, in any case, premature to consider the amendments proposed by the private member's bill given that a Public Accountability Committee [PAC] inquiry into New South Wales Government grants programs is ongoing and performance audits by the Auditor-General also relating to grant administration are currently being considered. The PAC inquiry that is currently underway is looking into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of New South Wales grants programs. The inquiry has delivered its interim report that recommended, relevantly, that the *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration* be updated. The PAC is scheduled to deliver its final report in February 2022, which is a very short time frame, and is likely to provide further recommendations to the Government on improving the grant administration process. There are also performance audits being undertaken by the Auditor-General that will be considered. One of those audits is examining the integrity of the assessment and approval processes for New South Wales Government grant programs. That audit is still in progress. A further performance audit by the Auditor-General into grants administration for disaster relief was recently completed and found that:

The agencies effectively implemented the grants within required timeframes, reflecting the NSW Government's decision to deliver urgent financial support to small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

NSW Treasury met urgent timeframes to design the grants and Service NSW made timely payments in line with the grants' objectives and eligibility criteria.

Service NSW and the Department of Customer Service strengthened processes to detect and minimise fraud in response to identified external fraud risks, and to investigate suspected fraudulent applications.

Fraud security checks and investigations are ongoing, and the agencies will not know the full extent of fraud across the grants until these processes have been completed.

The agencies regularly monitored and reported on the timeliness of payments to small business applicants but have not yet measured all benefits of the grants programs.

The findings of the PAC inquiry and that Auditor-General's findings and its other performance audits potentially will identify further recommendations that the Government can implement to improve transparency and accountability in grant administration. Those findings will be taken into account as part of the current review. Therefore, at this point in time the private member's bill is very premature and will significantly increase the administrative burden for government entities without any tangible benefit to the transparency and governance of grants programs. For those reasons, the Government opposes the bill.

From a personal perspective, private member's bills exist quite rightly to hold government to account, and I stand up for that process. I welcome the bill and the queries being made to the Government about funding that is, as I have said before, primarily on behalf of New South Wales taxpayers, which will ultimately benefit them through the community projects that I have already spoken about and through other broader projects. At the same time, grants administration needs to be done within an appropriate time frame and in an appropriate manner. Therefore, as I have clearly stated, the Government opposes the bill because it is premature. The Government is adopting the recommendations of the PAC and of the further investigations of the inquiry, which will be adopted as recommendations in the near future. The Government opposes the bill.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (10:40):** On behalf of the Opposition and as the shadow Minister for Finance, I support the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. I thank the member for Barwon and his colleague in the upper House the Hon. Robert Borsak. NSW Labor supports accountability and believes in the necessity of public trust. NSW Labor supports the bill, which is designed to curb the misuse of grants schemes by this Liberal Government. It is synonymous with pork-barrelling, grants rorts, conflicts of interest and current ICAC investigations. Each new scandal that is uncovered further erodes public trust in the Government. Time and time again, the public has been right in its distrust of this Liberal Government. My upper House colleagues the Hon. John Graham and the Hon. Courtney Houssos were instrumental in uncovering the grants rorts that led to this bill. The Legislative Council's Public Accountability Committee inquiry into government grants uncovered shocking examples of blatant Liberal Government pork-barrelling. Of course, the former Premier openly gloated about pork-barrelling and said that it was the way this Liberal Government does business with taxpayers' money.

In 2020 the Liberal Government distributed almost \$180 million to communities affected by the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires without an open application process. Of the 71 funded projects, only three were in non-Government electorates. I think that is worth repeating: Only \$2.5 million of the \$177 million fund went to families and businesses in non-Government electorates. The Blue Mountains community, for example, did not receive a single cent for the 23 projects that it put forward for funding despite the Blue Mountains local government area suffering \$65 million worth of losses during the fires. The Central Coast also missed out despite suffering an economic hit of about \$163 million. We must not forget the Liberal Government's brazen pork-barrelling through the Stronger Communities Fund. Ninety-five per cent of the \$252 million fund went to Coalition-held or marginal electorates, yet this Liberal Government wants us to believe the funds were distributed on merit. Its contempt for the people of New South Wales and their hard-earned taxes is obvious. This Liberal Government has tried to pull the wool over the eyes of the public for more than a decade, but we are not buying what it is selling.

The Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 is a necessary step to hold this Liberal Government accountable for its misuse of taxpayers' money. The bill will require local MPs to be notified of "certain information relating to the application" to grants schemes within their electorates, and it will ensure that an MP is also notified when a grant will be announced. Given this Liberal Government's tendency to shut out non-Government MPs, this bill makes for a welcome change. It comes as no surprise that the Government will oppose the bill. It wants us to believe it represents good governance and that it is responsible with taxpayers' money. But the people of New South Wales know better, and the evidence proves it. We only have to look at the new Premier's track record to see this Liberal Government's fiscal mismanagement. The Premier's record as Treasurer speaks for itself: higher taxes, higher tolls and more privatisation. He set up and oversaw icare, which ripped off thousands of injured workers to the tune of \$80 million but sent executives' salaries skyrocketing.

Since 2015, icare has failed to publicly register 422 contracts worth more than \$150,000 each. Millions of dollars in contracts were awarded without going to an open tender process, all on the watch of the former Treasurer and now Premier. Does that sound like responsible fiscal management underpinned by a commitment to accountability? Not on your nelly. "Accountability" is a dirty word for this Liberal Government. The Premier does not want residents to remember that he is responsible for the increasing cost of living in New South Wales. During the Premier's time as Treasurer, Sydney became the most tolled city on the planet, with motorists now paying \$2.3 billion each year in tolls. Most of that pain is felt by household budgets in west and south-west Sydney. The Premier, of course, wants to distract families and workers who are struggling with the cost of living by spruiking the questionable WestInvest Fund. Residents are right to question whether WestInvest is the Government giving with one hand and taking away with another, given the amount of money it has taken out of the region in tolls.

Residents are also right to question whether WestInvest will become yet another example of blatant pork-barrelling by this Liberal Government. The Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 is designed to reduce the misuse of government grants and funding schemes like WestInvest. It is worth repeating that the New South Wales Labor Party supports accountability. The Opposition wants taxpayers' money in grants schemes to be distributed on merit; this Liberal Government does not. That is why the Government will vote against the bill. Labor will work to rebuild the public trust that this Liberal Government has squandered and eroded. The Opposition has also introduced its own bill covering New South Wales grants administration to ensure that objectivity, transparency and respect for taxpayers' money are upmost when allocating taxpayers' dollars. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the lower House, and I thank his colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak for introducing it in the upper House. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:46):** I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. The object of the bill is to enable members of Parliament to be informed about applications for grants of government money that are made by applicants located in the electorates of the members of Parliament. It seeks to amend the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 by inserting provisions requiring the Government to notify local members of grant applications made by entities in their electorates. The intent of the bill is to disclose information to the relevant member of Parliament to make them aware that a constituent within their electorate has applied for a government grant and also to advise them on the outcome of the grant application. Effectively, the bill will mean that every member of the Legislative Assembly will be advised on every grant application made by entities and individuals within their constituencies for every grants program administered by government entities.

As somebody who has been a member for a while, still does not have a full understanding of all the grants programs that the Government runs and would have difficulty reading through all the applications and outcomes of the many and varied grants programs that happen within the auspices of a large organisation like the State Government, the extra work that public servants would be asked to do so that members could know that somebody from their electorate is applying for a grant through a process that would not normally entail political involvement by elected members is mind-boggling. Appropriately, that work should routinely be dealt with by government departments and agencies throughout the year.

It is the Government's view that the proposed disclosure requirements of the amendment would not be practical to implement and would unduly increase the administrative burden on government departments and agencies, given the volume of grant applications. The provisions in the bill will also adversely impact on the ability of government entities to effectively implement grants programs in a timely manner. By adding an extra layer of process, the likelihood is that disbursements of grants would be delayed. A number of grants programs are focused primarily on local government authorities or agencies in partnership with local councils. Inserting State members into the processes of these programs could give rise to political considerations or allow political tensions to play a part in programs that serve basic community needs, which would not serve the public interest.

I note the wide range of grant programs that occur. The member for Castle Hill talked about COVID-related grant programs in a range of areas that were presented quickly by the Government. Bureaucrats and agencies had to be nimble and adept to make sure that the grants reached the community as soon as possible and were as responsive as possible to the varying needs. That was a complex process; it was enormous. Inserting MPs into that process and making the agencies and public servants report back to us every time a grant was requested would have delayed the money reaching where it needed to go. That would have been totally inappropriate and it would have hindered the work that Service NSW and other agencies were doing to support our communities, which is the last thing any of us wanted. I am sure the member who introduced the bill was not thinking of that program or that aid, but that is what we need to do. When we change the law and it applies across the board, it will catch all sorts of programs and situations, and it can have unintended consequences. That would have been one.

There is also a risk that early disclosure of information could give rise to probity issues and inadvertent breaching of privacy laws. The temptation to be first with the good news may prove too much for some members

to resist. It has been said that the amendment is aimed at ensuring greater transparency in the grant application process. It was argued by the Hon. Robert Borsak in moving the bill in the other place that it is intended to prevent "misuse" of government funds. It is far from clear to me how advising a member of an application from within their electorate is likely to have that effect. Unless the implication is that a member, once advised of an application, would actively intervene to oppose that application, it is difficult to see how so-called misuse might be averted through that measure. That appears to be an extraordinarily unlikely scenario to me. It seems that the real point of the bill is to allow a member to line up and take a share in the credit for a government grant, rather than to enhance in any way the methodology of assessment or determination of grants. The intent would be to share in the perceived kudos, even though the member had no part in the process. The bill has a political motivation, rather than a motivation grounded in improving standards of governance.

Over the years many local members, especially those from the Opposition or crossbench, have been willing to turn up for photo opportunities when projects are completed, even though they opposed the project or its funding when it was announced. The bill sits squarely within that tradition. I can perfectly understand members wanting to grab some of the positive PR that successful grant applications may bring, and I dare say that no side of politics is immune from that temptation. Yet the fact remains that the bill would add to the cost of administration and would do nothing to enhance the timely administration of grant programs or the probity of the assessment processes and therefore would not benefit the local communities that such programs are designed to serve.

The bill may serve the political interest of a local member, but it does not serve the public interest. On that basis, it should not be supported. I understand the claim that somehow it is to do with preventing pork-barrelling, but nothing proposed in the bill will address that issue. There is no better process, no panel requirements and no conflict of interest provision in the bill. There is nothing in the bill that addresses the age-old culture of pork-barrelling. We should improve and reflect on our processes regularly. We should make improvements where we can, but those improvements are not in the bill. The bill only encourages an attempt to turn up to cut the ribbon, and that will not make positive changes for the people of New South Wales. On that basis, we do not support the bill.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (10:53):** I support the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 introduced by the member for Barwon. I thank him for shining a light on this particularly important part of government accountability. Many organisations and councils in regional and rural areas rely on government grants to make much-needed improvements in the community. The process of approving grants is complex, convoluted and layered in bureaucracy. Decisions are made confidentially, and often the local MP is not even aware that some organisations have sought funding. The process should be more transparent, above party politics and as straightforward as possible. The issue is about accountability and fairness.

I read this morning in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that members in the other place obtained government documents that indicate the Government is tracking how it is performing on its promises. It is reassuring to know that the Government is tracking its performance. It is good to know that 346 out of 913 have been delivered. Apparently 469 are on track. I bet that includes the emergency services levy reform that was promised in 2011; I am still waiting for that. That leaves nearly 100. I guess they belong in the "broken" category because they are not on track and have not been delivered. We know what was promised and delivered so it is good to see that level of accountability, but we do not know the total number of grants that were applied for and turned down. That is an important part of assessing fairness and accountability.

Irrespective of whether local MPs are government or non-government members, why should they be involved in that process? Local MPs know their electorates and were elected as their leaders. Whether they are government or non-government members, the communities have entrusted to them the incredibly important role of leadership and scrutiny of the Government. The Government and bureaucracy need to be scrutinised no matter what. We saw how effective members of Parliament were during the pandemic. I heard wonderful stories of non-government MPs getting involved around western parts of Sydney when the Government struggled to take action to curtail the pandemic. It is clear that MPs are a wonderful resource and having them involved at the grassroots level of the grants application process will be of enormous benefit because the process is not a level playing field.

I accept that before grants get to politicians and after they move into government bureaucracy there are robust checks and balances. But there is inequity in the grants process and constituents have raised this point with my office. The grants process is complex. Larger organisations and councils can employ full-time writers to apply for grants. Their job is to find options, work through the complex application process and negotiate the information technology, but those resources do not exist in smaller communities. Budgets are tighter and staff are not dedicated to writing grant applications. Resources are even more modest in community organisations. It is often the same core group of people who turn up time and again to each working bee, community fundraiser and annual meeting. Now we are adding the exercise of negotiating an online portal to submit an application that is often judged on

the fluency of the application process. How fair is that? Hardworking and dedicated people of the community are up against large organisations when navigating the complex grant process.

Unless MPs from both sides are aware of the grant applications being received, how can they make sure that all groups are getting a fair go? We do not have a level playing field for the grant application process. I remember in the aftermath of the black summer bushfires that our communities were particularly hard hit. It was incredibly important to provide resources to those communities, but people were battered and emotionally affected by the fires while trying to put their lives back together. It was difficult to rebuild the community spirit let alone get them to apply for the grants they needed. It was tough, but we have been able to do it and I acknowledge Resilience NSW. That experience brought home to me how much support community groups need. The application process needs scrutiny, which is an important part of making the Government accountable.

It might be that electorates get the same number of grants. But if one electorate has had 20 applications and another electorate has had five and they both end up with five grants, clearly there is an issue in the accountability process. Making sure that MPs are aware of that would be an important part of ensuring accountability. The arguments against the bill seem to be that there are no safeguards when non-government MPs improperly disclose that information. There are safeguards built into the bill, and I congratulate the member for Barwon on including those safeguards. I am not sure I understand why non-government MPs, as opposed to Government MPs, would be of particular risk.

The other argument that was put up, particularly by the member for Castle Hill, was that it is just too hard; I think he said there would be a million grant applications in a year. The Coalition is in government and it prides itself on its capacity to digitise. It has come forth to this Parliament on countless occasions and told us wonderful things about Service NSW, the online portals, the websites, the capacity for digitisation and the new internet computer technologies. All grant applications go through an online portal now. So long as you remember the password, you can log in and fill out a sheet. You could lose the sheet or forget to save, but you get through it. It is all there. It takes three times as long presumably so the bureaucracy has only half the job to do.

With all that technology, how hard would it be to generate an application spreadsheet with a feed that would go out to every member? It would not be that hard or that complex. In fact, I would regard it as a democracy dividend from the Government's investment in technology. How good would that be? To come back to the main point, it is important that we support small community groups with modest needs. We must make sure that when they apply for grants it is a fair process, the application is dealt with fairly and they are supported throughout the process. We need to make sure that the big end of town is not scooping up all the grants because it is better resourced. So some scrutiny of that process by all MPs, who know their electorates, would be valuable.

There is no doubt that the community has little appetite for pork-barrelling and election campaigns bloated with new promises. The process for grants applications needs to be vigorous. We do not want to see public money wasted, but I do not think better accountability and better democracy is ever a waste of public money. The process must be transparent and fair. In particular, regional and rural communities should not be disadvantaged because they lack the resources of their metropolitan counterparts. As part of that transparency, it stands to reason that the local MP should be aware of what grants are available, what have been applied for and what have been allocated to their communities. I support the bill.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (11:02):** I contribute to the second reading debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. I thank my good friend the member for Barwon, one of my favourite non-Government members, for introducing the bill to this House for debate after it was introduced initially in the other place by the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC, and passed earlier this year. As we have heard, the stated objective of the bill is contained within its long title:

... to enable members of the Parliament to be informed about decisions related to grants of money by the Government ...

The Act that the bill seeks to amend has an overarching purpose to drive further accountability and transparency in government decision-making. I take it on face value that these amendments also seek that objective. If true, then it is admirable, and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party should be commended for its efforts to add to the conversation in this area. As a Government MP, I can say that it is an objective shared by me and by all members on this side of the House—in fact, I would like to think by all members in this place—and the opportunity to further that objective is welcomed. However, despite the noble motivations and best endeavours, for reasons that I will soon outline this bill is fatally flawed.

The bill seeks to insert a new section 10.6 into the Government Sector Finance Act 2018, which would require entities responsible for deciding government grants to notify the Legislative Assembly member for the electorate in which the grant applicant is located. Effectively, the bill will mean that every member of the Legislative Assembly is to be advised of every grant application made by entities and individuals within their constituency for every grant program administered by government entities. As my colleague in the other place the

Hon. Scott Farlow rightly pointed out, at present there are currently around 1,000 grant programs being administered by over 50 government entities. Collectively, they receive and assess more than one million applications every year. That would mean, at the very least, one million disclosure transactions. When subsection (3) of the new section is read, the mammoth disclosure obligations for complying entities is fully unmasked in its devastating entirety. It imposes on relevant entities the onerous obligation to inform the local member as follows. Subsection (3) refers to:

- (a) when the entity received the application,
- (b) the time frame for deciding the application,
- (c) a decision about whether to pay the grant to the applicant,
- (d) if a decision is made to pay the grant to the applicant—
  - (i) the amount to be paid, and
  - (ii) when and where the decision will be announced.

Anyone even vaguely familiar with grant administration will know that the impact of complying with subsection (3) would result in at least three to four, and possibly more, contact obligations for each grant application. That will result in millions of contact transactions between those administering grant programs and local parliamentarians. The business of government grant decision-making would grind to a halt as it would divert critical resources to achieve little more than keeping local parliamentarians in the loop. At the very least, if grant-deciding entities are to meet such disclosure requirements it would involve introducing additional processes, including drastic changes to well-established and understood systems and practices. It would also require the hiring of additional staff. Let us not forget the millions of calls and emails that will have to be made or sent. In short, it will add enormous administrative and compliance costs without any material benefit to taxpayers—at least none identified so far in this debate.

I know that there are members on the opposite benches—mainly from the Australian Labor Party—who love bloated bureaucracy and think this sounds like a great idea. The Opposition when it was in government displayed an addiction to huge debt and deficit that bordered on an aphrodisiac. In the past week we have heard how the new and untested Leader of the Opposition is trying to pass himself off as a fiscal conservative. We have all heard that one before. We remember former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd doing the same—and that did not turn out well, did it? Now is the Leader of the Opposition's chance to prove he meant what he said. The way Labor and the Leader of the Opposition vote on this bill will provide some insight into Labor's true fiscal responsibility. The Leader of the Opposition knows the bill will dramatically increase the administrative costs of government grant programs. Will he be fiscally responsible and vote down the bill? I am sure that he and Labor will not. Old habits—and pleasing union mates—die hard.

I fear that future governments looking for easy spending cuts may look to reduce the cost burdens of complying with this bill if it becomes law. The reality is that these changes would impact the value-for-money assessment that underpins many grants processes. I look at grants in my own area of which I have only recently been informed: Yerrinbool Village Group got \$8,000, the Oaks Preschool Kindergarten got \$15,820, Cawdor Public School got \$20,000, Warragamba Silverdale Neighbourhood Centre got \$46,173 for a community upgrade, and the Buxton Community Association got \$19,000 and then a further \$33,000—the area was heavily impacted during the fires. Each grant that I have mentioned under the Community Building Partnership program could be brought to the House's attention and could be in jeopardy if the proposed amendments were to become law. On reflection, I am sure that the member for Barwon would concede it is not the intention of the amendments to create such a web of red tape that it would paralyse decision-making and completely undermine small grants.

In addition, the increased time frame for processing and finalising grant applications will cause unnecessary delays in the delivery of these programs to the constituents of New South Wales due to the unnecessary administration burden. Let us reflect on that as we emerge from lockdown and at a time when many community organisations and businesses need grant assistance in a timely manner. Let us also consider what impact these amendments might have on a future JobSaver or microbusiness grant programs if, heaven forbid, they were ever needed again.

The Government's view is understandably correct. The proposed disclosure requirements of the amendments would not be practical to implement and would unduly increase the administrative burden on government departments and agencies given the volume of grant applications. There is also a risk that early disclosure of information could give rise to probity issues and inadvertent breach of privacy laws. My colleague in the other place the Hon. Shayne Mallard, MLC, touched on this. We are all politicians with a weakness for self-promotion—that is kind of true. The temptation to be first with the good news may prove too much for some members to resist. As I mentioned earlier, the overarching objective of the Government Sector Finance Act is to ensure greater transparency. In moving the bill in the other place the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC, said that the

proposed amendments are intended to prevent misuse of government funds. The member for Barwon repeated this last week during his speech.

Neither of the members clearly articulated to me how, by advising a parliamentarian of a grant application, that misuse of funds would be avoided. Or, is it the intention that the local member, armed with the knowledge of a grant application, could mobilise their resources of office to undermine a particular applicant? If not, then it is difficult to see how so-called misuse could be averted through this measure. What worries me is it seems that the real point of the bill is to allow a member to line up to take a share in the credit for a government grant, rather than to enhance in any way the methodology of assessment or determination of grants, even though the member may not have had any part in the process—that is, the bill has a political motivation rather than a motivation grounded in improving transparency, accountability or any standards of governance. [*Extension of time*]

Before concluding I will respond to some of the incendiary allegations made by the member for Barwon during his speech. For the record, I hold him in high regard, but I think his remarks are unwise. I will not repeat them as they do not deserve to be placed in *Hansard* again. Suffice to say, the politically motivated allegations were the subject of an upper House inquiry chaired by The Greens Mr David Shoebridge and tabled in March this year. The evidence was insightful. At paragraph 2.39 the report referred to evidence provided by ICAC Chief Commissioner Hall as follows:

... ministers may, in exercising their discretion, prefer particular regions or electorates in order to pursue political objectives, or create or expand a grant scheme for a political objective. This in itself is not necessarily corrupt conduct, as long as it is in pursuit of a legitimate public interest.

He goes on at paragraph 2.41 to say that the "exercise of ministerial discretion is constrained by public interest principles not to act for personal benefit or to breach public trust." Since the election of the Coalition Government in 2011, decision-making has been cleaned up. I am confident that the Government's decision-making has always been in the public interest. The bad days of previous Labor government corruption and acting out of self-interest are over. Let us not forget that two former Labor Ministers are in jail today because they put personal profit ahead of the good people of New South Wales.

I am worried by the direction this debate is headed. I fear there is an attempt to increase the democratic deficit in our State—that is, to increase the distance between the New South Wales voter and the ultimate decision-maker. Our Westminster conventions and traditions were built on a foundation of ministerial responsibility. That ultimately drives accountability, transparency and better decision-making. The buck must stop with the Minister. Driving decision-making to deep inside the bowels of the bureaucracy is misguided. I argue this does not aid transparency or accountability. It hinders it.

The public service, which does a fine job, should be relied upon to provide unbiased advice. But it is Ministers who should always be the ultimate decision-makers and be free to do so in a way consistent with their political objectives. At their core, what are political objectives and why do they cause so much division in this place? It is simple. They are the priorities that distinguish our parties and platforms. They are why we were elected and outline what the people expect of us. It is why sitting on this side of the Chamber is so important. There is nothing dirty or unsound about it. Those who seek to claim differently are doing the public a gross disservice.

The fact remains that this bill would add to the cost of administration, would do nothing to enhance the timely administration of grant programs, would do nothing to enhance the probity of the assessment processes and would add no benefit to the local communities that such programs are designed to serve. The bill may serve the political interest of a local member, but it does not serve the public interest. On that basis, it is not a bill I can support.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:15):** I speak in debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 and commend my colleague and good friend Roy Butler, the member for Barwon, for introducing the bill to the House, which is designed to introduce transparency, accountability and legitimacy in the Government's grants funding programs and processes. The evidence given at the Independent Commission against Corruption Operation Keppel public inquiry has provided insight as to the motivations behind the direction of State Government funding—that is, taxpayers' money—in regional New South Wales. When giving evidence at the inquiry, the former Premier put on record that the Government was rocked by its 2016 loss of what was a traditional safe Nationals seat of Orange to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, which saw me elected.

In her evidence, the former Premier indicated that government funding was strategically directed toward the regions in "a desire for electoral popularity." The former Premier's office deleting and shredding grants documents was a scandal that exposed the lengths to which the Government was prepared to go to conceal what those records would expose about its illegitimate grants funding processes. There is no place for secrecy in the processes to award taxpayers' money for State-funded projects and programs. That incident marred the



Government's integrity and, by trying to cover it tracks, so to speak, it raised questions within the community as to the Government's ability to fund grants on the basis of merit in the absence of oversight or a legislative framework or rules. Following The Nationals defeat at the 2016 Orange by-election, The Nationals MLC Rick Colless curiously relocated to Orange and was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Western NSW. Thereafter, Mr Colless presented himself as the quasi local member, routinely announcing grants funding for local organisations and infrastructure projects. In the countless number of funding announcements Mr Colless made in my electorate, only once did he provide me advance notice, and it was shortly after he moved to Orange.

As my colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak pointed out in the other place, there are many other Government members who visited to make funding announcements. One was less than 100 yards from the front door of my office! That behaviour demonstrated a lack of statesmanship among certain members of the Government, which led to me delivering a notice of motion demanding that the Government reinstitute courteous, respectful, dignified and professional statesmanship in the conduct of its appointed Ministers, secretaries and leaders, with protocols for visiting and undertaking official duties in electorates represented by non-government members. That is simple courtesy.

The bill is a very short, concise bill. It is pretty straightforward and pretty simple to read. In essence, I have heard the arguments that members opposite have put forward, and I will touch on those later in my contribution. Needless to say, I think they are nonsensical and a complete dereliction of what the bill seeks to achieve. I also called on the Government to provide courtesies to the elected representatives of all three tiers of government—local, State and Federal—by contacting and informing those representatives of their planned attendances for purposes which relate to or affect the geographical area for which the incumbent elected representatives are responsible.

Clearly the Government took no notice of my motion. The Nationals MLC Rick Colless retired and was replaced by Sam Faraway, who took up the mantle of "Secretary for Western New South Wales" and The Nationals' tradition of making announcements across my electorate without providing me any notice. Like his predecessor, Mr Faraway made just one courtesy call to me of a funding announcement shortly after he was elected—but since then it has been zip. The examples of unannounced fly-in, fly-out government grants announcements are legion. Since being elected I could count on one hand the number of times a member of the Government has advised they were visiting my electorate to announce funding, which includes those examples I have mentioned before. Of course, I do not have enough fingers or toes to count how many times a Government member has visited to make an announcement without even so much as a courtesy call in advance, let alone an invitation to be present at these announcements.

The Government forgets that an overwhelming number of members of the voting communities its representatives fly in and out of to make funding announcements had their say on who they want as their State representative at the last election. I am often approached by members of my community who feel personally offended when I am not invited to participate in funding announcements. What the Government fails to realise is that voters are smart enough to know what pork-barrelling is and what the Government's motives are. The Government's practices are likely having the opposite effect of galvanising community support for their snubbed local member, whom they voted for.

Worse still is the Government's practice of subjecting grant applicants and recipients to a non-disclosure agreement, effectively gagging them from releasing information about the grant and the subsequent announcement. There should never be a condition of non-disclosure applied to an applicant or recipient of a government grant and/or State funds. The process should be completely transparent. The bill addresses this issue. Pork-barrelling is the common term used for the political art of cash for votes—selfishly prioritising projects to benefit political positioning against the best interests of the people of New South Wales. Technically, pork-barrelling might not be illegal. However, it is ethically questionable and absent the transparent and reviewable processes required to be considered a legitimate use of taxpayers' money.

It would be remiss of me not to mention a stand-out example of pork-barrelling involving the former Premier. Just prior to the 2019 election, Premier Berejiklian made a fly-in, fly-out visit to Orange. As per the Government's convention, I did not receive contact announcing her visit. When out on a routine morning walk to grab my coffee and engage with community members, which I do every single day, I happened to bump into Premier Berejiklian as she made her way toward a gathering of press at Robertson Park in the city's CBD. Curious, I attended the announcement. I watched and listened, and was astonished by the words I heard her say. Many will recall what she said and the fallout that resulted. The Premier announced she would fund a new \$25 million sports stadium—but only if the people of the Orange voted for The Nationals' candidate. There is not a more brazen example of pork-barrelling—outside of Wagga Wagga. In fact, it was questioned whether her announcement amounted to voter bribes. There was community fallout as a result. It had the complete opposite effect of that

intended by the former Premier. To this day community members tell me they did not take too kindly to it, and they were outspoken about it.

Using taxpayers' money to garner votes is unpalatable to the vast majority of community members. The community wants and expects scrutiny and oversight—a system to ensure that public funds are directed following a rigorous and reviewable assessment, and awarded on the merit of the project or program. Given that Premier Perrottet has publicly acknowledged the failings of the Liberal-Nationals Government in its practices regarding grants funding, I would like to think that he will support this bill—but clearly he will not. Doing so would legislate against the recurrence of pork-barrelling by this and successive governments and provide transparent and legitimate processes in assessing and awarding grants, as reasonably demanded by the communities of New South Wales. The bill will require the deciding entity of a grant to give notice to the elected State member of the relevant electorate, as soon as practicable after being aware of each matter:

- (a) when the entity received the application,
- (b) the time frame for deciding the application,
- (c) a decision about whether to pay the grant to the applicant,
- (d) if a decision is made to pay the grant to the applicant—
  - (i) the amount to be paid, and
  - (ii) when and where the decision will be announced.

Going forward, I hope the Premier insists on statesmanlike conduct among his Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, with prior warning of announcements provided to the elected representative of the electorate they intend visiting to announce project or program funding. However, I doubt this will happen. Again, this bill will address this issue. I seek a short extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House. I will touch on a few issues that have been raised by members opposite in their arguments against supporting the bill. As I said, these arguments are nonsensical. There was a suggestion that it would create more work for the public service in the administration of these grants. The member for Wagga Wagga provided a simple explanation of how that could be remedied by simply adding a spreadsheet or a screen to the grant processing application. It is nonsensical that the only argument the Government can rely on to not support this bill is that it will add further impost to the administration of grants, in terms of staffing and potential costing. One must ask the question: How much additional staffing did the former Premier get to shred her documents?

Who knows what the next election may bring? It could be in the best interests of Government members to support this bill because they could be in opposition after 2023. In that event, this bill would assist them. However, clearly political motives have dictated that they will not support a private members' bill simply because it is a bill not brought by the Government. They will refuse to accept, agree to or vote for a non-government bill, regardless of how noble it is or how much it would improve the processes of transparency in relation to taxpayers' money. I remind Government members: It is not the Government's money; it is taxpayers' money. It must be spent appropriately and there must be accountability and transparency in the assessment process. As the member for Wagga Wagga indicated, the local member on the ground, regardless of what party they are affiliated to, is the best-placed person to make a judgement call on a lot of these applicants, groups and organisations to ensure fair and equitable funding is distributed where it is most needed. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:27):** I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. At the outset I place on the record my appreciation of the member for Barwon for this piece of work and acknowledge the contributions of those members in favour of this bill. I know that those members want to represent their communities with as much vigour, effort and transparency as possible, and I applaud that. However, I am unable to support the bill at this time. I appreciate the comments made by the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Orange about wanting to have a fair go at representing their communities at announcements when community organisations and members are successful in receiving government grants. However, I will go into some details as to why I am not able to support the bill as it stands.

The bill proposes to amend the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 to insert a new miscellaneous clause to require entities responsible for deciding grants applications for government money to disclose certain information to the relevant member of Parliament. The purpose of the bill is to require the government entities responsible for administering and deciding on grants applications of government funds to disclose certain information to the relevant member of Parliament. As outlined in schedule 1 [2] section 10.6 it is proposed that this would be achieved by the local member being informed by the agency or the Minister of the following stages in the process: firstly, when the entity—that is the government body—receives the application from the community. We have heard other members in this place talk about the quantum that we are looking at is perhaps

in the hundreds of thousands of notifications that would need to be built into the current system of government for that to be facilitated.

Secondly, the time frame for deciding the application. That allows the member to diarise and be aware of when an announcement, either successful or unsuccessful in the application, is due to be made. Again, that would trigger another alert to the MP. Thirdly, a decision about whether to pay the grant to the applicant, or if a decision is made to pay the grant to the applicant, the amount to be paid and when and where the decision will be announced. I highlight that final point a little more: section 10.6 (3) (d) (ii), when and where the decision will be announced. I reflect on the time when I was a Minister in the Berejiklian Government, that decision about when and where decisions will be announced is not as forward planned as perhaps one may think. I recall a number of occasions when my diary was being planned out weeks in advance and everything was being locked in—travel, visits, briefings, community consultation roundtable events, announcements, visits to schools, hospitals—you name it, it was all planned out.

At times my diary was planned and locked in six to eight weeks in advance. During that period was when I may, as a local member, be notified, or as the Minister responsible, be notified that something had been approved. The ability to slot that in and be in attendance at that announcement was often at the very last minute. Practically, enabling that last point to be reasonably facilitated is quite problematic. I understand the desire, the wish and the viewpoint of the member for Barwon by including that in the bill, but having been on the other side of practically implementing that, it is quite problematic at times.

The amendment includes the capacity to exclude the local member from the future provision of this information if that person discloses unreleased information without the consent of the grant decision-maker. It does not preclude government from announcing grants; however, it does provide for the inclusion of the elected representatives in that process. Effectively, the bill will mean that every member of the Legislative Assembly is to be advised on every grant application made by entities and individuals within their constituency for every grant program administered by government entities. As I said before, that is a lot of grants. This is simply not practical, given the current transaction volume of grants applications processed by government entities. It will also significantly increase the administrative and reporting burden on government entities and increase costs to the Government, and ultimately to the taxpayers, to implement. It will also take away money from the community, which is the ultimate beneficiary of all grants.

Currently there are over 1,000 grant programs that are administered by over 50 government entities, well exceeding more than one million applications every year. It is not possible to provide the information proposed in the bill, especially to each relevant member of Parliament on each grant application received for every grant program. If government entities are to meet such disclosure requirements, it would involve introducing additional processes, making changes to their systems and practices, and hiring additional staff. It would be necessary to introduce additional steps in the grants administration process—for example, to assess each grant application on a case-by-case basis and then to determine the information to be disclosed to the relevant member of Parliament.

What I had not included in my speech at the time I wrote it was the fact that when there are redistributions of boundaries, the identification of who is the relevant member within a geographical area every eight years changes. That is another layer of tweaking, adjusting and realigning systems and internal processes, and automatic computer-generated notifications. It is another layer of complexity. I have been the member for Mulgoa for over 10 years. Just last year in the community grants program I received notification of the successful grant applicants, and I was receiving applications from neighbouring electorates. Even under the current processes that we have where government entities notify local members of Parliament, which is a part of the process of that particular grant application, errors still happen. The process that we have now is not 100 per cent perfect all the time. This proposal will put in another excessive layer of information sharing to members of Parliament right across the board in all electorates. It really is a very big ask.

The amendment will also extend the time frame for processing and finalising grants applications, which will cause unnecessary delays in the delivery of these programs to the constituents of New South Wales due to the unnecessary administrative burden. It will also impact the value for money assessment that underpins many grant processes. The administrative effort and burden on government entities of introducing these processes and system changes, and the resulting cost increases and time delays will be substantial and will not lead to improvement in the grants administration process. There are also strong concerns that early disclosure of information could lead to probity issues and the inadvertent breaching of privacy laws. Further, the Government already has in place good governance for grants administration, including systems, processes and guidelines. Government entities have systems to ensure effective, fair and timely assessment of grant applications and proper practices for routine disclosure of grants outcomes once the grant administration process has concluded.

[*Extension of time*]

The New South Wales *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration* provides detailed guidance to entities on establishing sound systems and processes for governance, accountability and transparency in grants administration. This practice guide is currently under review and it will be refined to reflect linkages to the delivery of outcomes, best practice grants administration and alignment to evaluation processes. In addition to this general guidance to the sector, many government entities have developed their own specific guidelines designed for the different types of grant programs administered by those entities.

I mention also that it is premature to consider the amendments proposed in this private member's bill, given that the Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee [PAC] inquiry is looking into integrity, efficacy and value for money for New South Wales Government grants programs. It delivered its first report on 31 March this year, but the final report is not due until 29 October. I am unsure whether it has been delivered—perhaps someone in the House can update me. It will provide recommendations to the Government on improving the grants administration process. I look forward to receiving those recommendations. The Government will take the time necessary to carefully consider all of the recommendations from the inquiry.

The Government will also consider findings of two performance audits conducted by the Auditor-General. The first of those is a whole-of-government review to assess whether grants are being effectively targeted, administered and delivered to achieve expected outcomes, looking at grants administration, governance, probity and benefits realisation. The second performance audit is of Treasury and selected agencies to assess the \$750 million grant for disaster relief through the Small Business Support Fund, looking at how effectively the grant program was administered and assess the benefits that have been achieved. In closing, the finding of the PAC inquiry and the performance audits by the Auditor-General potentially identify further recommendations that the Government can implement to improve transparency and accountability in grants administration. Therefore, the Government opposes the bill on the basis that it will not only be impractical and costly to implement, but also significantly increase the administrative burden on Government entities and will not result in tangible benefits to the transparency and governance of grants programs.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:39):** I contribute to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, which was introduced in the other place by the Hon. Robert Borsak, and I acknowledge his efforts and comments on the bill. I also thank the member for Barwon, who has carriage of the bill in this House. I note the speech of the member for Mulgoa—whom I have a lot of time and respect for—regarding last-minute announcements and notifications to members. Government members may receive a last-minute announcement or notification but non-Government members do not receive notification at all, which is why the bill is important. I draw to the attention of members the argument advanced by the member for Mulgoa about the level of complexity in the bill—what a load of baloney!

It is very simple: The role of the Government is to inform everybody. There is no level of complexity involved in sending a simple email—we might as well send messages via carrier pigeon or on stone tablets to inform members of what is going on in their own electorates. That argument does not cut it at all. It is called professional courtesy. All members in this House—irrespective of political party—and the electorates we represent should receive the professional courtesy of being informed about grants that have been applied for, will be given or will be announced. It is as simple as that, and that is why the bill is before the House. I thank the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for introducing the bill. I support the comments made by my colleagues in this place and in the other place about the bill.

The object of the bill is to enable members of Parliament to be informed of government grant money that is made available to applicants in the electorates they represent. The bill is intended to stop this Government or any future government from using taxpayer money for political gain and to provide transparency—that is the critical word—in the grants process. It is an unstated truth that politicising the grants process does occur and, while the Premier may think it is acceptable for any government to do that, it is ethically wrong and should be stopped. The Government has a habit of trying to lure community groups and local government with the promise of grants, thereby securing votes that it may not have received if State funds were not at its disposal. That is political manipulation of the public at its worst.

It is no coincidence that many funding announcements are made across all areas by the Government around election time, particularly in marginal seats. The member for Orange identified an occasion when a former Premier announced that a stadium would be built in Orange and then said, "But guess what? If you don't vote for us you're not going to get funding for that stadium." It is no coincidence that even without the prospect of an election in sight, the overwhelming majority of government grants across all areas are allocated in electorates where the elected member is a member of the Coalition. A case in point is the second round of approvals for the Cooler Classrooms Program, in which the schools that were selected for air-conditioning installation were, unsurprisingly, located in Coalition seats.

Elected members with competing political interests and the taxpayers who are footing the bill are excluded from the grants process and are merely expected to trust that the Government will do the right thing and allocate funds based on merit and need. Unfortunately, that is not happening. More and more often, funds that should be made available on a recurrent basis are allocated via discretionary grants where the Government decides who gets what. As the representative of an electorate in south-west Sydney, I can say truthfully that Fairfield has not seen vital discretionary funding in a long while. Applicants who have successfully navigated the maze of government requirements in the application process and who have actually obtained a grant inevitably do not receive those funds immediately. Instead, they must wait until the relevant Minister or government representative travels to the electorate to make the announcement amid a flurry of press activity.

Essentially, some organisations' ability to continue to deliver vital services depends upon the schedule of government representatives. As an elected member of Parliament, I consider it my job to inform community groups and organisations of the grants that may be available to them. Over the years I have developed a close relationship with many groups in the electorate, such as Food Angel, CORE Community Services and the Fairfield branch of the Salvation Army—to name a few. I have also had the pleasure of getting to know other organisations that generously offered to assist the community during the recent lockdown, such as Good360 Australia, Helping Hands and Shayna Humanitarian Services. Those organisations continue to assist the community. It is disheartening to know that, despite my close relationship with those groups, my position as a local non-Government member of Parliament means that I will be excluded from any contribution towards, and indeed from any knowledge of, the progression and outcome of any application for funding.

Even more disturbing is the underlying possibility that any organisation that applies for a grant in the electorate of a non-Government member may be precluded from consideration. The allocation of funding should be merit based and should not be political. There should be a bipartisan effort to ensure that all electorates in New South Wales are treated equally in the application process and are all given the chance to thrive. Taxpayer money should be treated not as an extension of the Coalition's campaign fundraising, but as a means of providing funds to all communities, regardless of their political preferences. The Hon. Robert Borsak spoke in the other place about a troubling development: Successful applicants may be made to sign non-disclosure agreements, which technically prevents any news from leaking before a government announcement but which also excludes the involvement of the local member. Each and every elected member of Parliament in this place has built relationships with community groups and organisations in their electorates over time.

The lack of transparency that results from non-disclosure agreements will immediately place a barrier between members and organisations, despite the fact that they may have worked together to improve service delivery by obtaining a grant. That undermines the very nature of our roles as advocates for our community. The need for transparency is the behind the drafting of the bill. In recent times the people of New South Wales have seen what can happen without transparency. In the electorate of Wagga Wagga, recent developments have laid bare the exorbitant amount of funding that that electorate received from the Government—while other electorates, particularly in south-west Sydney, struggled to deliver vital services for people who are doing it tough. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House for its indulgence. The pandemic has highlighted the many organisations in my electorate that require vital government funding to deliver essential services to vulnerable members of the community. From the beginning of the lockdown in June 2021, the electorate of Fairfield suffered through harsh public health restrictions. Were it not for the community groups and charitable organisations that stepped up to deliver food and essential services to those suffering from financial distress, many Fairfield residents would have suffered even more. Yet those organisation are woefully underfunded. Operating out of front yards, church halls and household kitchens, the organisations desperately need government funding to build appropriate spaces, purchase kitchen equipment and acquire transportation vehicles. Government funding would equip them with the resources to continue their support of the community. Many of those organisations foot the bill to provide essential services or rely on the generosity of local businesses.

That should not be happening. It is incumbent upon the Government to acknowledge the invaluable service that those organisations provide for communities that are in dire straits by allocating the necessary funding to ensure the efficient and continuous delivery of those services. Transparency would not leave a member of Parliament wondering whether or not funding has been allocated. It is essential that all members of Parliament be aware not only of what funding is available but also of what has been achieved. A member of Parliament should not have to rely on a Government Information Public Access Act application or an announcement by the Government on television or in the newspaper to know what funding has been allocated to his or her electorate. The information should be readily available and the relevant member be part of the process. Who better to know of the community's needs than the elected member who represents it? Therefore, it is essential to include the member in the process to ensure government funding is allocated to the organisations that need it. It should be a bipartisan effort for the benefit of all, which is sadly lacking, given the recent revelations of mismanagement of

grants by this Government show. The bill will deter governments that choose to act in a corrupt manner and use taxpayer money for political gain.

Schedule 1 [2] to the bill states that the local member will be informed by the agency or Minister of the following: when the application was received; how long the decision-making process took; whether the application was successful, and, if so, how much will be paid; and when an announcement will be made. The bill provides for the exclusion of a local member from any further information should he or she disclose the information without the consent of the decision-maker. The Government will continue to be able to make announcements, with the provision that the elected representative be included. It will decrease the opportunity to exclude opposing political members from the announcement of what is ostensibly a taxpayer-funded grant. The bill may assist in the return of recurrent funding, which has been increasingly replaced by discretionary grants. I thank all involved in the drafting of this bill. I thank the honourable members in the other place and the member for Barwon, Roy Butler, for the carriage of the bill in this House. I commend the bill to the House

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:51):** I speak in support of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, which the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party brought to this House after passing it in the other place. I have long been concerned about the role competitive grants play in funding, not just community facilities or artistic projects but more and more vital infrastructure across our State. Every council and every community group is now familiar with the rigmarole of applying for grants and the hoops they have to jump through. Their complaint is not with the principle. On paper, grants sound like a great idea. Applications will be assessed on merit, and the money will go to the greatest need. But in scandal after scandal in this State and around the country, we know that is not the case. Until just last month we had a Deputy Premier—who I note is still drawing a salary—who was proud to call himself "Pork Barilaro". Call me a cynic, but I was hardly shocked when I heard from ICAC how little role merit played in funding decisions in the Riverina.

What really stings the council and community groups of my electorate is that they still have to go through the charade of the grants process, and are pitted against one another based not on their need or worthiness but on who can dress it all up in the fanciest buzzwords just so the government of the day can use them to make itself look good. It is not something that surprises me. To me it is a perfect example of the decline of our culture, and our descent from being makers and doers to paper shufflers. It is all show and no substance. It is a government of the marketers, by the marketers, and for the marketers. Those who can sell the flashiest proposals win a photo opportunity for the Government's next election campaign. But the rural councils and community clubs I represent, which often cannot afford or attract a grant writer or PR person to compete with the big players in the city, are being left behind by this system. Grant-writing is a particular skill, and one that does not necessarily reflect the need or worthiness of the applicant or their community. Too often I see councils like Balranald Shire Council, with a population of 2,000, that is in desperate need of an upgrade to its water infrastructure. It is forced to compete with well-resourced urban councils for money to meet its most basic needs.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask members, in accordance with COVID-19 requirements, to remain seated in the Chamber unless they are standing at the lectern.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** It is no wonder rural councils feel the game is stacked against them, and resort to dodgy decisions to raise the funds they need. I see councils like Griffith City Council selling off its water to balance its budget, putting at risk the very resources on which the community relies for sport and wellbeing. I see councils like the Murray River Council gambling with ratepayers' money like venture capitalists, because it is desperate for a source of funding it can rely on. There are so many examples of why this system is not working. It is unfair. It is inequitable. It rewards style, and not substance or need. This bill will not fix the system: It is not so ambitious, and its aims are more modest. But it is important. It will signal that the Parliament acknowledges that a cultural change is needed and it takes the first practical steps in that direction.

Through a few simple, commonsense amendments, this bill will frustrate the abuse of the grant system by the Government of the day. It will return grants to what they were intended to do, which is to distribute money to where it is most needed by the community; not the PR campaigns of those in power. It will acknowledge the hard work done by the councils, community groups and local members of Parliament to advocate for their communities often over several years, and not the big government ring-ins who swoop down to cut the ribbon and fly out the same day. But most of all it will enshrine in law that public money must be spent for the public good, and that all the people of New South Wales are entitled to their fair share, regardless of where they live or who they voted for. After the loss of one Premier through a dodgy grants system, I welcome our new Premier's announcement that he intends to govern for all of New South Wales. I ask that all members take up his commitment to work for a fairer system. To that end I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (11:56):** I make a brief contribution to the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. The object of this bill is to amend the existing framework to ensure that State members of Parliament are notified of any and all applications for grants made in their

electorate. The introduction of this legislation is done with the overarching premise that it will provide greater transparency during the application for grants process, while also providing additional safeguards to prevent misuse of public funds.

The bill before us today seeks to achieve this by amending the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 No. 55 to include the following changes: Schedule 1 [2] will be amended to ensure that the entity responsible for deciding an application for a grant of money by the Government must not limit communications by the applicant for the grant and the member of the Legislative Assembly for the electorate within which the address provided by the applicant is located. Further, the entity must notify the relevant member of Parliament of certain information relating to the application, and the member must not disclose any information received without express consent from the entity.

Schedule 1 [1] will be amended to include new section 10.6, which will prevail over the provisions of any other legislation to the extent of any inconsistencies, while enforcing any entity to whom the section applies to comply with the directions. The bill before us today has come about as a result of some alleged conduct by members of this House who are being excluded from participating in community projects and supporting their local constituency with grant funds as a result of unscrupulous action. It is alleged that community groups and non-government organisations may have been coerced or forced into excluding the involvement of members of Parliament throughout the entirety of the project through either non-disclosure or agreements as a means of political coercion to successfully secure funding for their project. The bill will establish a government grants guideline to ensure that grants are distributed as fairly and equitably as possible.

This includes legislating the *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration*, which includes fully documenting funding recommendations and decisions, as well as providing reasons to unsuccessful applicants in a timely manner. The bill follows a series of Liberal-Nationals pork-barrelling scandals, including the Stronger Communities Fund, where 95 per cent of a \$250 million fund went to Coalition electorates. Three-quarters of \$25 million in grants for sporting clubs went to Coalition electorates. Despite the Central Coast and Blue Mountains suffering the worst bushfire damage with an economic loss of \$28 million, they missed out on the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund and got absolutely nothing—zero. For the Renewable Energy school grants, 23 of the 25 school grants went to Coalition electorates.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### **ICAC AND OTHER INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT FUNDING) BILL 2021 (NO. 2)**

##### **First Reading**

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

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I advise the House that the Speaker has received written authority from the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC, that the member for Murray will have carriage of the bill in this House. I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for tomorrow.

##### *Motions*

#### **DAYLIGHT SAVING PERIOD**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the concerns of residents in rural and regional New South Wales regarding the length of the daylight-saving period.
- (2) Notes it has now been well over a decade since the daylight-saving period was extended by six weeks.

As regularly as the sun rises every day, I again bring to the attention of the House the length of the daylight saving period, which is six weeks too long. This is not a debate about daylight saving, whether you are for or against it. It is not a debate about fading curtains or cows being milked in the electorate of Heffron. The motion is about the daylight saving period being too long by approximately four weeks.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Northern Tablelands will come to order.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** The best daylight saving reform would be if the Leader of the Queensland Government, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, does the right thing and adopts it, in accordance with the majority of wishes of people on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. But getting the Queensland Labor Government to do the right thing is near impossible, as the COVID pandemic has shown. As part of my 100 per cent for the Tweed

agenda, I ask this Parliament to consider tweaking the Daylight Saving Time that will have widespread benefits for the Tweed and the whole of New South Wales.

This is hardly new territory for the Parliament. Three daylight saving bills have been introduced into this Parliament—one in 1909, one in 1911 and one in 1916. However, they were all defeated. I have sought to have a bill debated to enable change. Before 1890, each local town and city in Australia could set its own time, which was called local mean time, and in Tweed today it feels as though that is still the case. When we look across the street at the police checkpoint to Coolangatta, it is a different time zone.

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

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** We have come a long way since 1890, but we can do better. The Commonwealth Government imposed daylight saving during both World Wars to save fuel and light, following the lead of Great Britain. Daylight saving would not return until 1971 when each of the States began a trial of the system. This proved to be generally popular, although not with the rural sector or my political party at the time. On 1 May 1976 a Daylight Saving Time referendum was passed with a huge majority—1.8 million yes votes to 868 no votes. Daylight saving was then from the first Sunday in October to the first Sunday in March—a very wise choice. This whole debate is to shorten the period of daylight saving by approximately four weeks. We are finding, particularly in regional areas, that people are getting up in the dark and coming home in the dark, so there is no benefit whatsoever. That is where it stayed until the mid-1980s and after that the daylight saving period got longer, which now extends to the first Sunday in April.

In 2008 I was in this Chamber when Clover Moore, the member for Sydney, moved a motion for extension. During that debate the National Party voted against the motion, and unfortunately we were not supported by our Coalition colleagues or the Labor Party. While the majority of residents do not have a problem with daylight saving, they become frustrated with the confusion caused by the time zone difference in Queensland for much of the year. I call on Parliament to honour the letter of the original referendum that indicates that daylight saving run from the first Sunday of October to no later than the first Sunday of March. If agreed to, the daylight saving period will be shortened by four weeks. I assure the member for Heffron that the cows will still milk and the curtains will not fade, but it would create common sense.

In all honesty, having young kids getting up in the dark and undertaking anything more than a 40-kilometre drive to get to school means they are leaving in the dark and getting home in the dark. There is no benefit in extending daylight saving. It is a major issue that is having a social impact on families. I have been greatly assisted in this speech by Patrick Wynne from the Attorney General's department, who has been excellent in providing me with expert advice on this subject. The motion is really about common sense. The subject of daylight saving comes up each year, but the debate is not about daylight saving; it is about the length of the daylight saving period. The last time I moved a similar motion, I failed to get support but I was buoyed by my colleagues on both sides of the House coming to me and saying, "Look, we agree that it is just a bit too long." That is the whole basis for this motion. I am pleased to see the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers members are getting involved in the debate. I am sure their constituents and the constituents of the member for Heffron would say that it is a bit too long.

I know it is a big ask. It will put New South Wales out of sync with Victoria, but I was buoyed by the support from my colleagues in Victoria, who also think that the daylight saving period is far too long, particularly for those who live in regional areas where children travel lengthy distances to go to school. As I said, it destroys our social fabric and imposes economic costs. I am also concerned about the large number of people driving at night on the roads. During Daylight Saving Time there is a spike in the number of road accidents because people are driving in the dark in the morning and driving in the dark in the evening, and fatigue sets in. There is a whole raft of issues, which is why I bring it to the attention of the House. The length of daylight saving is a major issue. It is not to be laughed off with jokes about cows and curtains. It is a very serious issue, particularly in regional areas of New South Wales. I hope this Parliament will come together and provide some clarity and support for people who live in regional areas. After all, in this House, that is what members are all about.

It will not impact on city dwellers, who still will be able to enjoy their leisure time. But for the four weeks I have mentioned, it is too long. This motion is not about whether people are for or against daylight saving. We have heard all those arguments time and again. It is not about that; it is about the length of the daylight saving period. It is having an economic and social impact. After all, members are elected to this House by our constituents to represent their views—not our personal views, but their views. I have said that time and again in this House. I hope to gain support for this valuable motion.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:08):** I am honoured and privileged that the member for Tweed recalls a speech I made in this House in 2013. As members of this House we often think that we are talking to an empty Chamber. I know the member for Tweed is attentive. I know he is one of the old guard National Party guys when the National Party really was a party that represented rural and regional areas. The problem is that the member for



Tweed represents an electorate in the State of New South Wales, not Queensland. The views he expresses on daylight savings are old-style National Party views which are not consistent with the changed demographic of his electorate. The member for Tweed needs to understand the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of people in New South Wales love daylight savings, as they do in Victoria, Tasmania and most nations around the world. Look at summertime in every country around the world; they all have daylight savings. But the old-style National Party guys know what we are going to say about fading curtains and upsetting the milking of the cows. Labor members know that too because we have spent time in regional New South Wales.

[A Government member interjected.]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Heffron has the call.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** If members opposite do not believe me, they can go and ask the member for Bega. He would have preferred me to be anywhere but in regional New South Wales over the years. Ask the member for Wagga Wagga, where I left a trail of destruction as a young person. Ask the late Tim Fischer, who used to spy on me in Lockhart in my younger days.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** That was a great speech.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I thank the Minister; I appreciate that. She has never said a nice thing about me in her life. The member for Tweed is a great judge. The advice I get from him in the parliamentary dining room about what I should have for lunch is always correct and his selection of the menu is quite outstanding. But when it comes to a judgement of what is in the interest of the people and social fabric of New South Wales, that is probably a reason why The Greens are starting to round it up in Tweed. He needs to understand that a whole community's quality of life is enhanced by daylight savings. If the member for Tweed's views on daylight savings being more dangerous and impacting on people driving had any substance, there would be some statistics that go to road safety; and Transport for NSW is not the Roads and Maritime Service of old. If the member for Tweed could produce those statistics—and I do not believe that is true—at least he would produce something that might genuinely be considered. The other issue that the member for Tweed correctly identified goes to the history of daylight savings in New South Wales and the reason why it was implemented during World War I and World War II—for one summer in World War I and for three summers, starting in 1942, during World War II. What was the reason the member for Tweed gave? It was that daylight savings was to reduce energy consumption—

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Climate change action.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The Minister picked it in one and her party has finally come on board with climate change. That is an extraordinary change in the National Party; it has taken it until 2021 to understand that the planet is actually warming. Our forefathers knew then about energy consumption. In 2021, for probably the first time in Australia's history across the entire political spectrum, the nation has accepted—including The Nationals, would you believe?—that climate change is a problem and we need to reduce energy consumption. The member for Tweed stated why daylight savings was created but then said it should be reduced to increase energy consumption.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** It increases it.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Daylight savings does not increase energy consumption; it reduces energy consumption.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heffron will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** That is why National Party members complain about it fading their curtains, because when they want to watch the television they have to close the curtains because the sun is shining outside. The young children, however, are happy to be playing sport in the park without having to turn on lights. They are happy to go to soccer training and rugby league training without having to turn on floodlights because of daylight savings.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** You cannot get the young kids to bed.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Here is trouble; he is a modern Nat and does not quite get it. The member for Tweed has changed his tack. He has been coming into this Chamber most years saying that we should abolish daylight savings; now he comes in and tries to shorten it from the edges. I have a mission for the member for Tweed. He should be talking to the people who live in south-eastern Queensland, in areas that adjoin his seat, because they have the same view as the people in the electorate of Tweed. They want daylight savings in south-eastern Queensland; they want daylight savings in Brisbane. The member for Tweed should be advocating for daylight savings in Queensland to ensure that it reduces the State's energy consumption.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (12:15):** I support my colleague the member for Tweed in discussing the issue of daylight savings and its impact on regional New South Wales, particularly regarding the length of the daylight savings period. Point (2) of the motion states that the House:

- (2) Notes it has now been well over a decade since daylight saving period was extended by six weeks.

That period of extension in regional New South Wales has a big impact on the quality of life of country people, whether in the Tweed, Broken Hill, Narrandera or Deniliquin. The sun rises about half an hour later in western parts of New South Wales, and that has an impact when children are getting on a bus and going to school in the dark and people are driving in the dark. The member for Tweed made the point that statistics show the impact of daylight savings when people are travelling at that hour of the morning in the dark. It is not an unreasonable suggestion to discuss the period of extension of daylight savings. I respect the member for Tweed for bringing the motion forward and giving us the opportunity to give a voice to country people and their concerns.

I live in a coastal part of New South Wales, but the older I get in life, funnily enough, the earlier I like to get up in the morning. University students and kids like to sleep in for as long as they can, but as people get older they actually enjoy the sunrise. When they do not get to see the sunrise because it is at 7.00 a.m. at the end of daylight savings, that is a disappointment. We should be talking to what our learned counsel the member for Heffron raised. I think he was a little bit confused. Daylight savings was brought in during World War I to reduce fuel costs and take the pressure off the amount of fuel the world was using. This is a perfect point in time to say that if we can reduce the amount of fuel we are using by working more with the natural movement of the sun, that would be a positive thing for the planet and for emissions and is a conversation well worth having. I agree with some findings recently from some scientists in relation to the impact that daylight savings has on a person's body, circadian rhythms and mental health.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Deadly.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I am not sure that it is actually deadly, but it does have an impact and I think it is worth considering some of these findings. An article entitled "Why daylight saving time could be bad for you" in *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 7 November 2021 reported that:

Professor Ian Hickie, a psychiatrist and head of the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre, says there's been an explosion in our understanding of "circadian rhythms" - the natural process regulating the sleep/wake cycle.

Evidence exists that suggests when we do change the clock by an hour, it has an impact. Some very interesting studies argue that we could have a permanent 30-minute change in the time across Australia, which would have a positive impact—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Adelaide time.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It would not be Adelaide time, member for Coffs Harbour. Given our place on the planet, a 30-minute permanent change could have a much better impact on life, and then we would avoid the circadian rhythm challenge twice a year when the clocks go forward and back. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:19):** I commend the member for Tweed for moving this motion. It is great to see so many regional MPs in the Chamber to speak about it. Members of our regional communities raise this issue with us from time to time. Constituents, predominantly farmers, have raised issues relating to the length of Daylight Saving Time in New South Wales. Their view is that it is too long. I was told that after the Olympics it was extended from four months to six months. It was only meant to be a temporary measure but it has remained.

I agree with a lot of what the member for Tweed said. Minister Pavey, who was the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, indicated that children get up in the dark and travel to school in the dark. More accidents occur as a result not only because it is dark but also because wildlife is around in the early morning and there is more chance of hitting a kangaroo or other wildlife that stray onto the road. More importantly, farmers who may have hired shearers have issues because the shearers cannot start shearing until it is light enough to get into the sheds.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Hamstrung.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** They are hamstrung, as the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales indicated. Daylight saving has a range of ramifications on regional people, and I speak to fair-minded, reasonable people.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murray will come to order. She will have an opportunity to speak.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** There is a view that daylight saving in this State is too long. I believe, and I think the general community of regional New South Wales would agree with me, that it should be shortened, either by four weeks or returned to the original period of two months. Four weeks is a good compromise. The length of daylight saving could be reduced by two weeks either side of the current period. I note that my colleague the member for Murray will make a contribution to this debate. Being a farmer she will no doubt give us an insight into the impacts that daylight saving has on her and her operations. I commend the member for Tweed. He and his colleagues are in government, so this should be an issue that—

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You were going so well.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** —he can take up easily. I do not know if we have got to 10,000 signatures or not, but petitions have been signed as well as numerous representations. I saw one petition that was sponsored by Troy Grant when he was first elected as the member for Dubbo—that was a fair while ago. The length of daylight saving has resonated around regional communities for a long time and it is still unresolved. I speak on behalf of many members, especially regional members, when I say that I believe there should be a reduction to Daylight Saving Time. People in the city love it. As the member for Heffron said, people in the city can exercise outside, go to a cafe, a kiosk, a restaurant, the gym or the beach after work. But people in regional New South Wales are a more fair-minded. Daylight saving impacts on schoolchildren, workers and production on farms. I believe it should be reduced. In my view four weeks is a good compromise. I thank the member for Tweed for moving the motion and I commend it to the House.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:23):** What has the member for Tweed done? He has exposed the deep rift in the National Party between those who support the current daylight saving period and those who are wrong. The member for Oxley talked about circadian rhythms. I thought about amending the motion to allow daylight saving all year round and to add an hour in the summertime, but that might prolong the debate until tomorrow and we have some more important things to talk about. I support the State's daylight saving arrangements. All jokes aside, I acknowledge the difficulties that arise the further west we go into the State. In communities on the coast, including Coffs Harbour, daylight saving presents enormous economic opportunities and allows farmers to do activities with their kids after work instead of before work.

Daylight saving has had a long and storied history in New South Wales. As previously mentioned, it started during the First World War and continued into the Second World War. Its original purpose was to save fuel. Daylight saving was introduced permanently on 31 October 1971. Interestingly, in a referendum in 1976 nearly 1.9 million people voted in favour of daylight saving and only 870,000 voted against it. The daylight saving period in New South Wales allows citizens to enjoy more outside activities, as mentioned earlier.

I was a farmer before coming to this place and I know that a lot is made of farmers needing to get up early in the morning. A lot of people on the coast appreciate the extra daylight in the afternoon that daylight saving provides. I never thought I would say this but I agree with the member for Heffron. The current period of daylight saving commenced on 3 October. This year it aligned with the easing of COVID restrictions. Currently our daylight saving arrangements are synchronised with Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. People who travel along the southern border between Victoria and New South Wales have different issues to people in the Tweed. The one issue they do not have is the time zone difference that the Tweed community experiences. Any changes to the length of daylight saving would need to be agreed with other jurisdictions so that the Tweed's problems are not created elsewhere. The member for Heffron mentioned a better solution, which is to include South East Queensland into Eastern Daylight Time.

Given that New South Wales is a leader in so many areas, Queensland must follow when it comes to time. A 2013 article in *The Courier Mail* struck at the heart of this issue when it stated that when it comes to time, Queensland is one hour and at least 20 years behind us. In a 1992 referendum our cousins north of the border were asked whether they were in favour of daylight saving. Forty-five per cent were in favour of it and 55 per cent were against it. They prefer to be stuck in the Dark Ages. I believe Queensland is due to have another plebiscite soon. I strongly welcome the proposal to bring South East Queensland in line with the rest of the eastern States.

There has been talk today about road safety. A study conducted by the University of Queensland in 2016 found that adopting Daylight Saving Time could have far-reaching benefits such as supporting koala conservation. That would be achieved by changing the times that people are on the roads relative to daylight because car collisions with koalas are projected to drop by 8 per cent on weekdays and by 11 per cent on weekends. So why the morons—sorry, maroons up north have not done this yet is anyone's guess. I say to all the good people of South East Queensland that we would welcome them in our time zone.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:28):** This must be one of the few issues that I agree with the National Party on, particularly its member Melinda Pavey. This is a one-off—unbelievable!—that we have something in common. It is amazing. Maybe we could have a drink at the bar tonight and talk about it. I thank the

member for Tweed for moving this motion. It was very brave. Daylight saving is a big issue in my electorate. As has been covered, in the autumn the sun rises at 7 o'clock and there is plenty of light. At Wentworth or Deniliquin it rises half an hour later, and it is still dark at 7.30 a.m. Often our children, as my children did, get on the bus in the dark. They travel miles to get to the bus and then get on it in the dark. They are sleepy and tired, and their circadian rhythms are out of whack. It is terrible. The extremes of that time in spring and autumn are terrible. It should be cut by two months: one month in autumn and one month in spring. That would make it bearable. I see tired and exhausted kindergarten kids get on a bus when they start school in February, with daylight saving still on the go. I really feel for them.

If city folk like daylight savings, they can get up an hour earlier and go and do their stuff. Daylight savings is based around recreation, not around work. Let's face it: Farmers keep the State going. In autumn we are always waiting for the sun to come up, which has an impact on us and decreases our productivity. I ran sheep. If I wanted a contractor to help me lamb mark, he would want to be there at 7.30 a.m.—when it is still dark. I would not want to muster the sheep the night before because the lambs are on their mothers. I would not want to split them up for 12 hours; I would want the lambs to have a drink from their mothers. So I would wait to muster. I would not be able to muster in the dark, unless you blokes wanted to give me a grant to floodlight the paddocks while I brought them in. I would be happy to do that; just give me another \$170 million. Treasurer Matt Kean should just give me the money and I will floodlight the paddocks—no problem.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** You might be drifting slightly.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** Well, that is the reality. We are practical and fair-minded people. We would be happy for others to have their four months, but the extremes for us are terrible. I urge the Government to consider that. We have had enough. We were not consulted about the extension of daylight savings during the Olympics. All of a sudden it just happened and we had to adjust. It is not fair. The member for Tweed should keep going. He is not listening to me, but he should keep going with the motion. He is in government, for God's sake. He should fill his boots and reduce daylight savings by a month at the beginning and a month at the end. He might even get the electorate of Murray—but I doubt it.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:32):** By leave: It is an interesting day in the Chamber today. I agree with some colleagues who I normally would not agree with. I am sad that the member for Heffron left the Chamber because he spoke about energy consumption, which was the specific reason to bring in daylight savings in 1917. There have been studies across the world and a handful of studies specifically in Australia about the question of power saving. On 17 September this year ABC Science published an article on the question of whether daylight savings reduces power. The simple answer is no, it does not; so let us put that argument to bed.

In my former role as a radio presenter for over 10 years on ABC local radio in the Central West and western region, something that came up every year at the beginning and end of daylight savings was that it was too long. On the face of it, for people who live on the coast it is a great opportunity to enjoy sport and recreation after work. They can head to the beach, go for a stroll or have a picnic in the park. There is a sea breeze. Across the mountains it becomes hotter and less appealing. But we still have our communities to represent. We are the heart and soul and the powerhouse of New South Wales, and we deserve better.

Most people agree that it is not about whether we should have daylight savings or not; it is about how long it goes for. It was extended and it now runs for six months; originally, it ran for four months. It is a simple thing; one option is to reduce the daylight savings period by a month or two. As we move further west, everything extends by an extra 30 minutes. People have less desire to be out and about. They do not get a sea breeze and they do not go for a stroll along the beach. They are sweating it out in the heat. We have also heard about some of the health issues affecting people in general and children in particular. In the morning children jump on school buses in the dark and get home when it is dark as well. Farmers, graziers and shearers feel the need to work as early as possible. If it is light till eight o'clock, they keep working till eight o'clock. There are effects on the family and there are mental health issues. We know we need to think more about mental health. Daylight savings creates mental health issues. That is part of it.

As the Minister and member for Oxley mentioned, the other solution is to make a permanent change. Rather than affect our circadian rhythms at the start and end of every year, why not make a permanent change? For the east coast of the country—everything to the east of halfway down the guts of Australia—we could permanently add half an hour of time. We could look at an hour, but that may be a bit too much. That way there is more sun and daylight in winter when it is colder, and in summer it is not as stinkingly hot at the end of the day for people in western areas. That has been looked at across the globe. In America 15 States have voted for year-round daylight savings. That has not been allowed by federal law, but it is being looked at. The European Union has looked at passing similar legislation. That would be particularly good for the shoulder seasons—autumn heading into winter, and spring coming into summer.

Some members—I am looking at the member for Terrigal specifically—will suggest that people from western New South Wales enjoy daylight savings over Christmas holidays et cetera, and that is true. We provide tourism, as they do, to encourage people to come to our region. That is great, but it has nothing to do with daylight savings. With or without daylight saving, people will still enjoy the beach. That argument falls on deaf ears; it drowns. I commend the member for Tweed for moving such a sensible motion. I fully support it.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (12:36):** By leave: Boy, I have missed these debates. We have not had a good one for a couple of years. I thank the member for Tweed for moving the motion. I remember the 6,000-strong petition and the failed private member's bill to achieve that outcome, and the many other debates like this since 2013, when I came into the Chamber. The member for Tweed is quite right to bring the issue to the House. It is an important issue for his electorate and for almost every community west of the great divide. My good friend and colleague the member for Coffs Harbour, with tongue in cheek, said that daylight savings highlights the divide within the parliamentary National Party. But it truly highlights the divide in the Chamber and in the State between those who live east of the sandstone curtain and those who live west of it, those who are more interested in recreation and those who are more heavily involved in production, and those who live in close proximity to everything and those who deal with the tyranny of distance on which daylight savings has a much more detrimental impact. That is the sad reality.

I firmly believe that a compromise can be found. The motion of the member for Tweed is eminently sensible and achievable. It effectively reverses the unmandated extension the Parliament gave to daylight savings back in 2007, when the then member for Sydney, Clover Moore, introduced a private member's bill that put an extra month on the back end of daylight savings and an extra two weeks on the front end. The government of the day supported the private member's bill, with the support of the parliamentary Liberal Party as well. I was not a member of the Parliament at the time, so I do not know the context of that.

Essentially, the member for Tweed moves a sensible motion. Members of the House spoke about the impacts on agricultural production, and they were right to do so. Before producers can muster sheep or get cattle into the yards ready for the truck to take them to sale, they have to wait for the sun to come up. Unfortunately, the world that they trade in—the global market that they participate in and grow food for—does not wait for the sun to come up. The march of time continues on. There is a real economic and social impact. It particularly impacts on school students in our electorates—in my electorate of Northern Tablelands, the electorate of Murray, certainly the electorate of Barwon, and I am sure even in the electorate of Orange—who have to travel hours each morning and evening on a school bus to get to school. The impacts are real.

Whether people want to mock this issue or not, it is no doubt a burr under the saddle; indeed, it is a calumny on the social fabric of much of rural and regional New South Wales, particularly out further west. Whether it is today, tomorrow, next year or at some other time, the Parliament will have to address this matter in a very serious and sensible way and also engage our fellow eastern seaboard States so that we do not further complicate time zones on the eastern side of Australia. I commend the member for Tweed. He is right to bring this motion forward. I wholeheartedly endorse his sentiments and the motion he has moved in the House today.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:40):** By leave: I start by thanking my parliamentary Coalition colleagues for granting me leave to make a contribution to debate on the motion. While I admire the motion brought before the House by my good friend the member for Tweed, it is a slippery slope. First it will be a four-week rollback and then it will be a two-month rollback, and before we know it we will be sitting in the dark during summer. The disingenuous member for Dubbo escapes to Macmasters Beach during daylight saving because he knows the benefit of daylight saving and the joys it provides to coastal electorates and places right up and down the coast on the eastern seaboard. The member for Coffs Harbour was 100 per cent correct.

We have to look at this matter with a holistic approach. I know that the member for Tweed has been engaging with the Attorney General's office, and the Attorney General is responsible for time zones. I suggest to the member for Tweed that he might want to mention drawing a line down the great divide and maybe moving one side of the great divide 25 years back while keeping the other side of the great divide forward-thinking. The member for Tweed often speaks in this House about his good friend Premier Palaszczuk. I noticed there were comments earlier about a plebiscite or something in Queensland about time zones. Here is a really good example; the member for Tweed could jump on the phone to the Premier of Queensland and say, "Time to work out how to set your clocks. Join the rest of the country and pick up daylight saving." Of course, that would take a lot of pressure off those cross-border issues that the member for Tweed is so concerned about.

We have also heard about the 6,000-signature petition that was tabled in this Parliament to roll back and get rid of daylight saving. Recently another petition was tabled to reduce daylight saving by four weeks. Unfortunately, only 890 of the millions of people who live in New South Wales thought it was a good idea to roll back daylight saving. While I admire the member for Tweed for moving this courageous motion, so many coastal areas benefit from the joys of daylight saving. The member for Wyong is in the Chamber with us; the people of

the Central Coast love daylight saving. The member for Coffs Harbour had a very good suggestion about running it all year round and adding an extra couple of hours to support the summer months. I know the good people of the Central Coast whom I represent adore their daylight saving. It cannot get here fast enough. Depression is an issue that seems to come on at the end of daylight saving because no-one wants it to end. It is a very serious issue.

While I commend the member for Tweed for bringing the motion to the House, it has some real implications, especially on coastal electorates and coastal regions that experience incredible economic benefits during daylight saving. The member for Dubbo is a big spender at Macmasters Beach; he single-handedly props up the bar at the surf club at Macmasters Beach. The Speaker of this very House also enjoys Daylight Saving Time at Macmasters Beach, as do so many other members in this place who migrate to the coast during daylight saving. There is a reason for that. It is because the coast is where they want to be. It is a beautiful, warm, sunny, inviting place. That is why daylight saving is so important. I implore the member for Tweed to work closely with the Attorney General on any concept that he wants to bring forward. The caveat is that he should think about what he would be doing to the member for Dubbo's holiday time at Macmasters Beach if the member was having his drink at the bar in the dark. While I admire the motion moved by the member for Tweed, I have grave concerns about it.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:44):** By leave: I commend the member for Tweed 100 per cent for his motion on daylight saving. It is not about whether members are for or against daylight saving. Let us get the record straight. We are hearing from members who are opposed to the motion that there is something heinously wrong with daylight saving. I will be very clear: When daylight saving is in proportion with the locality, it is very appropriate. For example, October, November, December, January, February and March is six months. October is early in the year for daylight savings. By the time we get to March, it is very late in the year for that harsh transition coming out of daylight saving.

The fair balance should quite simply be the four months of November, December, January and February. There is no need for October, and there is no need for March. That way we get the balance right. There is no slippery slope, as the member for Terrigal said; I know he does like a good slippery slope. Those from the inland can still enjoy the east and those from the east can still enjoy the west. Let us remove this barrier of the sandstone curtain. Let us remove the barrier of "us and them". Let us remove the barrier of "No, you can't have daylight saving. If you prefer daylight saving then there must be something wrong with you." It is not for or against; it is about working with. We in the west appreciate daylight saving for the four months of November, December, January and February. I also speak on behalf of our agricultural sector. It is not just about recreation versus production. We actually recreate in the west as well—and quite well. So it is not about recreating on the east—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Do you have Slip 'N Slides as well?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I note the member's interjection. It is not a slippery slope in terms of recreating. Try saying that late in the evening out in the west. In the west, it is about production and recreation. In the east, it is also about production and recreation. The commonsense approach is finding that balance. There is no need to make it hard on the agricultural sector at the end of March, particularly during that harsh transition phase. We need to get a little bit serious about the social impacts when we have kids on buses late at night—those youngsters in kindy, year 1, year 2, year 3. I note the member for Lakemba is a highly respected former principal from Punchbowl. When talking about the mental health of young kids, we need to bear that in mind. What happens in March when they are still out late on the bus at 8.00, 8.30 at night? How do you get them to function well in the morning—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** You can't.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you. The member for Lakemba has backed our call for daylight saving in November, December, January and February. I thank him very much. And there it is: Labor supports the motion, so why don't we? It is bipartisan across the Chamber. Let us look at that balanced approach to daylight saving. I commend the member for Tweed; there is no doubt that he is persistent. On behalf of all of our agricultural sector out to the west, I support the reduction of daylight saving. To those who recreate in the east, we love Terrigal and the member for Terrigal loves Tamworth. Let us get together on this. Let us do a big kumbaya. Let us find some sort of balance: Keep daylight saving, but bring it back to reality.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:49):** By leave: The member for Tamworth is always very entertaining. I liked his interactive efforts there, but he put something on the record that I need to clarify. My intention was not to speak. I was ready to speak on the next motion, but it seems that everyone wants to talk about daylight saving so I thought I would make a contribution as well. Clearly it is quite an interesting topic. There is no right or wrong here, there are arguments both ways. On a serious note, listening to the member for Terrigal and the member for Tweed, and then listening to the member for Tamworth, one understands that different things are required for different communities. Daylight saving does change the way in which we live for a number months of the year. It

has massive impacts. I do not come from a farming community or farming background, but I recognise that it does have an impact there. I quite enjoy daylight saving. It gives me an opportunity after work to be able to spend time with family and loved ones that I otherwise would not have. It makes a difference in that way.

For those who know how I speak in this House, I want to find the middle ground or a solution where we take some of the suggestions that have been put forward with seriousness. We recognise these are concerns but by the same token we look at why we may not necessarily go that way. As I said, my intention was not to contribute to the debate. I thank the member for Tamworth for inviting me to participate by inferring that I had something to say. As usual, if someone says I have something to say, I will have something to say. I congratulate the member for Tweed on his motion, because it is hard to get a notice of motion up. I found it interesting to watch members of the Coalition trying to say nice things but completely disagreeing with the member for Tweed. That was a great exercise in literary gymnastics. It was quite impressive. I look forward to visiting Tamworth at any time. I also love to visit the member for Terrigal's area. I go there quite regularly for beautiful daytrips—and daylight saving helps.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:51):** In reply: Once again, that was a very active debate. I thank the member from Heffron—although asking Queensland to come in line with New South Wales is a little bit difficult—for his contribution. I also thank the member for Oxley, who highlighted the travelling issues. I thank the member for Orange, who was very fair-minded. He brought up what we all know: There are some issues with the length of daylight saving. I do not think the member for Coffs Harbour understands the motion. I remind him that the 1.9 million people that he said voted in the referendum actually was the shorter version. It was not the longer version. We did not give the people of New South Wales the choice for the longer version. The member was a little bit misled on that. I supported everything the member for Murray said—basically—except the little end bit. The member for Murray knows—I think anyone from a regional area knows the impact of daylight saving on the kids, the mustering.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** What is mustering?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Mustering is rounding up the sheep. The member for Dubbo made a very logical and intelligent address. He is always precise. You can see that ABC training coming out, how honest and committed he is. Once again, he is representing his local constituency. The member for Northern Tablelands referred to productivity and relaxation. I thought that was a good angle. I come from the coast and there is a lot of relaxation there, but how can you have relaxation—unless you do it inside—if it is dark outside? That is the question I pose, but I thank the member for his commitment to agriculture. I thank the member for Terrigal. I do not think they produce anything in Terrigal other than relaxation. I got that strong impression. There is a difference with coastal areas but once again the member supports his local community. Any school kid in Terrigal would probably travel less than 15 minutes to go to school, whereas in the country it is probably one and a half to two hours for some. There is a difference there.

I thank the member for Tamworth for his support. He also mentioned kids going to school. A common theme is emerging here. It is about the kids and their mental wellbeing. It is about the stress. I have the difficulty of the Queensland border and the hour difference between the two States. The member for Lakemba spoke extraordinarily well and highlighted the number of issues. Regional areas are mostly affected. I have also been approached by many people in the city who enjoy daylight saving, but they often tell me that it is just a bit too long. It is that end bit, particularly for those people who live in the west. Their travel time is probably an hour and a half on the train, or it could even be a bit longer coming from the Blue Mountains. They are getting up in the dark and coming home in the dark. I remember speaking to some of my western Sydney colleagues in this place about the sitting hours—even if they leave here at 5:00 p.m., they are still getting home in the dark. They also have to leave home in the dark to get to the city. The member for Wyong would also have to leave in the dark to get here and then get home in the dark. There is an impact both socially and economically. I commend the motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** It is always a highlight of the parliamentary calendar—the annual daylight saving debate. I thank all members for the manner in which the debate was conducted. The Coalition members have excelled themselves in this instance.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **TRANSGRID HUMELINK PROJECT**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:56):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes with concern the proposed electricity transmission infrastructure of the Transgrid HumeLink Project and the severe impact on landowners, neighbouring properties and communities.
- (2) Supports the Government taking action to ensure the best route decided takes account of prime agricultural land and the environment, and placing transmission infrastructure on public land wherever possible.
- (3) Supports the Government taking action to ensure that compensation is fair and reasonable for all those affected, and that the option of annual payments to affected landowners and communities is available.

It is sink or swim time for the people of rural and regional New South Wales as the waves of renewable energy infrastructure engulf the land they farm and the communities they live in. The State is rightly embarking on a massive change to the electricity grid. There will be benefits for the environment and benefits especially for the city. It just should not happen at the cost of rural and regional people and communities.

This motion relates to the Transgrid HumeLink project. That project involves the building of massive transmission infrastructure in southern New South Wales, with towers as high as 70 to 80 metres—twice as high as any towers currently in place. That is the sort of transmission infrastructure the people are worried about. But it is not just in the southern part of the State, this issue is statewide. The rollout of transmission infrastructure and renewable energy projects across the State will affect landowners throughout New South Wales. This motion is seeking that the route selected for those transmission lines should be the best possible and the fairest possible to the communities they traverse and that compensation should be modern, the best available and the fairest.

For more than a year I have been calling on Transgrid and the Government to treat landowners and communities with respect. As I have acknowledged in this House, there has been a recognition of how poorly landowners and communities have been treated in the consultation process. To its credit, Transgrid undertook an independent review through its landowner and community advocate. That report, released in July this year, was highly critical and made 20 recommendations, which Transgrid has accepted. It has told me it is resetting the consultation process, and I acknowledge that that is what it is trying to do. In terms of the feedback I get from communities, the jury is very much out on whether that is succeeding. However, I acknowledge that effort is being made and I maintain regular contact with Transgrid on that issue.

The reason I have brought this motion to the House is that even if we get the consultation process right, it will mean nothing unless we listen to what those people who are affected are saying. The key issue is they want the routes to be considered carefully, their concerns to be acknowledged and compensation that is appropriate. As I have said before, we need to listen. We need to get this right now because this transmission infrastructure is going to go across the State. We have seen the electricity road map. We know there are renewable energy zones. If members do not think it is going to happen to their electorate, they should mark my words: They will be getting powerlines near them in rural and regional New South Wales. That is what concerns me. As I say, the cities will get sustainable, renewable, cheaper energy but it does not mean that we have to leave behind those who live where we put the infrastructure. Their land is devalued, their livelihoods are affected and they feel the crushing weight of anxiety as the threat of those towers looms. By way of this motion, I want for this Parliament to recognise the distress that is being caused.

As I said, I want to ensure that the best route is chosen; that it is on public land, where possible; and that prime agricultural land and the environment are considered. If that means undergrounding then that should be considered properly. It is always said that undergrounding is too expensive—it is dismissed and brushed off. Actually, undergrounding is recognised overseas as being appropriate. Many European governments are adopting it. When account is taken of the full assessment, including the negative impact of the towers and the positive benefits of undergrounding, I am not sure it is so clearly one or the other. What I do know is that the people whose lands will be crossed by these wires deserve to have an independent, detailed assessment done to show the difference between undergrounding and overgrounding.

The routes we select should not just be the cheapest; we should have the best. We should respect agricultural land and share the benefits of this technology with the communities. I acknowledge that Transgrid is looking at an option in relation to public land—the so-called 2F option. It has indicated to me that there is a possibility this option may be more expensive, which will create an issue for its negotiations with the national regulator. I say this to the Government: If that is the case, either stump up the cost difference or make it a requirement. My understanding is that if the jurisdiction makes it a requirement then the national regulator will have to cop that. That is something that can be done, and I think the Government needs to consider it as an option.

I also raise the issue of compensation and say that it needs to be modern and fair. One of the issues that keeps being raised with me is the potential for annual payments. I actually think under the just terms Act there is a provision for annual payments in the negotiated settlements, and I understand Transgrid is looking at that. I encourage it to do so, because that will address a lot of the landowners' concerns. They have seen other renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind turbines, get annual payments and they would like to see the same benefit. I add that I think benefits need to apply not just to the people whose land these lines go over but also to their



neighbours and their community. They should all share in the benefits of this technology. It is convenient for the Government to say that it is up to the regulator or to a private company, but the Government can take action—and I support it to do so—to ensure that landowners are treated fairly, that the best and fairest route is chosen, and that the compensation is also the best and fairest for those landowners and their communities. I thank the House.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:04):** I acknowledge the motion that the member for Wagga Wagga has brought to the House and thank him for doing so. As he has identified in his contribution, this is a longstanding matter he has advocated on and we, as a Government, respect and appreciate the voice he is sharing in this place on behalf of his constituents. I know that my colleague the Minister for Energy and Environment has been working with the member for Wagga Wagga and takes on that feedback. The Government acknowledges the importance not only of upgrading the transmission infrastructure of New South Wales but also of doing so in a fair, open and honest way. The power stations that have provided our abundant and reliable power are, as members know, beginning to reach the end of their technical lives. It is a false economy to try to just patch them up over time to keep them going. The Government's focus is on supporting replacement generation that will continue to deliver reliable, affordable and low-cost capacity.

In releasing the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the Government has taken decisive action to take control of our future energy system, acting in the interests of the people of New South Wales. We are doing this by providing the private sector with the framework it needs to deliver up to \$32 billion of electricity infrastructure by 2030, and driving savings of around \$130 a year for the average household electricity bill between 2023 and 2040. The focus on delivering renewable energy zones with generation firmed by batteries, pumped hydro and gas generation has been further confirmed by the latest CSIRO *GenCost 2020-21* study released earlier this year. That report confirms that solar photovoltaics and wind continue to be the cheapest sources of new electricity generation capacity in Australia, even when the integration costs of renewables, such as storage and transmission, are included. Our challenge is that the best locations for renewable energy zones are not in the same places as our existing generators. New transmission lines are needed to support the electricity getting to the cities, towns and regions where there is household, business and industry demand.

The scale of this necessary transmission transformation is borne out by the Integrated System Plan [ISP] published by the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO]. AEMO's recent *2021 Inputs, Assumptions Scenarios Report* for the next ISP suggests that the level of generation investment interest continues to far exceed available transmission capacity. The Energy Security Board, in its Post 2025 reforms, has also stated that more transmission capacity is needed in the energy system to meet increasing renewable energy generation investment. The ISP confirms that to support the renewable energy zones and projects such as Snowy 2.0, new transmission is needed in southern New South Wales around the Wagga Wagga region.

In August 2020 the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment put on record in the Parliament his expectation that Transgrid, the New South Wales transmission operator, would undertake genuine, transparent and inclusive consultation with local communities and affected landowners when it comes to planning new transmission infrastructure. The Minister has made it clear to Transgrid that there needs to be marked improvement in its information provision and consultation approach. The feedback received then, and since, is that there needs to be improved explanation and communication of why the projects are needed, why particular routes have been selected and why other route options are not feasible, as well as improved conversations on the approach to compensation. The Government welcomes Transgrid's report on its stakeholder consultation carried out by the former Commissioner for NSW Fair Trading, Rod Stowe, which was referred to by the member for Wagga Wagga. This report made 20 recommendations, all of which Transgrid has committed to implementing.

One consistent theme heard by the Government was that landowners want to see route options that maximise the use of public rather than private land, and I think this is a reasonable request. However, we cannot forget that the impacts from these projects are not just local. These major projects have a cost, and that cost is borne by electricity consumers. We need to get the balance right. This balance needs to be achieved between minimising the local impacts of projects on private landholders, as raised by the member for Wagga Wagga, and minimising additional project costs that will reduce the overall benefits—and, therefore, the bill savings for households and consumers. This is not an easy balance to achieve, as it often involves competing priorities. In that vein, I will move an amendment to the motion of the member for Wagga Wagga, while acknowledging the contribution he is making. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

- (1) Notes the impact of proposed electricity transmission infrastructure of the Transgrid HumeLink Project on landowners, neighbouring properties and communities.
- (2) Supports the Government's efforts to balance the interests of prime agricultural land and the environment in determining the best route for the project, and to place transmission infrastructure on public land wherever possible.

- (3) Notes that the HumeLink project is progressing through the national framework that is regulated by the Australian Energy Regulator [AER].
- (4) Notes that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is engaging with the AER on ways to ensure compensation is reasonable and balances the costs of infrastructure with social licence.

On the fourth point, the other concerns that the Government has heard include that compensation to which landholders are currently entitled does not sufficiently cover their loss and that the compensation framework is deemed to be unfair because greater compensation is available for wind farms and other similar infrastructure. The Government is currently working on a range of compensation options for transmission projects, for HumeLink—as the member for Wagga Wagga has raised—and beyond. This is part of broader and necessary work to ensure these new projects obtain social licence from the communities that will be hosting them. The Government has also heard from Transgrid that its scope to make changes is limited or non-existent because of the relevant economic regulatory regime administered by the Australian Energy Regulator.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has been directed by the Minister to work with relevant professional advisers and the Australian Energy Regulator to inform us on the current regulatory arrangement regarding community consultation and compensation frameworks, benchmarks for comparable infrastructure development and advice on the "gold standard" for community consultation and appropriate compensation arrangements for transmission development. This work is underway, and the Government looks forward to not only receiving the advice but also sharing it with Dr McGirr and others.

I reiterate the Government's view: Transgrid is expected by this Government to undertake genuine, transparent and inclusive consultation with local communities and affected landowners when it comes to planning new transmission infrastructure. The concerns of these groups, as raised by the member for Wagga Wagga, are real, they are legitimate and they need to be addressed, responded to and acted on wherever possible. However, we also need to ensure these new projects are efficient and built at the lowest cost to avoid the gold-plating and bill impacts that happened under previous governments. New transmission is essential for the transformation of the energy sector, and because it is essential the social licence for these projects needs to be earned and maintained, not taken for granted.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (13:11):** I make a contribution to debate on the motion moved by the member for Wagga Wagga. Only a couple of weeks ago I was in Tumut with him and Snowy River Valleys Council Mayor James Hayes. My relationship with the member for Wagga Wagga goes a fair way back, including a link with the Sydney Muslim Cyclists. That is a group in my electorate that makes an annual trip through Tumut to raise funds for the hospital. I believe their last trip raised \$40,000. We also had a link during the bushfires, when our community was able to join with Dr McGirr's community and support them. I remember getting stuck in a service station at Adelong at two o'clock in the morning, but that is another story. I publicly thank Dr McGirr and his wife, Kerin, for the lovely flowers that they gave me from their garden to give to my wife. We really appreciated them. They did not survive the trip as well as I hoped, but that was okay.

While I was in Tumut Dr McGirr and Mayor James briefed me about some of the issues and concerns surrounding the HumeLink project. I know they have been addressed with Dr McGirr and with the Parliamentary Secretary and member for North Shore. There is no argument that the Snowy Hydro is a good project. It will improve energy, it is something that we require and it builds into the road map. The argument primarily centres around some of the things that the Parliamentary Secretary has just referred to, and that is about the way people are being treated. People have not been treated right. I am glad that there was an inquiry, that it made recommendations and they have been acted on.

I am a city boy, but I spend an enormous amount of time in the regions. One thing I have learned is that one cannot do city things in the regions. Courtesy, decency, respect and listening to people and communicating well with them are incredibly important. That was the sense I got when I spoke to Dr McGirr and the mayor as they gave me a briefing. I thought that was a pretty easy fix, and I am glad that is being worked on. It comes down to listening to what the valid concerns are. As I said, the argument is about transmission and the need for energy. The idea that was raised about just compensation, I think, is a fair one.

This is a situation in which we are asking to use people's land and they are being paid a certain amount of money. But down the road another landowner might be using, say, renewable energy and is receiving a substantial annual income from that. The landowner with lines that run straight through their land at this point is getting a one-off payment. I do not think that is fair, and I do not think many people would think that is fair. I do not want the landowners painted as being greedy in some way, or wanting to stop progress; they do not. They just want to be treated fairly, with respect and the same as other people. Otherwise, if I were a landowner, I would be thinking, "Why would I allow this particular line when I can make money from my land by having renewable energy?"

Time is running short. I note the amendment and it is up to Dr McGirr what he does with that. I see this matter as the responsibility of the Federal Government with regard to the Australian Energy Regulator, but the State Government also plays a big role regarding Transgrid and the way that we operate things. To simply say that this is somebody else's problem and somebody else will deal with it is absconding from that. I know the Minister would not be doing that on purpose but it seems he is saying, "We are not responsible for this." That may be true, it may be that the Government is not responsible for this, but that does not mean that we walk away from our responsibility to treat people properly and with respect. I am glad to support the motion of the member for Wagga Wagga. Like everybody, I hope for a proper and fair resolution to this issue.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

#### *Announcements*

### **PARLIAMENTARY LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge those staff of the Department of the Legislative Assembly, the Department of Parliamentary Services and the electorate offices who this week received long service awards. I thank the members who accompanied their electorate office staff in receiving those awards today. Congratulations to everyone concerned.

#### *Members*

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: The Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services have been delayed in their return from flood-affected communities in Forbes. I inform the House that the following ministerial arrangements will be in place:

- (1) The Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Trade and Industry will answer questions today in the absence of the Premier.
- (2) The Minister for Water, Property and Housing will answer questions today in the absence of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.
- (3) The Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

#### *Question Time*

### **GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:17):** I direct my question to the Treasurer. Over the decades both sides of politics have engaged in the pork-barrelling of grants, but that does not make it okay. The people of New South Wales have had enough. Will the Treasurer join with Labor to bring integrity back to the grants process by supporting the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:17):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question on that important issue. To update the House and the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier has committed to undertaking a review of our grants framework, which will be led by the General Counsel to the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] and the NSW Commissioner for Productivity. I look forward to seeing the recommendations that come out of that inquiry. I think it is very important, certainly as the Treasurer of New South Wales, that we handle public money very carefully, appropriately and judiciously. That is certainly what I will be doing as the Treasurer of the State. We look forward to hearing the recommendations of the DPC General Counsel on what we can do to provide the community with the confidence it needs to ensure that public money is spent appropriately and through a proper process. I commit to the Opposition that the Government will do exactly that.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:18):** I address my question to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy and Environment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Coalition Government is taking action on climate change in ways that will grow the economy, and whether there are any other alternative policies or visions?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:19):** I thank the member for Manly, the rockstar politician of the joint, who has been waiting for two days to see whether the Opposition will come up with any alternative policies. I regret to inform him that all it has come up with is tumbleweeds. But I was excited to see that the Leader of the Opposition had come up with something

else—a vision. On Twitter he posted that he had committed to a "positive vision for New South Wales". I will have to call in the fair trading Minister for false and misleading conduct because I have not seen anything positive from the Leader of the Opposition—nor visionary, for that matter.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Take that down.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** That's right. There is certainly nothing positive when it comes to policy. We have seen nothing positive when it comes to the member for Strathfield. Certainly we have seen nothing positive when it comes to the member for Maroubra or from the Leader of the Opposition—but I digress. Members on this side of the House have a positive plan to build a better and more prosperous future for everyone in New South Wales. That is why we have rolled out the biggest and most ambitious renewable energy plan in the nation. The plan will see over \$32 billion worth of private capital coming into the bush, it will see over 9,000 jobs coming into New South Wales and it will see household bills lowered on average by \$130 per annum and business bills lowered on average by \$430 per annum.

It will turbocharge the bush and the cities, and it will support a manufacturing boom in New South Wales like we have never seen before. It will energise those businesses in the Hunter and the Illawarra. I acknowledge the member for Swansea, who is seated up in the gallery, and commend her on her leadership in seeing that positive plan delivered in New South Wales. Government members care about the regions, we care about the cities, and we care about building a stronger and more prosperous State for everyone. Recently the New England Renewable Energy Zone was established in the electorate of the member for New England and the member for—

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Northern Tablelands.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** —Northern Tablelands. The member for New England will be very happy to hear that our call for expressions of interest for eight gigawatts of private investment in the renewable energy zone in New England was oversubscribed four times.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Thirty-two.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** More—thirty-four gigawatts of interest in our renewable energy zone in New England. In terms of private capital and investment into the bush, that is worth around \$40 billion. To put it in Labor currency, that would be about 40,000 Aldi bags worth of private capital coming to the bush. Our policies are working. We called for three gigawatts of private investment in new energy in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone and we were oversubscribed to the tune of nine times. That means investment in the bush, that means jobs for the bush and that will help to lower energy prices right across New South Wales, whilst at the same time delivering clean energy that will set our businesses up for success in a very fast-changing global environment. Currently we are calling for expressions of interest for the South West Renewable Energy Zone, which the member for Wagga Wagga is very excited about.

I note the concerns of the member for Wagga Wagga about ensuring that the transmission line infrastructure is built appropriately by taking into account the concerns of local communities and by ensuring that we get a great outcome for everyone because everyone should be able to benefit from it. It means investment in the bush, it means jobs in the regions and it means a more prosperous future for everyone in New South Wales. But that stands in stark contrast to members opposite and their commitment to renewable energy because last night the Labor Party issued a media release opposing renewable energy. The member for Bankstown said that she had exposed the Government in its attempt to allow commercial energy operators onto plantation lands. She did expose us—we hid it in the second reading speech. The question must be asked: Who in the Opposition is really calling the shots when it comes to climate change? We know that it is not the Leader of the Opposition. Is the member for Bankstown calling the shots on climate policy for the Opposition? [*Extension of time.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will cease interjecting.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Is the member for Lakemba calling the shots on Labor's climate change policy?

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Is it the member for Port Stephens calling the shots—a member who genuinely believes in taking decisive and responsible action to tackle climate change? No, it is not. It is none of those people. I was shocked to learn from the great investigative journalist Tom Rabe, in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, who is calling the shots on Labor's opposition to renewable energy on plantation lands. It is the CFMEU.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** When the Labor Party was deciding on its renewable energy policy—

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** —it was not the member for Port Stephens or the member for Swansea; it was John Setka.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for Bankstown to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of 24 hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 14:25.]*

**Mr MATT KEAN:** When it comes to determining whether or not renewables will go on plantations, the CFMEU is deciding Labor policy. The fact of the matter is that the fix is in. If you vote Chris Minns, you get John Setka. Labor does not take climate policy seriously. If you want serious action on climate change that will grow the economy, create jobs and turbocharge our future, vote for the Coalition.

### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:25):** I direct a question to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Page 133 of the transport department's most recent asset management plan reveals a \$670 million maintenance backlog for Sydney Trains. By 2031 the number will be \$1.6 billion. Given this pattern of chronic underfunding, is it any surprise that every single tram on the inner west line is cracked and out of action for up to 18 months?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:26):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and for his interest in relation to asset management planning. As the member would no doubt be aware, the total value of assets under the management of Transport for NSW is around \$168 billion. That asset base has grown significantly in recent years. In 2018-19, it was estimated that the total assets of the State would grow by 22 per cent by 2022. The reason for that is the Government's investment of so much money in new and improved infrastructure and equipment. The good news about increasing the scale and the value of the infrastructure owned by the State is that new infrastructure is obviously cheaper to maintain and allows the update of historical equipment that is more expensive to maintain.

The challenge with that is the need to spend more money on maintenance because there is more to maintain. There are now more things to make life easier for people to get around this great State of New South Wales. We currently spend about \$14.5 billion per annum on asset maintenance, and that includes Sydney Trains. The asset portfolio for Sydney Trains is worth \$43.2 billion and the annual maintenance program is about \$1.5 billion. I am happy to advise the House and the member for Kogarah and Leader of the Opposition that scheduled maintenance for Sydney Trains has no impact on safety. There are three types of maintenance: routine maintenance, major periodic maintenance and emergency maintenance. Sydney Trains is undertaking funding reprioritisation to assess the risk associated with scheduled maintenance, along with existing maintenance activities. For the edification of the Leader of the Opposition, Sydney Trains was the first public sector organisation in Australia to gain international ISO 55001 accreditation for its asset management system, providing assurance that our maintenance regime is fit for purpose.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: That is interesting, but the light rail will be out of action for 18 months.

**The SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Chris Minns:** The point of order is relevance. The Minister should answer the question. This light rail line will be out of operation for 18 months. Any information that was provided by the transport department clearly does not stack up.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Transport and Roads will continue. There is no point of order.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I have concluded my answer. I am unsure whether that was a question or a statement.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** It was a supplementary.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** It was a supplementary question? I did not understand. I had concluded my answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I will clarify. Was it a supplementary question?

**Mr Chris Minns:** It was a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I took it as a point of order.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** What was the point of order?

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, have you completed your answer?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I have not completed my answer to the member's subsequent question.

**The SPEAKER:** It was not a supplementary question; it was a point of order.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** To the point of order: What was the member's point of order? The member did not raise a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I am asking for clarification: Have you completed your answer?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I have to the original question, but not to the supplementary question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. There was no point of order as the Minister had completed his answer.

### AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (14:29):** I address a question to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how agriculture has achieved record growth this year in the face of immense challenges?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (14:29):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. The member is a strong supporter of the agricultural sector and farmers in his electorate and, in particular, farmers on the Merriwa Plateau and the rich, chocolatey soils of the Liverpool Plains around Quirindi, Spring Ridge and Premer. There are some amazing primary producers in those areas. On their behalf I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his strong support of the work that they do to produce food and fibre for this State, the nation and increasingly the world. It is a bittersweet day for agriculture today. Our thoughts are with those primary producers in the Forbes district that have had crops inundated by the Lachlan River breaking its banks. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Emergency Service are visiting the area today.

It is a day of celebration. I was pleased to release the sixth annual Department of Primary Industries *Performance, Data & Insights* report, which showed for the very first time in this State's history agriculture is a \$21 billion industry. That is \$21 billion of gross value product [GVP] in the 2020-21 financial year. That is a 31 per cent market increase on the previous year. I acknowledge the huge amount of work that our primary producers have done, given the hardship that they have faced in the past few years: the worst drought in living memory, a mouse plague, bushfires and floods such as we are seeing at the moment in the Central West. Farmers have triumphed against all the odds to produce more and more gross value in the agricultural sector, and for the people of this State.

One of the products that increased in value in that financial year is wheat, which has increased by 541 per cent year on year. It has a gross value product of \$4.2 billion. Cotton has grown 383 per cent and is worth \$847 million to the State's bottom line. Canola is up 527 per cent and is producing \$844 million worth of value. It is pleasing to see that the dairy industry increased its value by another 2 per cent to be a \$659 million industry. The poultry industry continues to increase with an \$855 million output. The report clearly demonstrates that our farmers continue to grow their production. It shows this Government's wide, sensible and practical investment in supporting the agricultural sector, particularly in times of drought. I note the water Minister is present in the Chamber. There was a \$4 billion package from this Government to support those primary producers during the worst drought in living memory.

It took the form of rebates for transport of fodder and the waiving of water charges. It not only saved the furniture in the worst drought in living memory, it also put our primary producers in a position where they could rebound quickly into full-scale production once seasonal conditions turned around. That is in stark contrast to what was offered to the agricultural sector by those opposite. In the 2019 election year, at the height of the worst drought in living memory, the only contribution to agricultural policy in this State made by those opposite was to propose a new tax. It was a tax on tractors and farm vehicles. It would have taxed farmers into oblivion at a time when they needed government to help them. It was worse than that. Those opposite were not only going to put a millstone around farmers' necks, they also wanted to introduce the criminal, draconian Bob Carr native vegetation laws to lock up productive land in the State and deprive farmers of the right to utilise the land that they own, that they paid for, and that they pay rates and taxes on. It would stop them from growing the food and fibre that this State needs.

Shame on them—and that is still their policy today! They would reintroduce those laws. They would introduce taxes on farm vehicles and tractors in this State. When they have an opportunity to show that they have changed their stripes to support farmers' rights to farm, they voted against that as well. They could not even support them on the floor of this Chamber at the height of the worst drought in living memory. Shame on them! Well done to the farmers of this State. We will keep backing them as they continue to do the job for us.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Summer Hill, it has been drawn to my attention that a member is wearing a T-shirt. Consistent with earlier decisions of Presiding Officers and my own statements, I will leave the matter of dress to the House and the better judgement of members. There is an expectation that business attire is adhered to. I will not be heavy-handed, but I do not want it to be a precedent for people wearing T-shirts in lieu of business attire. I will not give any more attention to the member. The member for Summer Hill has the call.

#### INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL FLEET

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:35):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. At estimates this month the Minister said that the cracked light rail trams are inspected every 30 days. Yet on page 149 of his department's most recent asset management plan it says that annual inspections are performed which, "does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the asset condition". Given this, is it not now clear that his Government failed to properly oversee the maintenance of the Inner West Light Rail fleet?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:36):** I thank the member for Summer Hill for her question. I am pleased to reiterate my answer from estimates, which is that the advice I had is that the light rail vehicles are inspected every 30 days. I am happy to say that again because that is the advice I have. I am happy to tell the member in relation to the inspections that were undertaken that I had the opportunity to go to the depot and see exactly how that process is undertaken. In respect of the defects that were discovered in relation to the light rail vehicles, that was uncovered as a result of forensic investigations that occurred subsequent to routine maintenance that did exactly what a routine maintenance check is designed to do: It indicated that there was some cracking in what I understand is called a rotation bracket, which is to stop the bogie swinging around too far.

On the basis of that some good proactive investigations by the local maintenance crew then went to quite extensive forensic levels to look beneath the noise buffering, beneath the primer and then to undertake the extraordinary step of actually removing the interior of the light rail vehicle to identify the substantial cracking in the structural parts of the frame of the vehicle. That process was repeated in relation to all of the trams. So in actual fact, it is an example of where the maintenance program identified a fault before—and the advice I have is before—it became a safety issue; well before it became a safety issue. I would argue that that is a case of maintenance inspections doing precisely what they are designed to do, which is to uncover where there are defects.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Point of order: I appreciate the Minister providing further detailed information. However, the question was specifically in relation to his own department's asset management plan, which clearly shows that they only inspect them every year, and whether that would provide an accurate assessment. Could the Minister come back to the question in relation to his own Government's document, which shows that they were not accurately inspected?

**The SPEAKER:** The transport Minister is being generally relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Was that a supplementary question?

**The SPEAKER:** Has the Minister completed his answer?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I am happy to provide further information. I thought I had been pretty direct to the question. The question asked about the 30-day inspection regime. I repeated that that is the advice I have received. I have gone into some detail to explain exactly what the process identified. The most important thing, for the benefit of this House, is that I determined, together with Transport for NSW, a fix to get those trams back on the tracks as quickly as I can.

#### COVID-19 AND TOURISM

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:39):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support the tourism industry to recover following the impacts of COVID?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:39):** I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. I know he is a big supporter of our tourism and hospitality industry and all of the people who are employed in it. I know that out in western Sydney this week we have V8s rolling around night racing at Eastern Creek. That will be a fantastic drawcard for people to make their way into western Sydney, particularly around the Blacktown-Seven Hills area, to experience a whole lot of fantastic cafes and restaurants. It is good to see those major events coming back into New South Wales. Today we launched one of our new initiatives in the CBD revitalisation fund, Sydney's Open

for Lunch. We will set up a long table lunch right down George Street. We could not give a clearer signal to people right across the city that Sydney is open again, and we want people out and enjoying our city.

It is not only taking place right down the centre of George Street, we will also activate it in other parts of the city. We will do a long lunch table out at Parramatta Square where there are so many fantastic restaurants and opportunities to take full advantage of. We have York Street, Clarence Street and Barrack Street as well—we are activating down there. All of the laneways in and around that part of the city, we will do long lunches down that way. We also have at south Eveleigh a fantastic entertainment precinct. We want to make sure we activate that to get lots of people back into the city. Far too many people have not been able to work the hours they wanted to work and far too many businesses have not had the customers that they wanted to have because the Government had to take action against COVID-19. But now is the time to get our city back open for business.

I have a message for all of the other hospitality venues right around the city—in fact, right around the State. You do not have to have the long lunch outside your restaurant or be involved in this. We have that happening, so why not put on your own event on the same day? Let's make sure that we get every single person out, as many as we possibly can, to support our hospitality industry right across the State. Join with the New South Wales Government and get your own Sydney's Open. Get your own New South Wales's Open for Lunch activity happening right across the State. It can happen in the suburbs. It can happen out in regional New South Wales. This is about getting people back into work and getting our city confident again. It is also about making sure that we rebound and bounce back better from the impacts of COVID-19.

On top of that, the Government is also supporting our tourism industry with a series of other initiatives. We are making sure that we are out there accelerating our business events that are coming back into our major events centres. Once again another sector that has been absolutely critical to our economy over a number of years but has not been able to do the events that they wanted to do, so we are supporting them with new business events. We have our Kickstart fund to get business events back up and going again. They are out there and open. We can start pulling people back into our International Convention Centre, and back into the conference and convention's facilities that exist across our hotels. Once again, this means more jobs, more people back to doing more hours and more dollars rolling back through our economy.

We are also making sure that we are opening up New South Wales to the world. One of the devastating impacts of COVID-19 is that we lost over 18 airline connections to Sydney; 18 airlines that would bring people from around the world stopped flying to Sydney because of the impacts of COVID-19. As we have prioritised the health of our citizens at the expense of our economy, we have to take back the other way. We have to open back up to the world. At the same time, it has become a lot more competitive. That is why we have our Aviation Attraction Fund. We are putting \$60 million on the table to bring those airlines back and to go chasing new and additional airlines. A big part of this, because of the fantastic work of the citizens of New South Wales who now have our vaccination rates up to over 91 per cent double vaccinated, means that for people who are coming back into Australia, fully vaccinated with a TGA-recognised vaccine, they do not have to quarantine.

That is going to allow more airlines to put more flights back on routes to get people coming back into Sydney. A fantastic example of that is Qantas flying direct to India for the first time in over 10 years. That is a great example of us being able to open up new routes and get new people back into Sydney and keep driving that growth. One of the great things about the Aviation Attraction Fund is that it has been matched automatically by Sydney Airport to make sure that both the private sector and the taxpayer are working hand in hand to make sure that we reopen Sydney to the world. [*Extension of time*]

On top of that aviation fund, we are also going to be able to support all our accommodation providers with our Stay & Rediscover vouchers. They are additional vouchers modelled on the immensely successful Dine & Discover voucher that has really supercharged spending right across the State. We know that, as we come off this surge in demand from reduced restrictions, we are going to get that through summer and we want to be able to keep that going. That is why we are going to have our Stay & Rediscover vouchers offsetting a little of the cost of accommodation not just in the Sydney CBD but right across the State so that the people of New South Wales can have a holiday anywhere in regional New South Wales, on the South Coast, on the North Coast, in western Sydney or right in the centre of Sydney.

On top of that, we have also launched a fantastic new marketing campaign set up by Destination NSW. Our "Feel New" marketing campaign has been incredibly well received. We have used an amazing local artist, Azure Ryder, and a DJ group from Sydney called Breathe. They have completely re-imagined Nina Simone's classic song *Feeling Good*. That is now owned by New South Wales.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Sing it!



**Mr STUART AYRES:** I am definitely not going to take on Nina or Azure. We have been able to match that with fantastic images of our cultural landscapes and the wonderful diverse offerings we have in New South Wales. It is a completely new campaign unlike anything we have seen before based on the early feedback from the industry, accommodation provider bookings and the long lunch and open for lunch activities we are doing in Sydney. We want to make sure that those 300,000 people who have been employed in the tourism and hospitality sectors get their jobs and hours back, and that New South Wales bounces back better.

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:46):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Page 181 of the transport department's most recent asset management plan—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wakehurst will come to order.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** —says that over the past five to 10 years, funding for operating expenses has been below the required sustainable level. That has led to the condition of our public transport assets progressively deteriorating, with impacts on service. Why has the Minister allowed our public transport assets to be continually underfunded to the point where they start breaking down and where the trains do not fit the tracks?

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

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:47):** I will answer the final point of the question from the member for Blue Mountains first—the idea that trains were procured on the basis that somehow there was a misunderstanding that they would fit the tunnels. I will be clear on this point because it is important for the edification of the House that it understands the nature of that procurement decision. As members would be aware, many of those tunnels were built in the nineteenth or early part of the twentieth century. When we procure new trains—

*[A member interjected.]*

The history is important because it tells us a lot.

**Mr David Mehan:** You forgot to measure them.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I acknowledge the quip by the member for The Entrance that we forgot to measure the tunnels. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we buy new equipment, we buy it fit for purpose for all the New South Wales community—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order and listen to the Minister.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** I thought trains were meant to carry passengers.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** —including people with a disability. Member for Summer Hill, this is actually an important issue. The trains that the member for Blue Mountains is asking about have been designed fully cognisant of modern disability standards to make sure there is access for everybody, including the right facilities for people with disabilities. To ensure we could introduce these modern, fit-for-purpose trains, we procured them in full knowledge that we would have to upgrade the tunnels. Put simply, we do not buy nineteenth century trains to fit in nineteenth century tunnels. We build twenty-first century trains and fix the old infrastructure to make sure that it is upgraded to the standards of the community and that it fits with the standards and expectations of modern society.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** The doors do not work!

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I acknowledge another interjection from members opposite, because interjections are useful for edification. It would be useful if, having interjected, the member for Summer Hill now listened to what I have to say in response to her interjection. Her interjection was that the doors on the trains of the Intercity Fleet do not stay open when the train starts moving. That is a safety feature. We actually want the doors of the trains to close when the train starts moving at speed.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Summer Hill will come to order. If she continues to interject she will be called to order. The member for Londonderry will come to order.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** If the member, again, looked back into history, she would be aware that this was a matter of great tragedy that coroners have previously commented on in relation to passengers falling out of trains when the doors were not closed when the train was moving.

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** We design our equipment with modern safety features in mind.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** This is not going well, Rob.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I am aware that there is a number of interjections happening all at once.

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I am doing my best to address all the interjections. But I hope members opposite are able to understand that of course we will procure modern equipment, of course we will build the asset base of the State, and of course we will ensure that all equipment operates in a safe and serviceable way. We will undertake whatever maintenance is required to ensure that all our equipment and infrastructure stays in safe and working condition.

### JOBS GROWTH

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:52):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Housing and Property. Will the Minister update the House on how the water and housing projects are contributing to jobs across New South Wales?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:52):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for the question and for his energy in coming to my office and telling me what his electorate needs. He has some very good ideas and he works very well with his community. The types of projects that we can do in Wollondilly we can do anywhere in regional New South Wales. We are recycling our assets and building our community's infrastructure as we build jobs. It is worth pointing out, as the Premier and Deputy Premier are on their way back from visiting Forbes and our heroes, the SES workers, are dealing with stock losses along with that community, the jobs we will create building the Dungowan Dam and the Wyangala Dam will be incredibly important to those communities and those regions into the future. In fact, we are looking at around 3,000 direct and indirect jobs during those construction phases.

That information has been presented to me through the final business cases, and it is a huge number of jobs. They are in addition to the 25,000 jobs I highlighted to the House yesterday in relation to Crown lands, housing and Aboriginal housing. The projects that we are working on across regional New South Wales will change lives, and that is important. I was talking to the member for Tamworth the other day about some of the people who are taking up the jobs in the Housing portfolio. We met Tiara from Tamworth. She is a young Aboriginal woman living in public housing. She is doing a cabinet-making apprenticeship and working with Greg from GPL Joinery—I am sure the member for Tamworth knows Greg. That is an example of the type of projects and programs that we have going.

In fact, 86 per cent of those who are doing our cadetship programs, which are like pre-apprenticeship training, are women going into the trades. The Government was really pleased to send a text message to all social workers and to all people in social housing to encourage them to sign up to our \$80 million TAFE program. The Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and I are working on ways to get people from social housing to sign up to those cadetships and apprenticeships so that we have builders of tomorrow while we are rebuilding the homes of today.

That is what a good government does and that is what we do: We recycle assets and we use the asset base in housing of around \$51 billion to build better and newer homes, and to re-calibrate where people are living. Where there is a three-bedroom home with one person in it, we move that one person into a new apartment so that we have homes for families. This Government has increased social housing stock across New South Wales by 10 per cent since we came to office. We have 400 homes coming online this financial year, and thousands more will be coming online in the next financial year. We are re-calibrating and training the builders of tomorrow from social housing. Anybody who has been out to of Airds Bradbury will have seen the extra money it got from the budget to improve that community. It can be seen through its school results. Putting people together from all sections of the community has had an incredible impact on improving our communities.

As I mentioned yesterday, the Wilcannia Weir is another area where we will be putting jobs into place. We have 14 people lined up who want to be able to work on the Wilcannia Weir and 100 jobs will be created during the construction of that project. We met some of the community members out there. We had a lovely barbecue picnic on the banks of the Baaka, the Darling River, a week or so ago. We saw their excitement about how we are going to turn that community around by encouraging residents to buy the Aboriginal Housing homes they are in so that we can have Indigenous home ownership in the community of Wilcannia as we give them the jobs to build infrastructure for that community. That is the type of activity, whether it is the 3,000 jobs that will be created building dams, the 100 jobs in Wilcannia fixing up the weir or the 25,000 jobs that we have created over the past 12 months or so with the economic stimulus, we are rebuilding our communities, creating jobs and allowing the people of New South Wales to further their opportunities and prospects off the back of our asset recycling, and building the infrastructure for tomorrow across all of New South Wales.

**WATER, PROPERTY AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:57):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Given that we are in the midst of a crisis of unaffordable housing and rising homelessness, and that last week the Minister did not know that her Government had allowed the Chinese Government to buy New South Wales water, would she agree that the crucial Water, Housing and Property portfolio is too large for one Minister to handle and that it should be split up in the best interests of everyone in this State?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There was too much audible conversation in the Minister's last answer. The Minister's next answer will at least start with silence from members.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:58):** What an interesting question from the member for Murray. We have almost \$10 billion invested in projects across regional and metropolitan areas of New South Wales, record home building in the social housing space, record partnerships with community housing providers and good relationships with cooperative councils like Griffith City Council, Wagga City Council, Coffs Harbour City Council and AlburyCity. But the problem with the member for Murray is she has such a toxic relationship with her councils and communities that she wants to throw sticks and stones and not work in collaboration. In Griffith this Government is working with community housing providers to provide key worker accommodation, as well as being involved with the new community drop-in centre for the kids, but all we get is carping criticism from the member for Murray rather than a positive approach. In terms of water transparency—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** In terms of water transparency, it did not take *The Weekly Times* very long at all to understand that the member for Murray sold part of her water allocation to Duxton's. If the member for Murray wants to talk about transparency, it is on the record that she has been trading water at a time when communities were short of water during the drought. That is a fact. In terms of foreign investment in our water markets, we have an opportunity with our—

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. I think the Minister should answer the question. Does she not think that her portfolio is far too big and complicated for her to handle?

**The SPEAKER:** I will ask the Minister to continue. While the Minister is being relevant on water, the question was about the size of the portfolio. At some stage the Minister will address that.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It might be a bit difficult for her but it is not difficult for me to address these issues. I enjoy working passionately and hard every day across my agencies. I have some of the best public servants in government. We are re-imagining how we are delivering public housing across New South Wales. We have a record water infrastructure program going across New South Wales. We were able to achieve a \$330 million investment from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority in communities largely in the member's electorate. But has she said anything positive about that? Has she done any work to contribute to that? No. She does not do any work. She gets on Facebook, she criticises and she does not work towards outcomes in her electorate. We are delivering in the most incredible way through our relationship with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority for better outcomes.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** She cannot even work with members of her own party. They are embarrassed by her public statements. She has been working against the raising of the Wyangala Dam wall. Every day she puts out comments criticising the raising the Wyangala Dam wall project. She put out a statement the other day celebrating the lie that this Government was not committed to the Wyangala Dam wall. That is the type of work that she does while we work with other members and other really good councils in her community, achieving amazing things throughout the electorate of Murray and working directly with councils on things like \$5.3 million for the Edward River connected learning centre, \$18.4 million for the Deniliquin police station, \$1.6 million to widen and improve Irrigation Way near Wamoon, and \$17 million for bridge reconstruction and a pedestrian walkway on the Barham Bridge over the Murray River. This is in addition to the \$330 million that we have been able to secure from the Commonwealth, from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, with not one moment of support from the member for Murray in achieving those outcomes, which will create hundreds and thousands of jobs through her community. Water, Property and Housing is an important portfolio. We are delivering record expenditure, record investment, record jobs and record outcomes.

**CENTRAL WEST FLOODING**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the recent flooding activity in the Central West?

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the Minister has returned to the Chamber. I welcome him back from inspecting the floods.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:03):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Goulburn for her question. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and I have just returned from the Forbes and Parkes municipalities, where we have been inspecting floodwaters and meeting with volunteer emergency services and local community leaders. As we speak, the Premier and the Deputy Premier are having a rapid antigen test [RAT], which is quite appropriate. They send their apologies for missing question time. This morning we made sure the local communities of Parkes and particularly of Forbes know that the Parliament will stand beside them every step of the way throughout the latest flood crisis. Some 275 volunteers from the State Emergency Service are currently deployed in and around Forbes, where floodwaters at the moment have peaked at about 10.75 per cent. Unfortunately, that probably will not be the peak. Over the next couple of days the floodwaters will decline somewhat, but with further rain activity expected this weekend, it is unfortunate that those SES members probably will remain busy.

So far they have filled 50,000 sandbags, which have been distributed around the town and outlying villages where 800 residences have been evacuated and 1,900 individuals have been evacuated. I thank St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Forbes, which has acted as an evacuation centre. Currently, that evacuation centre is not operating. It was operating until last night, but I suspect over the course of the next week it will be operating again. There will be further need for community support from that church. The SES has been ably assisted by the RFS, with two rotary wing helicopters used to assist with evacuations and floodwaters. Overnight one extra flood rescue was made. Yesterday, in the preceding 24 hours, was the first time in a few days that no flood rescues were required. Unfortunately, there have been 33 flood rescues in and around the Forbes local municipality over the course of this flood activity.

What the Premier, the Deputy Premier and I have seen, alongside Commissioner Carlene York from the State Emergency Service, is a resilient town. As the Premier moved around, meeting with volunteers this morning, he met with a farmer who, unfortunately, lost \$1 million worth of crop in the 2016 flood, and so far he has lost probably \$300,000 or \$400,000 worth of crop. And in between those two floods there has been drought. They have done it tough, very tough down there. But as I said, all credit goes to the resilience of the community, ably led by Mayor Phyllis Miller, who has done a magnificent job in not only advocating for the needs of her community but also making sure that government and the emergency services know that they are welcome, and making sure that the emergency services have everything they need. In fact, it was only a few hours ago that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and I stood with the mayor at a barbecue to make sure that the volunteer emergency services we met with knew they are appreciated.

Of course, a post-operation review will be undertaken, as it is after every emergency of this size and capacity. I hope and I am confident that the record budget that this Government has given to our emergency services will be the reason the response from the Government is so successful. It is quite pleasing that, despite the fact that we have had 33 flood rescues and despite the fact that 1,900 people have been evacuated, there have not been any fatalities in this storm activity. Members of the House will recall that in the storms earlier this year we could not express that gratitude, with the loss of a constituent from the member for Londonderry's electorate. This morning the Premier offered the best wishes of the House to all the emergency services personnel, particularly the police, the State Emergency Operations Centre and those working out of the local emergency operations centre at Parkes, making sure that they know that whatever further needs they have will be met. Of course, with those statistics—1,900 people evacuated, 800 residents evacuated and between 275 and 300 volunteers on deployment over the course of the crisis—come individual stories. [*Extension of time*]

This morning we met with the families of emergency service volunteers, who worry every time the buzzer goes off, every time the pager goes off, every time the phone rings and every time a text is received. Those individuals are called out to do what we mere mortals in the Chamber probably would not do: They run towards danger, whether it be a flood recovery, a storm, a response to a house under severe threat during storm activity or a bushfire. Those families sacrifice a lot. The anxiety in those homes when the volunteers are called out into dangerous conditions at short notice should not be underestimated. I know I speak for every member of the House when I say that our gratitude and thanks go to those families as they deal with the crisis. As I said, Forbes and Parkes are towns that do not look back. They show great resilience. The tourism Minister will be happy to know that despite this crisis, the people around Parkes are looking forward to the Elvis Festival. Elvis will arrive in January.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Are you dressing up?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I am singing this year. Of course, tourism will be a very important part of the recovery for that part of New South Wales.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** You can catch the train down.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I will catch the train down. We were briefed this morning that some of the floodwater will stay around for a couple of months, but please do not let any of that distract you from getting down to Parkes or having a drink at the Post Office Hotel at Forbes. They lifted the lifetime ban for me when I was there this afternoon, so I am grateful for that. Again, on behalf of all members of the House, we are grateful for our emergency services.

*Business of the House*

**VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That the business of the House be interrupted:

- (1) On Tuesday 23 November 2021, after the routine of business following question time, to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Strathfield.
- (2) On Wednesday 24 November 2021, after the routine of business following question time, to permit the presentation of valedictory speeches by the member for Bega and the member for Monaro.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Documents*

**PUBLICATION OF TABLED PAPERS 1856 TO 1900**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** By leave: I move:

That this House authorises the publication of all papers laid upon the table of the House from 14 May 1856 to 5 December 1900.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide:

- (1) That, during consideration of all business on Friday 19 November 2021, the following motions may not be moved:
  - (a) member be not further heard;
  - (b) member be now heard; and
  - (c) question be now put.
- (2) That on Friday 19 November 2021, after the conclusion of all speeches on the second reading of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021:
  - (a) the reply of the member with carriage of the bill;
  - (b) the question on the second reading of the bill; or
  - (c) amendments on that questionbe set down as an order of the day for Thursday 25 November 2021.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Tallawarra B Power Station**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly review the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Tallawarra B power station approval decision, received from **Ms Anna Watson**.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to an electronic petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—COVID-19 and Education Delivery—lodged 14 October 2021  
(Mr Jonathan O'Dea)

## PETITION DEBATE

**The SPEAKER:** I note that there will be no petition debate today because there are no outstanding petitions that have reached the threshold to warrant a petition debate in the House.

### *Bills*

## GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (GOVERNMENT GRANTS) BILL 2021

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:14):** I continue my contribution to the debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. Some of the grants money was put into upgrading Smithfield Road because it had pinch points along the length of it. Smithfield Road runs through the Fairfield electorate, the Prospect electorate and the Cabramatta electorate. We were not advised of the funding for that road, and we were also not advised of the official opening when the projects were finished. The council was a contractor that did work on the project for the State Parliament with money issued by the State Parliament. We were never advised. To my understanding, neither of the other two State members were informed of the opening of Smithfield Road nor the granting of the money. We found out through a notice that came through the office of the Mayor of Fairfield.

The other project was the Canley Vale lift. During the break I found out that tomorrow is the official opening of the Canley Vale lift. For years, the State member for Fairfield and I have pushed to get that lift into Canley Vale because it is on the border of both our electorates. We were not advised that tomorrow will be the opening and we have not been invited if we wished to be there tomorrow. But that is the way the Coalition runs the process of notifying Opposition members when funding has been granted and when projects funded by the State Government are going to be open. The intention of the bill is to rectify such situations by making it mandatory for any entity responsible for approving government grants to provide oral or written notification to the relevant member of Parliament of a range of information regarding the application, which includes when the application was received; the time frame for deciding on the application; and the decision regarding whether to pay the grant to the applicant, including how much is paid, as well as when and where the decision will be announced.

The information being provided to the relevant member of Parliament cannot be disclosed without the express consent of the entity responsible for the determination of the application. As noted by the Legislation Review Committee, the enforcement of disclosing application information to all relevant members of Parliament may impact on the privacy rights of the applicant for any government grants, as the applicant is not asked whether they consent to their information being provided to any relevant member of Parliament as part of their application process. I do not know why that is a concern. It is government money; we are giving the money to the relevant applicant. They should not have the right to say, "I don't want my information given out to the relevant State member." It is money from the Government.

We are elected by the people. We are entitled to know who is asking for what in our electorate and why they are asking for it. To say, "They may not want their information given to you" is quite wrong. It should be part of the process that the relevant State member—Liberal, Labor, Independent, The Greens, whatever—is notified of a grant application when it is made. It is worth noting that under new section 10.6 (5) members of Parliament who have previously been provided information about an applicant and subsequently disclosed that information without consent may be refused information for further grant applications as a result of their failure to comply with the requirements to seek consent under this legislation. I agree with that. The bill before us aims to provide some additional transparency in the way government grants are communicated to members of Parliament by ensuring that all members—not just select Government members who are hand-picked to receive the information—are aware of all grant applications being considered and administered within their electorate. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:18):** I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. The bill was introduced into the Legislative

Assembly by Mr Roy Butler, MP, member for Barwon. The Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 enables New South Wales members of Parliament to be informed about applications for New South Wales government grants that are made by applicants located in the particular electorate of a member of Parliament. Too often, governments utilise taxpayer dollars to pay for grants while completely excluding the taxpayer from the decision. Conversely, a loophole currently exists where New South Wales Ministers can leave the relevant member of Parliament, who represents the electorate in question, out of the grant decision.

Those loopholes leave government grants open to abuse, and a particular business or group may receive a taxpayer-funded grant solely on the basis of political interest. Hardworking businesses and groups deserve a fair opportunity to apply for and receive grants. It should not matter whether a business or group resides in a government electorate or a non-government electorate. All businesses and groups in New South Wales should have an equal opportunity to receive New South Wales government grants, despite their postcode. Additionally, members of Parliament who represent and understand the relevant electorate deserve to be informed of the Government's decision-making processes regarding grants in their jurisdiction. That should include when and where the applications will be announced.

The bill amends the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 by inserting new section 10.6. The new section stipulates rules for the entity responsible for deciding an application for a grant of money by the Government and the relevant member of Parliament. The intended outcome of the bill is to curb the misuse of government grants by this Government to create a more equitable system and to ensure that government grants are received by worthy participants and not used simply for political gain. First, the bill stipulates that relevant members of Parliament must be notified of decisions about government grants. That applies to an application made by an entity, which is the applicant for a grant of money by the Government. The entity responsible for deciding the application cannot limit communication between the applicant and the relevant members of Parliament. For example, it can take the form of the entity responsible for deciding the application requiring the applicant to enter into a non-disclosure agreement in relation to the relevant member.

Instead, the bill requires that the entity responsible for deciding the application must give oral or written notice of key pieces of information regarding the application to the relevant member of Parliament as soon as practicable. That information includes when the entity received the application; the time frame for deciding the application; a decision about whether to pay the grant to the applicant; and, if a decision is made to pay the grant to the applicant, the amount to be paid must be notified in addition to when and where the decision will be announced. In return, the relevant member of Parliament must not, without the consent of the entity responsible for deciding the application, disclose that information. If a member of Parliament has previously failed to comply with this, then the entity responsible for deciding the application may refuse to give notice of information to the relevant member of Parliament.

The bill is an appropriate response to recent grant rorts scandals highlighted by the media and the first report by the Public Accountability Committee entitled *Integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs*, published in March 2021. That upper House inquiry found that there is an alarming lack of transparency and accountability in New South Wales Government grant programs. In addition, I refer to the Stronger Communities Fund, which was originally established to assist councils created through forced amalgamations by the New South Wales Government's council amalgamations program. However, the Stronger Communities Fund had a resounding lack of checks and balances and became simply a pork-barrelling scheme for this Government. The Public Accountability Committee—including New South Wales Labor upper House members the Hon. John Graham, MLC, and the Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC, amongst others—uncovered that some \$252 million of public money was handed out for purely political motives by the New South Wales Coalition, particularly to help with the 2019 State election.

The Stronger Communities Fund failed the general public in many ways. First, it allocated money in favour of Coalition electorates, often inviting the Liberal-Nationals candidates for the seat at the next election to the awarding of the grant. Secondly, the grant was used as a means of punishing councils that had objected to being forcefully merged under the proposals. Thirdly, it was designed to assist an ongoing legal dispute caused by the New South Wales Government's forced amalgamations policy. Examples of this include Hornsby Shire Council, which received \$90 million dollars, and Parramatta City Council, which received \$16 million, to help resolve legal disputes between the two Liberal councils. The committee found that the \$90 million paid to Hornsby Shire Council was processed within 72 hours and without an application form. The grants that I have just mentioned should alarm all members of this Chamber.

I am certain that my constituents, in the electorate of Prospect, would be seriously concerned with the lack of transparency, accountability and sufficient application processes regarding the use of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars for these government grants. Adding to the need for a greater transparency of government grants, the Public

Accountability Committee revealed a series of questionable grants handed out during the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires. Last year, the Berejiklian Government handed out \$177 million for projects in communities affected by the bushfires. Sadly, only \$2.5 million of the \$177 million went to families and businesses in non-Coalition electorates. For instance, the Labor electorate of Blue Mountains, despite suffering \$65 million in losses and being the twelfth worst affected local government area in Australia, did not receive any money from the New South Wales Government. Similarly, the Central Coast, despite suffering an economic hit of \$163 million, received nothing from the New South Wales Government.

While individuals and businesses were neglected after suffering huge financial, infrastructural and environmental losses, the New South Wales Government was busy handing out cash to its own electorates. The Berejiklian Government gave \$11 million to a skydiving company in Kempsey, \$3.6 million to build a seawall, \$3.5 million to a cider factory in Batlow and \$194,000 to a honey-making company on the North Shore. The New South Wales Government hands out cash left, right and centre to win over its own constituents. However, depending on their suburb or postcode, some people in New South Wales who have genuine struggles do not receive a cent. It also appears that when the New South Wales Government tries to allocate money to non-Coalition electorates, it just cannot do the job correctly. The Government is out of touch with non-Coalition electorates and does not understand what our constituents need. This is why, as members of Parliament, we need to be informed of potential grant applications available in our respective electorates. We have a deep knowledge of the different individuals, groups and businesses within our electorates and have open communication with those individuals and groups, so we understand what is needed. [*Extension of time*]

The NSW Labor Opposition is deeply concerned with the Coalition State Government's handling and distribution of government grants, especially in non-Coalition electorates. In particular, the NSW Labor Opposition is concerned that the Coalition's irresponsible handling of grants creates an unfair system that negatively impacts deserving individuals, businesses and community groups. Many important businesses and groups in our electorates are reliant on public funding, especially in the arts sector. With the current lack of accountability and transparency, the New South Wales Government can drain the available government grant funds and allocate the money depending on the Coalition's own political agenda. The result is important groups and businesses are deprived of a fair opportunity to receive much needed funds and an unreasonable competition to access government grants is created.

In particular reference to the arts, an article published in 2019 in *The Sydney Morning Herald* describes arts grant programs as creating a "Hunger Games" mentality for groups that rely on public funding. The New South Wales Government has replaced recurrent funding streams with grants and has consolidated multiple funding rounds, leaving individuals and small companies in fear that they could lose out to larger, more exportable commercial projects. NSW Labor believe that all individuals, businesses and community groups should have an equal opportunity to access important government grants, despite their size or location. NSW Labor believes that the government in charge must also be made accountable when dealing with the handling of hard-working taxpayer dollars, to avoid reckless spending. There is a large, systematic problem with the handling of government grants in New South Wales and Labor believes that the bill is a good first step in combating this issue. By making it a requirement for the Government to inform local MPs about applications for grants in their electorates and when and where they will be announced, the Government will be made to be more transparent in the handling and distributing of government grants.

The bill will indirectly impact jobs because it will affect how the Government operates its grants schemes. A fairer distribution of grants will create more job opportunities across the State and lead to more consistency in recurrent funding. However, NSW Labor shares minor concerns about new sections 10.6 (4) and 10.6 (5) in schedule 1 [2] to the bill in respect of the conduct of members of Parliament and the entity deciding grant applications. According to those new sections, members of Parliament are required not to disclose information given to them under this amendment, and the entity has the power to not disclose information to relevant members if it has "reasonable grounds" to do so. Labor is concerned that this could create a conflict in the relationship between the Executive and members of the Legislature. Nonetheless, we need to address the large-scale and inherent issues within the current system of handling government grants to create a fairer opportunity for all. This bill begins to address this process.

In summary, the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 addresses the issue of grant rorts by requiring the Government to inform local MPs about applications for grants in their electorates and when and where they will be announced. As highlighted by the media and the Legislative Council inquiry into government grants, the New South Wales Coalition Government has misused taxpayer-funded grants for its own political gain. This decreases the accessibility of government grants for deserving individuals, businesses and groups, whilst creating an unfair distribution between grants received by Coalition and non-Coalition electorates. Our hardworking individuals, businesses and groups—especially those who are reliant on regular funding—deserve an equal opportunity to access government grants. Local members of Parliament



also deserve to be informed of this process, as they have the most niche knowledge of their area and understand what groups in their electorate need. The NSW Labor Opposition does not oppose this bill.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:33):** This morning I was listening to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, and it provoked me to quickly put a couple of notes together to participate in the debate. I was amazed at how out of touch, unfortunately, some Government members are. This may be because many of them were elected in 2011 and went straight into government. They have not felt the pain of opposition, have not been starved of information and have not been put in a position where they have to fight to get a nod or some type of acknowledgement. I make one exception to that in respect of the Speaker of the House. I appreciated it when the Speaker was a guest speaker at the Australian Catholic University and the insight he shared with the law faculty and the local lawyers. But sometimes it is so hard to get anyone out to your electorate or, as the member for Orange talked about in his contribution to this debate, when they do come out, they exclude you.

The member for Mulgoa and some other conservative MPs talked about the excessive layers that are needed. God help us if we do not have some type of transparency in the grants process. I did not realise it was that difficult for them to communicate with people. I will give the Government a tip: When someone is applying for a government grant, maybe have a box to tick so they can indicate which electorate they are aiming for. I know occasionally some complications occur when services are provided across a couple of electorates. Fundamentally, the question to ask is where would most of the money go, and tick that box. Heck, why not tick a couple of boxes and state that the program actually goes a bit longer? I do not think it is that hard to upgrade the technology to then create a spreadsheet of the grant applications that people have submitted.

Just yesterday, Amazon in Kemps Creek stated that it can move 11 million shopping products from a warehouse of 200,000 square metres. That is the equivalent of 24 football fields. When people ring up and buy something, the customer orders can be delivered to 85 per cent of the population within 12 hours. And Government members are telling the House that this Government, with a Minister for digital technology or whatever he is—customer service and everything else—

**Mr Nick Lalich:** Innovation.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Innovation. Can he not put a box to tick on an application form to indicate which electorate the funding will go to so we know what is happening? Many members have identified Hornsby Shire Council getting \$90 million under the Stronger Communities grant—for what? For not even merging! "Here is a bonus \$90 million that is supposed to have been part of a \$250 million program." They were told to apply, but no other council knew about it. Right now, Blacktown City Council is owed \$250 million by this State Government in promised section 7.11 grant funding. The Liberal-Nationals Government capped developer contributions and said, "Trust us, we will pay you the difference." The Government owes Blacktown council infrastructure, especially in the member for Riverstone's area, where most of the growth is happening. Both he and I argue about getting better roads, local roads and parks et cetera. The Government owes \$250 million to the council to purchase land and everything else, yet it says to Hornsby council, "Here is \$90 million." Why? I do not know.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** It is petty cash.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** It is petty cash. How good was the contribution of the member for Wollondilly? He stated that millions upon millions of grant applications come to this Government. Millions. I ask members to think about that. I cannot even imagine what millions of applications mean? Eight million people live in New South Wales. Does that mean one in every three people are seeking a grant? I know members exaggerate—I never do; well, not today. Millions of applications. Honestly, what does that mean? There is only a handful of people who live in Wollondilly. I know downtown Bargo is considered to be metropolitan western Sydney and Blacktown has been excluded, but at the same time, come on!

I share the pain of the member for Orange. The former Premier turns up while the member for Orange is grabbing a hot dog on the sideline, and he sees her wandering around. The former Premier did a press conference 20 metres from my electorate office. My photo could probably be seen in the background on the office welcoming board. However, she did not pop in. I started running after her, but then I realised chasing and stalking the Premier probably looks a bit suss. Premier Berejiklian also turned up at a Doonside childcare centre to announce some type of policy. She was literally 20 metres away from Doonside railway station. I note the Liberal Party rejected the Liberal candidates for Blacktown council. How good is that? Then the New South Wales Supreme Court reinforced the rejected candidates but they could not run. However, the member for Riverstone is happily involved in backing some of those rejected candidates, who are now taking credit for Doonside station. So the Premier turned up 20 metres away from the station. I could have shown her the station lifts that she rejected to fund so many times. Thank God the new Premier has delivered them.

On another occasion they opened Blacktown Hospital, which is in the Blacktown electorate, is it not? Yes, it is, but I did not know they were doing that. Better still, the Government opened a minor extension to Blacktown railway station. The member for Riverstone was there, I believe; I ask him to correct the record if I am wrong. In which electorate is Blacktown railway station located?

**Mr David Mehan:** Is that in Riverstone?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** No, but the member for Riverstone and the member for Seven Hills were there. The Parliamentary Secretary was there to cut the ribbons. They got their names on the plaque at the Blacktown railway station. They have to have a plaque with their names on it. I share the pain of the member for Orange; I understand. I recall one more story. The member for Prospect and I turned up to a factory opening and Premier Berejiklian's staff—they say she is a nice person—had the member for Prospect and I guided to the side. They said, "Have a look at this machine over here." The Premier and everybody else was then invited to pose for photos. What a good set-up! How well did they get rid of us. Members want a transparent government. Good luck, member for Barwon. It is not going to happen. He is going to be voted out in a blaze of glory.

Then there is air purifiers. Across Blacktown City in the electorates of the member for Riverstone and the member for Mulgoa and in mine—we have got seven electorates in the area, including the electorates of Prospect and Mount Druitt. We begged for five air purifiers. Just across Richmond Road in the Hills District, smaller schools got about 30 to 40 air purifiers for their classrooms. We cannot even open the windows in our 50- to 60-year-old classrooms. The way they fix window locks in Blacktown is to drill holes into the window so that it cannot be opened anymore; that way it will not fall off. I note the laughter from the member for Balmain, but I assure him it is true. It is ridiculous. Meanwhile, the brand-new or modified schools down the road will get about 30 purifiers. Why can we not have transparency?

To members opposite who argue that the technology cannot handle it, I say talk to Amazon. I am sure it can move those papers around. It can move 11 million packages—that is millions upon millions, for the benefit of the member for Wollondilly—so I am sure the Government can put an extra box on an application form so local MPs can be notified. We are the people on the ground trying to support our electorates. Regardless of our political backgrounds, we are here for the community. Each and every one of us is trying to make those connections and identify which groups are doing the best for our local communities. We all have struggling people in our community, whether they have mental health issues or challenging health, such as diabetes et cetera. If we work together as a Parliament—elected by all the people of New South Wales to represent their interests—we can deliver the best outcomes.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:43):** I contribute to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. Before I commence I thank the member for Barwon not only for introducing the bill to the House but for his incredible decency. I say without dispute that in the time I have been in this Parliament he is the best member for Barwon that I have ever worked with. It is a credit to him that he has introduced the bill to debate transparency and accountability. During the time I have been in this Parliament I have been a backbencher, a frontbencher and a crossbencher. Depending on the length of this interregnum and, on any particular day, the degree to which I prosecute this Government, on some days I feel like the Leader of the Opposition. What the member for Barwon is asking for at the heart of this bill is professional courtesy and decency.

I say to my good friend the member for Blacktown, who gave an excellent speech in this debate earlier—as I say to the members for the electorates of Barwon and Orange, and would have liked to have been able to say to the member for Murray—that whenever I went to a member's electorate as a Minister, I gave them the courtesy of a phone call and also the opportunity to meet to discuss and hand out grants.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** I took you out for lunch.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** You did take me out for lunch, I say to the member for Blacktown. I had an exceptional day in your electorate and enjoyed every minute of it. It is represented by a very strong member. When Ministers are spending public money, it is incumbent on them to think about professional courtesy. Because when it comes to the expenditure of money it is not owned by the Labor Party or the Liberal Party, it is taxpayers' money. Sometimes there is just not a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do; there is a right thing to do. I would hope that, regardless of whoever occupies the Treasury benches, that people would think about that without the need for legislation in order to do that. The reality of Westminster government is that the government of the day, the Cabinet, will get to decide the circumstances in which public money is spent and will be held accountable for those decisions.

The Leader of the Opposition probably said it best when he acknowledged earlier in question time that both sides of the Chamber have used government to benefit themselves. I say this in the context of my friend the

member for Shellharbour—and I make a confession in the confidentiality of the Parliament: I have grown close and warm to the member for Shellharbour in recent days. She said in the lead-up to the 2019 election that if Labor won the election she would be opening the Albion Park Rail Bypass. Let me tell members, it was always going to be over my dead body. I would have got on a quad bike and like De Groot would have run through and opened that thing. There is no way that she would have got her grubby mitts on the novelty scissors before I had the opportunity to get there. That suggests to me, albeit comically, that if Labor had been in government I suspect it may have been shining the plaques after all the work had been done through the asset transactions. Labor would have been there and taking the happy snaps.

Coming back to the substance of the bill, I think what the public is calling for is a new level of professional courtesy. That is exactly what the member for Barwon is asking for. As much as I would commend my friend and my colleague for this legislation, because the Treasurer has given me undertakings that there will be an Auditor-General's report and there will be some further discussions in Parliament, at this point I will not support the bill. That is not to say that I will not in the future. On this occasion I will side with the Government, but I reserve my right as a cross-crossbencher to reconsider the matter at a future date.

**Mr Kevin Conolly:** A park bencher?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** No, not a park bencher, I say to the Parliamentary Secretary. It comes from a good place, and I think the debate has been well spirited in that respect. I hope that from this point with new leadership—and I commend the Premier for his appointment—that he will take a different approach and ensure as a professional courtesy that members are advised. Yes, it is the prerogative of the day as to how governments spend funds, but local members have been elected by their communities. When a Minister goes to an electorate they should think about that because by disrespecting the local member they are not just disrespecting that individual, they are disrespecting the thousands of people in their constituency by saying that they do not want to involve them.

That is why my policy as a Minister was to ensure when I went to an electorate I let the member know, regardless of what colour they were. There are plenty of members on the Opposition side who will say that, and plenty of members on the Government side who will say that, because that is just the right and decent thing to do. I say to the member for Barwon, good on him for raising something that, frankly, should be a matter of course of business, rather than the need for legislation. I see why he is doing it. He is doing it for the right reasons, but let us hope that from here the message has been heard and, regardless of who occupies the Treasury benches, they remember that they do so by virtue of the good graces of the people of New South Wales and not the political party they represent.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:48):** On behalf of The Greens I support the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. I acknowledge the thoughtful and considered approach that the member for Barwon has taken and continue the discussion about how important it is for all members to recognise that our behaviour is scrutinised by the public. The behaviour that we have seen, in particular when it comes to grants, is absolutely unacceptable and cannot continue. There is more to this than what we have heard from the other side. While there are technology issues and issues about management, the issue at stake here is about political will.

The temptation is there for governments to hoard any potential benefits, good news or gifts, as they might see them, to electorates and keep that to themselves. The Government might think that delivers short-term benefits because the member can be there in the local paper, the Minister is cutting the ribbon, and cutting out the local member. Excluding the local member makes it more and more difficult for the Government to acknowledge in the community that it is being genuine and honest. It also builds the wrong kind of culture. It builds animosity and negativity within the Parliament. The bill is about how to build the right culture in our democracy. A basic requirement is a process of respect for members and the constituency that they represent.

What has brought this to a head in my community is the issue of the amalgamated grants scheme, or the grants scheme that had \$252 million allocated to so-called "support" councils that had been compulsorily amalgamated. I am a former mayor of my council that was compulsorily amalgamated. Three councils were amalgamated and one council was responsible for over 200,000 people. We had huge problems bringing all those councils together. Ashfield Council had all its development applications on paper. Leichhardt Council was fully digitised. There was a huge amount of effort involved to bring them together to try to make it work. The Inner West Council, my council, did not get one cent. It did not even know that these grants were available. Yet Hornsby Shire Council, with a former Federal Liberal member at its helm, got \$90 million without even making an application.

We know that because in the upper House of this Parliament, where the Government does not control the numbers, a parliamentary inquiry scrutinised these issues. A handful of emails about the Stronger Communities

Fund was sent around to determine where hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars was to be spent. That should alarm members of the Government who might not be in favour of their leadership, and it should alarm members of the Opposition and all those members on the crossbench. All that the public expects, all that I expect, and I think all that every member expects, is clear criteria for grants, a clear application process and a clear and transparent process to determine who is successful and who is not.

Of course, the Government can get credit for ensuring that the scheme was developed and the grants were given. That should be the bedrock of the distribution of public funds, not the process that the Stronger Communities Fund used where there was the staggering situation where tens of millions of dollars were allocated, and in this case 95 per cent of \$252 million went to councils that were in Liberal or National electorates. In my area, which was one of the biggest forced amalgamations in the State, almost a quarter of a million people in a newly amalgamated council got nothing. Other councils got tens of millions of dollars when they were a half or a quarter of the size of the Inner West Council. That is not acceptable.

While the bill does not address that exactly, it says that there are some simple, basic steps that should be taken. Local members should be informed and should be part of that. I give members an example regarding the member for Ballina in northern New South Wales. She never gets a heads-up because Ballina was a National Party electorate but she won, and the Government does not want to give her an inch. That is the truth of it. It is just raw, clear politics. The Government would rather let someone else who is the duty MLC cover that area and make all the announcements, and the local member does not know about it. What the Government does not understand, which seems to be counterintuitive to it, is that people can see that. People are not dumb. People see that and say, "That's pretty rotten." Every time an announcement is made and the local MP is not included, people say, "Well, that's not fair." Even The Nationals, Liberals, conservatives and others say, "Well, that's not fair."

The Government does not understand that every announcement it makes is like another vote for the candidate that it is trying to push to one side. Every time *The Daily Telegraph* runs a campaign against Clover Moore, her vote goes up. The Government does not understand the way that politics works in that space. In the City of Sydney, every time News Limited attacks someone, they get more votes. It is the same with me. Every time *The Daily Telegraph* attacks me, it is great for me. It is actually wonderful. Obviously, the conservatives do not like getting attacked by *The Daily Telegraph*.

The Government brings its own prism to this discussion, rather than the reality of the politics of the day. That is concerning. Not only is it the wrong thing to do, as many members have said, but it is contrary to the interests of the Government. I include the member for Barwon when I say that we treat our constituents with respect, and we know they can see through the hubris. When they see someone who is not the local member making an announcement, they know it is poor, shabby politics that does not show the Government in a good light. The Greens say: Let us be honourable and recognise that democracy is a precious and delicate institution.

We have seen around the world that democracy can be washed away very quickly. That means members have a responsibility to respect each other and to deal with each other in a civilised way. But, more importantly, we must recognise that the distribution of taxpayer funds is a joint project because the money is used to provide grants, to encourage community, to build democracy and to nourish the public square. The Greens support the bill and we look forward to a Minns-Car government implementing the bill. We have heard that Labor supports the bill; we want a Minns-Car government to commit to it now. We ask Opposition members—and I am sure the member for Barwon will ask it also—whether a Minns-Car government will introduce a similar bill. Then we can hold the Government to account. Do not just talk about it. If the Government will not do it, let us make sure an incoming government commits to taking action. That is our hope. It may or may not happen but, like the member for Barwon, I will never be in government or a Minister so my job is to hold everyone in this place to account.

What we have seen with the distribution of grant funding not only federally but also in New South Wales is unacceptable. It has tarnished the reputation of the Government. I acknowledge that the Government is now trying to find a solution. That is absolutely critical. We should work collaboratively to make sure that what is good for the Government is good for the Opposition and the crossbench so that across the Parliament we can agree on how money is allocated. That way we can come to a position where the public has confidence that grants funding is not just a big cash register for the Government, from which it hands out money to win elections. I have pointed out why it is contrary to the interests of the Government to exclude members from the discussion on grants funding as well as why it is better for the Parliament, for our culture and for our democracy for that to take place. The Greens support the bill and commend the member for Barwon for bringing it to the House.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:57):** I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. The title of the bill gave me a different impression of what it is about, but it is quite extensive. It is five pages long but it contains one page of writing. The object of the bill is pretty simple: respect for this place. Whether you like or dislike a member has nothing to do with common courtesy. It is a shame that at times we must legislate for stupidity. I have experienced that firsthand,

having been involved in campaigns as a mayor, as a State member and as a Federal candidate. Before my election success in 2011, a Liberal had not represented my electorate since 1962. So I knew exactly what it was like to be locked out as a candidate in an area where all three levels of government were of the same political persuasion.

Unfortunately, the sad fact is that in this place, through legislation or even common practice, things are weaponised and political advantage is used—regardless of politics—to suit the party in power or the government of the day. In 2011 I ran against the local mayor and experienced a lot of disheartening and challenging behaviour. But I learned over the years that people are very smart and realise quickly that when different levels of government are fighting, blaming each other and cost shifting often the community loses out. In fact, I often seized the advantage and tried to get the upper hand over my Labor opponent. I have lived in my community for some 45 years and I would often receive correspondence from people I knew—they were not political and very objective—who would say, "Stop playing politics. At the end of the day, infighting will not win you votes. Your community will lose out."

To his credit, the Labor mayor understands that. We have had a very good relationship over the past few years and we have delivered some great projects in my community. Those projects would never have succeeded if it were not for the collaboration between the different levels of government. But the idea that we must legislate for that is a problem. From time to time people forget—and, having been a Minister, I understand that. It is a time-consuming role that takes up every minute of the day. You can genuinely forget to do something because you are going from place to place and things can often elude you. Last night we debated the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021. As I said, I have been upset about my colleagues not inviting me to an event. To his credit, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces apologised, which showed he is a genuine and compassionate human being. When he made a mistake, he copped it on the chin. I could not vote against the bill because his apology was genuine. I thank the Minister for that and I respect him more as a human being for what he said yesterday.

I had an issue in my electorate—it is public knowledge. As the Minister responsible for veterans, I worked with the local Labor mayor and with the Federal Liberal member on the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. The track is a place of great harmony, it is a place for meditation and it holds a very special place in the hearts of my constituents. Having the track granted the status of monument of national significance—which, in essence, would allow it to receive the funding necessary to return it to pristine condition—required collaboration between all three levels of government. As the Minister responsible for veterans, I did all I could to gather support across the three levels of government. The other day the New South Wales Government made a great announcement: It had awarded \$600,000 to my electorate. But, to my shock and horror, I discovered that the local Labor mayor and the local Federal member had been invited to the event but not me, the State member. Whether or not I am Liberal or Labor, at the end of the day I am the local member, for crying out loud. If you do not respect me, then respect the position and the office. When that respect is lost, there is a problem.

I believe people make mistakes—we are human beings and we make mistakes from time to time. I have seen people make mistakes, so I think it is wise to give them three opportunities. I reserve my right to decide how I will vote on the bill, but I commend the member for Barwon for introducing it. We should not have to state the obvious, but unfortunately sometimes we must. At the end of the day, there should be bipartisan support for the bill. It is common sense because neither the Liberal Party nor the Labor Party will always be in government. I commend the member for Barwon for the honourable way in which he conducts himself as the local member. That is important, and the member will gain much respect from his community for it. But it does a disservice to members—irrespective of their political persuasion—to make a major announcement in their electorate and not invite them. It probably strikes at the heart of the Minister—or the Government of the day—who does not make that acknowledgement. It reflects badly and it is bad politics. It is bad everything. But we cannot buy loyalty. I will have to think about the bill over the next few minutes. I commend the member for Barwon for introducing the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:04):** I admit that I have not had a good look at the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021 and I have not had a conversation with the member for Barwon. I knew about the bill and I believe its principles are quite simple. I cannot see how any member would not support the principles and essence of the bill. It is attempting to bring honesty to a process that expends taxpayer monies in communities through the grants system. The bill is attempting to change the present paradigm. Members would be denying reality if they said it was not necessary. It would be nice if politics was more transparent, but the bill presents an opportunity to start that process.

I note the contribution of the member for Balmain in which he said he would like to see a commitment from Opposition members now that they will adopt this process when they are next in office. It would be good for everybody. In reflecting on the bill, whether it is about grants or major announcements, I remember in the lead-up to the first election that the member for Orange contested—other than the by-election when he became

the member for Orange—the Premier at the time visited the electorate and announced an amount of money. The member for Orange may be able to assist me, but I think it was an amount approaching \$30 million.

**Mr Philip Donato:** It was \$25 million.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** Yes, \$25 million was going to be provided for a sporting centre on the basis that the people of Orange supported the Government's candidate. I have a high regard for the former Premier, but at the time I could not believe what I was hearing. I wondered who was advising the Premier to make such a political play. I remember sending a text message to the member for Orange, saying that he should thank the Government because it had just given him another 3 per cent to 5 per cent of votes. As was said earlier, the people in our electorates are not stupid. They do not like a member they have elected to be disrespected by this process. It does not matter who is in government. They want the government of the day to respect the people they have appointed to represent their electorates. If they tire of a member and move them on, that is another thing.

Government moneys, the resources of the people of New South Wales, should not be used in a partisan political manner. I cannot see anything wrong with the bill, other than it should not have come from a minor party on the crossbench. I do not disrespect the member for Barwon or the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for introducing the bill. It should be how an honest Government operates. I have been a member of this House since 2007. I was a member of this House under a Labor-led Government, and this situation is not unique. I was appalled by how that Labor Government treated me. It played out on a regular basis, proving that no-one should attempt to take the high moral ground. I have often said, tongue-in-cheek, that if we want to completely divorce partisan politics from the process of allocating public funds and grants in New South Wales, then we will have to select a group of independent members who do not have a say about their own electorate but have oversight of others.

I do not know how we can take politicians completely out of the process, but we have to do better than what is occurring now. Part of the problem is that people are sick and tired and jaded with the way in which politics plays out. If the community is not immediately aware of a situation, the media certainly is. It would be good if the Government adopted the bill. Whether or not the bill is defeated today, it should be seen as a template and framework for it to improve the situation. It is a simple bill that is responding to a situation that probably requires a more complicated response. It is easy to support a bill that carves out one particular area that is blatantly rorted from time to time. I commend the bill, and I thank the member for Barwon for introducing it to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:10):** I was not going to contribute to the debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. However, while watching it I thought it is important that members do make a contribution. I want to speak about the points that were made by the member for Lake Macquarie. He said that it is a simple bill. It may be a simple bill, but its principles are very important. When we think about what is important, it does not matter whether the bill is simple or complicated. If we need to move amendments, then that is what we should do. The principles of the bill are very important. I believe that all members—even those who may be forced to vote against it—would agree with these sensible principles. I thank the member for Barwon for introducing the bill to this House and to the other place.

Slowly but surely everyone is coming to realise that I enjoy travelling around the countryside. New South Wales is a beautiful place and when I get a chance I travel. About a year and a half ago I was with my family in Broken Hill. I promise it was not because we wanted to see the Mad Max Museum. We just wanted to have a big country trip. I rang the member for Barwon and informed him that we were in the neighbourhood. The member was 400 kilometres away, so we could not catch up.

**Mr Ryan Park:** A short trip for the member for Barwon.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** That is a regular trip for him. He told me he could be there in four hours, but I was on my way back home. The point is that I gave him the respect and courtesy of letting him know that I was in his electorate. I visited his electorate office to say hello and thank you to his staff. I think I took a photo with the pull-up banner in his office. When I went to Coffs Harbour, I made sure that I let the member know that I was in his electorate. I said I was not there for politics. My wife was doing HSC marking and I wanted to say g'day. I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for taking me to the temple. He also introduced me to some of the locals and told me about his family history and the multicultural history of the area, which I appreciated. I do the same when I visit Cootamundra or the electorate of the member for Murray. We did not get a chance to catch up with the member for Murray, but I let her know I was driving through the area. It is the courteous thing to do.

Courtesy is just one principle contained in the bill. Notwithstanding what occurs during an election campaign when each person is trying to get themselves or a representative of their party elected, there must be a sense of civility. We are representatives of a greater Parliament. We do not represent just ourselves or one electorate. It is the people who vote for us. I hate to break this news, but people do not have the highest regard for parliamentarians or parliaments. That is the case across the world, not just in New South Wales. What they see

more often than not on the news is the fireworks of members having a go at each other. I try to explain to people that most of the time we work together to find solutions. Regardless of which party we belong to, we are all here for the same reason, which is to make things better for the people of New South Wales.

When you are privileged to be in the Legislative Assembly because of the 50,000-odd people who put their support behind you, that is a really important thing and something we should never take for granted. But what they do like to see is that parliamentarians can work together to achieve positive outcomes. Something that works well in Lakemba potentially will work well in Barwon. Maybe things will be a little bit different, but when we talk about the need to increase school funding or hospital funding, wherever that is going to be, it helps people across the State.

The next issue that comes up is what is really at the heart of the bill, which is funding and funding that is fair. People would know that the Labor Opposition has a bill before the House and we will be talking about rorts. People do not like the use of the word "rorts", but a little while ago when the former Premier was asked about it because things were uncovered, basically the inference was, "Well, that's okay. We can do that." I was gobsmacked to hear that because it was an admission that this is fine. It is not fine. The money needs to go to the places where it is required. If you are unlucky enough to be in Opposition, it should not mean that your community suffers because what we are doing is holding communities to ransom when we basically say, "If you want things to get better, they will." It reminds me of a story from about four or five years ago when I first came into Parliament. I have not spoken about Punchbowl station for a long time. When I used to go to get the kids on their way from the station to school, I remember asking them to help ladies with prams up and down the stairs and to help the elderly with their shopping.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Yes, he did. Yep, he did do that.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Indeed. At that time the member for Keira was the shadow transport Minister and he said, "We've got to fix this." I remember making some speeches and carrying on. I presented the then Minister with all of the facts. I said, "This is why it should happen." Talk about coming in here with a bit of idealism—there is nothing like Parliament to knock the idealism out of you quickly. I will never forget the then Minister saying to me, "Well, you can do it when you're in government." Firstly, I wasn't in government and, secondly, this is a place that we need. I have seen a lift go to a station for a Coalition member that is not too far away that has one-quarter of the people who use it. There was another lift for a place further down the line—say, Waterfall for example—that has one-eighth of the people.

It is when things like that happen that people lose faith in politics. We cannot blame them. The public are not mugs. They understand that there is a Government, there is an Opposition and there are crossbenchers. They get it. But what they do not get is straight-out, blatant pork-barrelling and being unfair. This also stems from the fact that we have had the Stronger Communities Fund, which was a classic example to help amalgamated councils. Canterbury Bankstown city council is in the local government area that I live in and represent. Within a few years we will have approximately 450,000 residents. We did not want the amalgamation. Indeed, at the time all the local members said, "We don't want it." We were forced into it. Then we discovered there was this grant, but when did we discover the grant? We discovered the grant after it had been given, and it was meant to help forcibly amalgamated councils. I cannot understand how Hornsby council got \$90 million—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** It was \$95 million.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I thank the member for Rockdale. I look forward to his presentation because I know he has something to say. Hornsby council got \$95 million. We did not get a brass razoo. Again, it is fairness. We cannot sit here and listen to people talk about fairness and equity, but when it comes down to actions, the actions do not actually take place. There is a sense of politics, but we have to take the politics out of it. I acknowledge a couple of different Ministers who on rare occasions have shown me some respect.

The former Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama rang me up to tell me he was coming out to Lakemba to visit the Jannali Community Centre that looks after really vulnerable people. He said, "Jihad, I'm coming to your area. I think it's right that you're there." That actually meant a lot. I joined him. I gave him a compliment and he gave me a compliment. The director of the community centre, Audrey, saw me about a month later and she spoke to me about how wonderful it was that she saw us together. We went together to a juvenile justice centre after there had been a riot at the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre. There is a time for politics and there is a time to actually show unity and to show some respect.

I saw the same thing with Minister Stokes when we had a tragedy at Banksia Road Public School. He made sure that I was there. He did not close the gate because he knew that was my community that I represent, and people appreciated it. Together we went to the funeral of two young boys—no politics, because politics has to transcend that. The same thing happened again with Minister Mitchell when we were at the memorial. No politics;

do it right because it is the right thing to do. When we talk about funding, let's fund according to the people who need it and let's fund according to the communities who need it, not based on some winner-and-loser mentality of, "They didn't vote for us, so they're not going to get anything."

If my electorate needed nothing I would say, "Absolutely. Somebody else should get it." My electorate is needy. My electorate needs some help. We have one of the lowest socio-economic communities. We have issues with our schools. We have issues with our hospitals. We have issues with the traffic. We have issues with public transport. We have issues everywhere you would need to consider, yet when it comes to asking for some type of funding we either get "No, we don't have any" or we find out another way that we were never even in the mix. How do we think that makes communities feel? [*Extension of time*]

I saw it again probably a year and a half ago when a Service NSW office opened in Roselands. Everyone knows Roselands. Roselands is a shopping centre. Everyone might have a Roselands story. It was the first shopping centre in Australia and, for those who have never been there, it has a tear-drop fountain.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** It was great in the old days.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** It was great in the old days. It still is great. They had a Service NSW centre opening. My electorate office used to be in Roselands. It is in the heart of my electorate and it is not in anybody else's electorate. Here is a really interesting story. I made a bit of a fuss about it. I was upset. I do not play these games and I do not like the way the games are played on me. We came across a Facebook page where people could register to go to the grand opening, so we registered. We did the right thing. We did not wait for the Minister to invite us. We thought we would register, like anybody else would. We got a phone call about three days beforehand saying that I could not go, even though I had registered like everybody else.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** You were an undesirable.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I was an undesirable, apparently. I picked up the phone and I used very entertaining language about why that would be the case. Then I was told, "Okay, you and Sophie Cotsis", who is the member for Canterbury whose electorate is just on the other side of the road from the shopping centre, "You can come." So I thought, "Okay, we'll go along." At that time the member for Oatley, Mark Coure, who seems to spend a lot of time in my electorate, came along as well. We went there, we thanked the staff, we wished them all the very best and I thought that was very nice of them. Lo and behold, a few days later there was a grand opening where the local member was not invited, but members from two different electorates were invited and they just happened to be Liberal members of Parliament. As you can imagine, I thought it was incredibly disrespectful. I thought, "Do I put this up on my community page? Yeah, I'm going to." I was not sure what reaction I would get.

The reaction I got was of a community that was disgusted with that sort of behaviour because they hated the politics. They know that I do not play that politics and they did not appreciate it. They get that we are in opposition and that is the Government, but this is not a Liberal Government thing. This is from the New South Wales Government for the New South Wales people. When we play those sorts of games, people not only lose faith in politics, they also lose faith in politicians and that eats away at our system. The other thing that it does, which I do not like, is that it creates a bit of a mentality of it being a game. I have said this a number of times: Politics is not a game. Politics is actually about doing good. Earlier I joked about politics and idealism, but once we lose our idealism, what are we doing here? Once we lose our desire to make a difference, what is it that we actually do here? Once we lose that sense of service, what is it that we are doing here?

Once we lose respect for one another and we see each other not as individuals and not as representatives of a particular community but we see each other only through the prism of the party we represent, then we have lost the plot and we have done the wrong thing. This bill, while it may be, according to some, simple, the principles are actually grounded in something that is really important. People are sick and tired to the teeth of games, they are sick and tired to the teeth of partisanship, and they are sick and tired to the teeth of some people missing out and some people getting things. When we heard the phrase "We're in it together", we saw a tale of two cities and some really dark days a while ago. But this is a perfect example of two cities, two regions, two places and two teams. We are not two teams. In the end, after the election, we are for New South Wales. Wherever help is required, help needs to be given, whether that be in the electorate of Barwon, Keira, Orange, Rockdale, Murray, Upper Hunter, Coffs Harbour or Riverstone. We give that help because that is what we do and what people expect of us.

I urge the Government to support the bill because at the moment its record is not strong. All the evidence points to the fact that a member of the Legislative Assembly is either a winner or a loser. Our communities are not losers. Our communities made choices to elect certain representatives. That is who they want, and they do not want to lose out because of that. I think that is a really clear and simple example of why we should support the



bill. Having said that, I reiterate that the Opposition also has legislation on this issue. If the Government decides not to support this bill, I urge it to support the other one or to bring something on.

We keep hearing that a review is going on. Reviews are a good way of sweeping something under the carpet; this needs to come out into the light. It needs to be fixed. I do not want to be in the same situation in six or seven months' time when I find out about grants that my electorate completely missed out on because I did not even know they existed. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the House. I thank the House for its indulgence. I hope that some of the language used about fairness, equity, decency and all being in it together resonates.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:25):** I contribute to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021. I pay homage to the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the House. It is a pretty simple bill, but it promotes professionalism, respect and standards in politics. I think it is extremely important to pursue that path. All members in this House work extremely hard in our electorates and we fight for things. We come up with ideas, and many times governments support those ideas, even if we are on the other side of the fence, because there is a need for that support within our electorate. At the time that is to be celebrated in the community, it needs to be done jointly and cooperatively. I cannot say how many times I have opened up my local *St George & Sutherland Shire Leader* to see a story about funding provided for a great community project that I fought really hard for, and I have not been included in the story. I know that my constituents know how hard I have worked for it and how hard they worked to lobby me to get an outcome.

When the F6 came through my electorate, that had a big impact on my community, so we fought really hard to get something for somebody and compensate our communities. Then you see the member for Oatley there with his cheesy smile putting people off in the community. That has got to end. If the bill goes towards ending that type of behaviour, it is a great thing. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the House. The bill is also about not confusing the community. A lot of times people will look at a celebration in the electorate of Rockdale on a particular achievement and they know that Mark Coure is not me; they can clearly see that. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the House. I think Government members should support the bill, including the member for Oatley, Mark Coure, because it is important that we start setting standards.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Steve, did you mention me?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I did—many times.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:29):** In reply: I thank the members who made a contribution to debate on the bill, including members for the electorates of Castle Hill, Macquarie Fields, Riverstone, Wagga Wagga, Wollondilly, Orange, Mulgoa, Fairfield, Murray, Cabramatta, Prospect, Blacktown, Kiama, Balmain, Drummoyne, Lake Macquarie, Lakemba and Rockdale. The contributions, especially those from the Opposition and crossbench, really crystallised what the bill is about. It is about respecting the fact that an electorate of 50,000-odd people in majority one way or another has agreed to put somebody in as a representative. It is disrespectful to those people when a Government member shows up without the local member or without the knowledge of the local member and makes announcements about grant funding.

I acknowledge that there have been times where I certainly have been contacted by Ministers travelling in for different reasons. I cannot fault the level of communication of the member for Kiama and former Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. When I travel into the Deputy Speaker's electorate, she knows that I send her text messages and let her know that I am in her electorate, even though I am not there for any kind of business and am just travelling through looking for a feed. The same could be said for the member for Orange and the member for Coffs Harbour.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I note the member for Barwon did not make time for a coffee.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** It is a long way to go. When I travel to Coffs Harbour, I send a text or have a phone call. I would do the same for the member for Upper Hunter. Not so much the metro electorates because, unlike the bush electorates, we drive through the metro ones in about two minutes flat, whereas my electorate takes a bit longer.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Which you remind me of all the time.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** That is right; we have had that discussion. I acknowledge the respectful tone of the debate. It had a bit of levity, but generally it was very respectful. I remind the House that the bill passed the Legislative Council, the House of review, without amendment. I address some points made by members for the electorates of Castle Hill, Riverstone, Wollondilly and Mulgoa. Most Government contributions talked about the volume of grants, the quantum of grants, and how that would generate a significant workload. That is interesting given that the grants processes are digitised. That got me thinking, does the Government have any capacity or any

successful projects where digital information is collated from across multiple sources, centralised and reported on? Does anyone know? Does anyone have any ideas?

**Mr Mark Coure:** Sorry, what was the question? I missed it.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** Have you ever seen the Government successfully digitise a platform and take information from multiple sources, bring it all together—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Barwon will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** Sorry—the ability to take information from multiple sources, collate it, bring it together and report on it? Madam Deputy Speaker, have you seen any examples of where the Government has been able to do that?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am not here to answer your questions, member for Barwon.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** Let us have a think about that. Within months, Service NSW can take data from millions of people in New South Wales, create a user interface, centralise that data and report on it in a very short time frame. That is a job for Victor; let us get Victor on it. You will be glad you picked a Victor.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Good one; that was not bad.

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** Thank you. Government members would have us believe that within months we can have millions of users on a digital system every day with reporting, however we cannot tell 93 members of Parliament about grants. It was interesting to see that The Nationals members did not see fit to join the debate about the use of taxpayer dollars. That does not send a strong statement about commitment to accountability and transparency. A number of Government members spoke about the burden on public servants to provide the information that the bill will require the Government to disclose. I draw members' attention to the *Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW government sector employees* and highlight section two entitled "The Ethical framework for the government sector" under the heading "Accountability", which states:

- Provide transparency to enable public scrutiny

All public servants sign up to that code. They are not unwilling to provide the type of information we are talking about. A number of public servants have had direct communication with MP offices in the course of the Local Sport Grant Program and the Community Building Partnerships Program, including the occasional email to my team or perhaps a phone call. Maybe Government members could get on the phone with them and find out how simple it is to communicate that information. The argument that it is all too hard really does not pass the all-important pub test, does it?

I sum up the member for Castle Hill's speech as, "We cannot be transparent because it is a burden." Government members called the amount of information required a burden because there are over 1,000 grant programs administered by the Government. In one way, the Government has highlighted one of the biggest problems that people have with this Liberal-Nationals Government. It has taken recurrent funding and turned it into a grant. An application merry-go-round has seen important work like domestic violence advocacy and mental health counselling stifled by the drain of applying for funds to keep going. The Government has done that to keep community groups, councils and charities on the funding drip-feed, and to provide its members with the opportunity to jump in front of a camera and proclaim the Government to be a saviour.

On the "photo opportunity" argument that was put forward by the member for Wollondilly, who I hold in high regard, I say respectfully that he has missed the point. The majority of the time the Government has played no part in the grants process other than putting up the cash, which is taxpayer-funded public money. Government members do not assist constituents to find a grant to apply for, help them to bolster their applications or write letters of support, yet they fly in with a giant, gaudy cheque to proclaim saviourhood.

Issues around short notice for times and locations of announcements are the world we live in. With a 10-hour drive across my electorate, I know all about the challenges of getting to places at different times. Every point that has been raised by Government members can be easily refuted or addressed. Probably the best example of a Government member missing the point was the suggestion that non-Government MPs want to be involved when they have had nothing to do with a grant. For the Government's information, Grace, an amazing electorate officer at Broken Hill, has a portfolio for grants and we pay for subscriptions to grants websites. Every day we look for State and Federal opportunities to fund projects. We assist people with their applications and do not just drop them if a grant is unsuccessful. We keep a database of unsuccessful grant applications and keep scanning for opportunities to get projects funded. Until that happens, we continue to try to match them with grants. As members would be aware, every year the eligibility for different grant programs changes. Matching a grant with a project can take a while, but we keep trying and do not drop them off.

It is presumptuous and erroneous to suggest that non-Government members are not involved in that process. In many cases we connect an applicant with an opportunity in the first instance. I imagine that some offices have a different level of service for constituents to help get grant funding for projects in their electorates. A key reason the bill should be supported is that grants are public money, which should never be used for political purposes. Funds should be allocated equitably based on merit and need. Involving local members in discussions about the allocation of funds will unlock a massive amount of local knowledge and information.

Continuing to administer grants in the shadows and behind closed doors is a risk to every MP and to the trust in government. Public servants are also placed in compromising positions. Stories of the destruction of documents, which is inconsistent with the State Records Act 1998, undermine confidence in government and, ultimately, that extends to all members. Using public money to suppress political competition or threats to stop a dialogue between constituents and their elected local members is not how we should operate in Australia. It is grubby and, frankly, beneath any government in a democratic country. A vote against the bill will send a clear signal to the people of New South Wales that nothing is changing and nothing has been learnt from the ICAC investigations and associated resignations. A vote for the bill will show a willingness to be better and that the Government wants to right some wrongs and learn from mistakes. I thank those members who contributed to the debate for their respectful tone and genuine approach. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes ..... 17  
Noes ..... 24  
Majority..... 7

#### AYES

Atalla, E  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Dalton, H  
Donato, P (teller)  
Greenwich, A

Harris, D  
Hoenig, R  
Kamper, S  
Leong, J  
McGirr, J  
Mehan, D

Park, R  
Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Tesch, L (teller)  
Washington, K

#### NOES

Bromhead, S  
Conolly, K  
Cooke, S (teller)  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

Griffin, J  
Layzell, D  
Lindsay, W  
O'Dea, J  
Petinos, E  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D  
Sidgreaves, P

Sidoti, J  
Singh, G  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Tuckerman, W  
Upton, G  
Ward, G  
Williams, R

#### PAIRS

Aitchison, J  
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  
Lalich, N

Constance, A  
Stokes, R  
Barilaro, J  
Berejiklian, G  
Perrottet, D  
Toole, P  
Elliott, D  
Hancock, S  
Ayres, S  
Kean, M  
Hazzard, B  
Dominello, V  
Pavey, M  
Marshall, A  
Anderson, K

## PAIRS

Lynch, P  
McDermott, H  
McKay, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P

Lee, G  
Henskens, A  
Preston, R  
Roberts, A  
Clancy, J  
Wilson, F  
Smith, N  
Gulaptis, C

**Motion negated.**

**LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021****First Reading**

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

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I advise the House that the Speaker has received a written authority from the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC, advising that the member for Summer Hill will have carriage of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2021 in the Legislative Assembly. I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for tomorrow.

*Private Members' Statements***FATHER JOHN VARVARIS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:56):** I invite the House to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of Father John Varvaris to the Greek community in the St George and Sutherland shire. Father John, as he is popularly known, has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to the service of his community and the Greek Orthodox Church. He was born on Patmos, Greece, a small Aegean island where Saint John the Theologian is said to have written the *Book of Revelation*. Father John graduated from the Patmos monastery prior to immigrating to Australia in 1963 to begin his new life in Brisbane. It was in Brisbane that he was ordained as a deacon in 1964 and transferred to the Diocese of Newcastle. In 1964 he was also ordained as a priest and made parish rector.

The young and growing Greek Australian community he served was spread from Gosford in the south, right up to Tamworth and Moree in the north. Father John would travel long distances across his parish, conducting baptisms, weddings, funerals and liturgies. He would provide welfare support, comfort or just a friendly and familiar face to Greek Australians as they built new lives for themselves in Australia. Under his leadership, the parish acquired land, funding and approval to build a new church in Newcastle. In 1969 he was honoured by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese with the traditional title of "I Konomos", meaning "housekeeper", to acknowledge his work for the church. In 1973 Father John left the Hunter for Sydney. Newcastle's loss was Kogarah's gain. Father John was transferred to the southern Sydney parish, which includes my electorate as well as other parts of the St George and Sutherland shire.

In 1974 he received further honours, this time from the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. He was awarded the Holy Millennium Gold Cross of the Holy Mountain and given the title of "spiritual confessor" to mark his dedication to the Greek Orthodox Church and Greek Australian Community. Father John served 27 years as the hieratic supervisor of the Kogarah Church of the Resurrection of Christ. He has been deeply involved in the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek community in Australia nearly all his adult life. Under his leadership, the local Greek community passed on their traditions and language to a new generation of Australians with afternoon language teaching for up to 1,000 students at a time. On the fiftieth anniversary as a member of the clergy, Father John received well wishes from across the political spectrum. Father John continues to be well loved and respected by the St George community. Today he still volunteers to assist and to pass on his knowledge and experience to the next generation of church and community leaders. I ask all members of this House to join me in acknowledging the extraordinary life and work of Father John Varvaris.

**COVID-19 AND LANE COVE ELECTORATE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:59):** I take the opportunity to draw the attention of the House to my electorate of Lane Cove for the first time since the lockdown. Throughout the pandemic, the residents of my electorate have shown great resilience and excelled in their common duty to their neighbours and to their families. The electorate of Lane Cove has led the pack with previous vaccination milestones, surpassing the rest of New South Wales at the 70 per cent and 80 per cent

vaccination rates. As of today, we have reached 93 per cent single-dose and 91 per cent double-dose vaccination rates. I am proud that my electorate was one of the first to reach these vaccination milestones ahead of the rest of the State, which contributed to bringing forward the easing of restrictions earlier last month.

The surpassing of those pivotal vaccination milestones well before the majority of the State demonstrated the incredible diligence of my constituents and the community values they held dear during the early stages of the vaccine rollout. Their respect and commitment for the health orders have greatly limited the spread within my electorate. I give full credit to our businesses and their extensive COVID-safety plans, and especially the diligent actions of their customers in slowing and stopping any further spread of outbreaks. During the restrictions many of my constituents made the most of the area in which they live by utilising the fantastic environmental spaces on their doorstep. The Lane Cove and Parramatta rivers have been a great attraction on the warmer days during the middle of spring, with many constituents trying their hand at kayaking and sailing with mixed success. Kissing Point Beach, and the baths at Woolwich and Greenwich have sufficed for those wishing to cool off and get their tan ready for summer.

During this time, the New South Wales Government has recognised the importance of outdoor spaces to Lane Cove residents and has subsequently made considerable contributions to a number of projects within my electorate to increase and re-awaken the community interaction that we have sorely missed. In August this year, this Government granted \$75,000 to Lane Cove Council to create the Lane Cove loop walk. The project aims to further connect our residents to bushland tracks and reserves through a 15-kilometre loop, with an additional nine kilometres' worth of tracks branching off throughout that walk. Further, through the Crown land activation program, this Government has contributed some \$142,000 towards Lane Cove Council's planned rejuvenation of Manns Point reserve. That project will improve the locals' utilisation of Manns Point for more recreational opportunities, with better access to the foreshore via an upgraded walking trail and sandstone steps.

For some—and I also speak for myself, having assisted my wife, Alicia, with baby Joey and homeschooling our three boys—it has been an unexpected blessing during this period. I have appreciated the chance to be more physically present with my four sons and continue to strengthen our bond. Having said that—and I know I speak for many parents—this time has given me a new-found appreciation of the astounding commitment and patience that our teachers have. I know for other families it has not been as joyful. Family separations have an impact on everyone, and I acknowledge our essential workers who have sacrificed so much valuable time with loved ones for the greater good. Additionally, I express my condolences to those who have lost someone and were unable to be by their side when it happened. The highlight for me this year is seeing how well my constituents handled and adapted to these restrictions. It goes to show their unparalleled resilience and commitment to their families and to the safety of their community. I once again thank them for their sacrifice during these times.

### **COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE PROJECTS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:02):** We are extremely fortunate on the Coffs Coast to have a vast array of organisations that work each day across a range of sectors to help our community thrive. Some are focused on providing an emergency response when the call comes to keep us safe. Others are focused on preserving and improving our environment, or on providing a place to pursue particular sporting interests. Being involved in a local organisation is extremely rewarding because it gives members of the community the opportunity to give back to their communities. Recently I was able to spend some time with several groups in my electorate to thank them for contributing to the social fabric of the Coffs Coast.

A New South Wales Government funding boost of \$500,000 is providing welcome improvements to the Coffs Harbour Racing Club. Those funds are being used to upgrade the irrigation system to an automated system and for groundwater tanks to enable better facilities for trainers and jockeys, racegoers and, most importantly, the horses. The Coffs Harbour Racing Club has a rich and illustrious history, dating back to 1885. As the member for Coffs Harbour, I am pleased to have played a role in making this facility even better. I congratulate the board of directors: chairperson Alan Johnson, vice-chairperson Shane Burns, treasurer Mark Palmer, director Merv Mercer, director Scott Nolan and director Kevin Riddell. Tim Saladine is the CEO, Cam Nealer is the licensee and functions manager, Casey Arendarcikas is the racecourse curator, and Chris Grieve is the marketing and sponsorship manager.

Meanwhile, the Rural Fire Service Solitary Brigade in my electorate has moved into its new and improved home, marking a major milestone in the delivery of the Coffs Harbour bypass. As part of early works, the RFS shed has been relocated to make way for this major infrastructure project. The new shed is double the size of the previous one and is on Bruxner Park Road, closer to the new highway and next to the new Korora Hill interchange, meaning better and faster access for emergency response. I was joined by my Federal colleague member for Cowper, Pat Conaghan, to present the keys to Rural Fire Brigade Solitary Captain Lyle Gately and his proud team. Also on hand was district officer with the NSW Rural Fire Service, Inspector Michael Brougham.

I also acknowledge the strong local leadership of NSW Rural Fire Service Superintendent Sean McArdle, who said he was grateful to Transport for NSW for delivering a new state-of-the-art station for the RFS Solitary Brigade. Across town, a Coffs Coast sporting organisation is benefiting from \$100,000 in funding from the New South Wales Government's Infrastructure Grants Program. Westside Tennis Club is the big winner, with those funds allocated to the club's project to redevelop court 6, providing another quality tennis court at this popular complex. These improved facilities will cater for our local tennis-playing community and those competitors who travel to the Coffs Coast to participate in tennis tournaments. Westside Tennis Club is an important part of the Coffs Coast's sporting and social fabric and is to be congratulated on its promotion of healthy lifestyles in our community.

Great teamwork is why Westside is such a success story. I acknowledge the dedication of president Penne Slaviero, secretary Kate Blackman, treasurer Rob Alford, committee members Lorraine Booth and Lesley Chouri, and facility manager Allan Pade. Further north, a \$108,900 State Government grant is delivering big improvements to the popular Woolgoolga Lakeside Reserve picnic area. The New South Wales Government's Infrastructure Grants Program, Clubgrants Category 3, has allocated those funds to the Woolgoolga Lake Working Group for the community's exciting project.

The redevelopment of the Woolgoolga Lakeside Reserve picnic area will include new paths, picnic area settings, a renovated barbecue area, shelters, beach shower, bottle refill and bike racks. It will connect the play space to the water, use the natural shade of the park and provide much-needed safe, inviting and accessible areas. The Woolgoolga Lake Working Group is a strident advocate for the conservation of our natural environment. I applaud the members for the many hours they spend enhancing the local area for all to enjoy. Their hardworking committee comprises president Karen Dallas, secretary Bill Buckless, treasurer Sandra Venier and environmentalist Joelle Bridger.

### BLACKTOWN BOUNCING BACK

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:07):** I report to the House the fabulous event we had recently called Blacktown Bouncing Back. It was a business forum conducted by the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber, Blacktown City Council, the Australian Catholic University [ACU] and *Blacktown News*. It was hosted at the Blacktown Workers Club. Firstly, I thank Morgan Stewart, the CEO of Blacktown Workers Club, for offering the facilities; Kay Kelly, chair; Jack Miller, the vice-president; and the board. I bring to the attention of the House that something like \$15 million of improvements was undertaken during the COVID lockdown. The club focused on using local materials as much as possible. The club used the timber and joinery from Campsie, carpet woven in Campbelltown and obviously, because Blacktown was one of the most locked down local government areas in the State, it had to use all local tradesmen from within the local government area. The club is a massive employer and does wonderful community engagement.

The importance of businesses bouncing back in Blacktown is highlighted by the fact that the city of Blacktown has a \$22 billion economy. The gross regional product of Blacktown has 190,000 jobs when Tasmania has 215,000 jobs. Blacktown should think of itself as the size of a State and act as such. The economic growth prior to COVID was 4.6 per cent per year. We are talking about an expansion of economy, if everything is going well, at \$1 billion a year. It is important to give the tools and support to the local businesses of conducting a forum. About 85 businesses of various sizes attended.

I thank all the guest speakers—Rebecca Mihalic, Director of BusinessDEPOT, who spoke about seizing the opportunities in the post-lockdown environment. She talked about the importance of goal setting and functional teams. The ACU is the only university in the world to open a campus during COVID and expand its operations. Dr Hormoz Ahmadi and Dr Syed Fazal-e-Hasan were there talking about the ability to bounce back through personal adversity. Hormoz shared his family journey from Iran and the difficulties they faced coming through Europe to Australia, his businesses and his life story. Syed spoke of the challenges growing up in Pakistan. They are now academics at ACU and mentor up-and-coming business entrepreneurs. They identified that the key to success is essentially based on the ability to build your own network and rely on people to support you. Failure is usually where the entrepreneur is on their own and does not have the time to talk.

Katherine Hawes, a lawyer, Director of Digital Age Lawyers—you usually think you go to sleep when lawyers get up to talk—gave an extremely interesting presentation on social media policies and law changes. Two things that I had not heard of were smart contracts, where you use blockchain technology to develop the contracts of today and tomorrow and, more importantly, emoji law. I never thought that if you put an emoji doing a double thumbs up with champagne bottles in response to an offer, it means you have just accepted. There is a court case that said, "Yes, you have accepted the terms of that contract." That information alone was well worth it. Let's be careful when we are putting thumbs up on our Facebook posts. Chris Hekeik from Mode Media focused on the social media aspects, and said that 90 per cent of information is absorbed by the brain visually. When you think about Parliament, it is all verbal.

Dr Jim Taggart, OAM—what a person!—is a man about town. He has his heart and soul in the community. He organises fundraising, and harnesses ideas and networking opportunities. He gave a fantastic presentation about people's perception of you, how you present and how important your character is for long-term success. I thank Trevor Oldfield from the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber for being the MC. I thank the mayor of Blacktown and the council, which supports not only the chamber but also the business community, for all their efforts. It was a wonderful event.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:12):** The Community Building Partnership program delivers crucial funding for our grassroots community organisations across the State, and this year has been no different. This year the electorate of Goulburn secured \$400,000 in funding for a total of 19 community projects. This funding will help create a more vibrant and inclusive local community with positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes. This is fantastic news for Goulburn and worth sharing with the House today. The recipients for 2021 include Tarago Public School P&C, which was granted \$30,000 for a playground upgrade, including new play equipment, seating, soft fall and shade sail.

The Yass Lawn Tennis Club was granted \$9,000 to refurbish the floor of the clubhouse. Well done to the fantastic grant writer, Michelle Whitters and her team. She certainly is a strong advocate for the lawn tennis club in Yass. Gunning District Association was granted \$19,366 for the installation of solar lighting at the Gunning Showground for the skate park, outdoor gym and adjacent pathways. Good job by Gavin Douglas, another strong advocate for his local community. The Grabben Gullen Hall and Recreation Land Management Committee secured \$7,886 for an industrial sweeper mop. One thing for sure is that these volunteers deserve some of this funding. It has been a really tough couple of years for them, raising funds to be able to continue these organisations. To be able to support them is such a wonderful thing.

Moss Vale and District Basketball Association received \$36,000 for the replacement of basketball backboards that no longer meet competition standards. Paul and the other members of the association are very active in securing the future of basketball for the Southern Highlands region and I continue to admire their ongoing efforts in that regard. The rugby hall and recreation reserve land manager received \$37,489 for playground equipment installation, including mulch soft fall and timber edging. They have missed out a couple of times on funding so it is great to see them finally secure it. Yass Golf Club received \$35,000 for a clubhouse upgrade and urgent repairs due to weather concerns around its clubhouse. I congratulate Judy Brower and John Hedges on their continued successful volunteering at the club.

Goulburn Junior Stockmen Rugby League Football Club received \$30,000 for tiered grandstand seating at North Park, Goulburn. St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn region received \$29,338 to renovate the awning that covers the footpath and to repaint the building's exterior. It is a very welcome grant. Obviously there are some beautiful buildings in the electorate, particularly in Goulburn, and those sorts of grants help to preserve those fantastic buildings.

Harbison Memorial Retirement Village received \$8,440 to purchase what is called Motiview. Motiview is a unique motivational video that is paired with a display and a custom-made exercise bike. I have seen these devices in action and I was very impressed with how they work. Not only do they assist with physical mobility of the residents who live there but they also have great social and mental health outcomes. In fact, there are worldwide competitions for these Motiview cycles, which is absolutely fantastic to see. They have gold and silver medals and an Olympic feel about the competition. I say well done to the Harbison Memorial Retirement Village. The Anglican Church Diocese received \$35,700 for a car park upgrade at Robertson. It will help them to seal the surface against rain and inclement weather, which is great news for the church.

Crookwell Golf Club received \$10,461 for the replacement of west-facing windows with new aluminium-framed windows. It is a great outcome for the club. Obviously these have been difficult times and it is really important to assist some of the great recreational clubs in the community. Southern Youth and Family Services received \$8,360 for a permanent outdoor pergola, shade structure and associated works. Carinya Court Incorporated received \$5,340 for the replacement of old metal rainwater tanks that have become rusted and unsuitable. That is a great outcome for Carinya Court Incorporated at Boorowa. Crookwell Services Club received \$28,407 for bowling club refurbishments, including painting, gutter refurbishment and door timbers. Lots of different community groups have received great grants to assist them to continue the wonderful work they do. I congratulate all the organisations, although I have only covered a few. Congratulations to all concerned.

### HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:17):** Confirmation of the electoral redistribution of the Heathcote electorate is a case of "back to the future". The redrawn boundaries are almost exactly the same as they were when

I was elected in 2011. Once elected, I set out to seek out the issues in the northern Illawarra. It was not long before I concluded that over the decades and decades of Labor governments, infrastructure was ignored. In 2007 I found myself, as the candidate for Heathcote, standing in front of the historic Bulli Hospital with the then Opposition health spokesperson, Jillian Skinner. The press was grilling her about the future of Bulli Hospital and what would happen under a Coalition government. Mrs Skinner was struggling to answer their questions when journalists turned to me and asked, "What would you do if you were elected?" I asked a simple question of the reporter: "Would you put your grandma in Bulli Hospital?" The answer was "Definitely not." That was what started the new Bulli Hospital project.

After being elected, I moved to arrange a meeting with the chair of the Illawarra health district as a priority. I asked Jillian Skinner, by then the health Minister, if there was any money for Bulli Hospital. The response was a definite no. I then asked if I could look for funding outside of government and she agreed, saying, "Go for your life." Through a mate of mine, I invited the finance manager of the green slips fund to lunch with the chair of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. The finance manager had indicated that the fund would be interested in investing in bricks and mortar. I introduced him to the chair. The finance manager said, "I can only offer you \$75 million now but if you need more, let me know. The only caveat is that rehabilitation therapy has to be offered at the facility." The seed was planted and watered. I look forward to the official opening of Bulli Hospital in the not-too-distant future.

One morning at 5.00 a.m. a Thirroul commuter stopped me to talk about the condition of the roof of the Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club. The building was suffering from concrete cancer. Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club was in a state of decay. Although the building was a council asset, no significant funding had been offered to renovate the club. As with most volunteer organisations, the club was raising funds to fix up a council asset. There were safety issues caused by the club's state of disrepair. As a result of the concrete cancer, the reinforcing steel within the building had become live with electricity. The mixture of water and club members presented a real threat of someone being electrocuted.

I invited the mayor to see what the council could do about the issue. He was unavailable, so the council engineer represented the council. As we walked around the club, the then president of Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club was pointing out the rusted holes in the roof and the concrete cancer. I asked the council engineer to turn the lights on, as the floor was saturated with rainwater, but he balked. "I might get electrocuted," he said. "Yes, you probably will," I said. I told him that nippers, as they do, would run around the club flicking lights on and off. "The first crispy nipper will be on the council's head," I said. Within a month of that conversation the roof was being replaced. I encouraged Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club to apply for a Community Building Partnership grant, with council to restore the concrete cancer and upgrade the kitchen, and it was successful. Within a year of my being elected the club was being rejuvenated and renewed.

Bulli Surf Life Saving Club was also endeavouring to rebuild its clubhouse and had been fundraising for a decade or more, but the building was going to be mammoth. The club applied for a New South Wales infrastructure grant and was successful, receiving \$300,000. It was also successful in receiving \$375,000 from the Federal Government. The building was becoming a reality. Once council took over the project the costs blew out to \$1.1 million and the project was foiled. It went back and forth for years, and funding had to be returned as the project never started. The resilience of the club knows no bounds. It dusted itself off and starting applying for grants again, while ramping up fundraising and working with council to set the boundaries of the build. The Bulli Surf Life Saving Club stands as a monument to the tenacity of the then club president, Keith "Cocky" Caldwell, a true leader of the Bulli Surf Life Saving Club until his sad passing earlier this year. He was the force behind the club being so successful, building not only the surf lifesaving club but also the membership and the surf lifesaving club championship winners. I am so pleased that I will once again represent the northern Illawarra in 2023.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:22):** When redistributions happen it is never, ever easy, but the member for Heathcote is going back to an area he knows very well. I know that the people down there will be very lucky to have him. He is someone who never gives up. Even if it takes him years to prove why something needs to get done, he does not give up and he makes sure it happens. Whether it is fixing the hospital or those lifesaving clubs he mentioned, he is always there to advocate for his community and make sure things get done. Not much has changed in the time since he represented that area. That community is one that has been left behind. However, I know that having the member for Heathcote back there will make a difference again, as he did once before. They will be very lucky to have him back.

#### **COOLER CLASSROOMS PROGRAM**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:23):** I speak on an issue of great disappointment to the teachers, families and children at schools in the electorate of Prospect and, indeed, throughout New South Wales. Round two of the Cooler Classrooms Program has left some 97 per cent of schools literally in the dark, having



still not received approval for the program, meaning that after a 2½-year wait only 15 of 447 schools have been approved.

That result is confusing to teachers and school staff as the review of round one of the Cooler Classrooms Program took only three months to approve some 900 schools. The \$500 million Cooler Classrooms Program is supposed to deliver sustainable air conditioning, heating and fresh-air ventilation systems in eligible classrooms and library spaces to improve indoor environments and air quality. These units not only make a classroom more comfortable by heating and cooling rooms but also alert teachers of when more fresh air is needed in a space. It is a key factor in helping reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Now, more than ever, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need fresh-air ventilation systems in all of our classrooms across New South Wales.

In many classrooms there are large numbers of students at one time, which fosters an environment where the transmission of COVID-19 can occur easily. Children are typically asymptomatic for COVID-19, making it all the more dangerous when they interact with each other, and older and more vulnerable persons, for example their grandparents. The lack of fresh-air ventilation systems in our classrooms further puts our teachers at risk, especially those teachers who may be older or immunocompromised. That is not the way the New South Wales Government should be treating our teachers, who have worked tirelessly to educate our children by putting themselves on the front line during the recent pandemic. A limited number of approved schools for the Cooler Classrooms Program is a safety oversight and reveals the incompetence of the New South Wales Government to approve less than 500 applications in an entire 2½ years.

If we can completely ignore the health and safety aspects of the New South Wales Government's incompetence, leaving classrooms without proper air conditioning and heating is just plain cruel to our children. How can teachers expect their students to concentrate on their school work properly if their environment is uncomfortable, being too hot or too cold? Additionally, how can we expect our teachers to spend hours on end in classrooms when they are not an appropriate temperature? We do not want to work in an uncomfortable environment, and the same goes for our teachers and our students. I have read reports that some of the rejected schools for the Cooler Classrooms Program have used unflued gas heaters during the winter months. This can pose health risks for children and teachers with asthma and can also inflame allergies. This cannot go on.

I am disappointed to hear that the two schools from the electorate of Prospect that applied for round two of the Cooler Classrooms Program, Bossley Park High School and Girraween High School, are yet to receive approval. Classrooms in western Sydney especially need to be further examined to receive better air conditioning and fresh-air ventilation. This is the case as we have recently overcome extremely high case numbers of COVID-19 and the average temperature of western Sydney is typically a few degrees warmer than the average temperature of the Sydney CBD. We need fresh air and air conditioning in our western Sydney classrooms. I am sure that my parliamentary colleagues representing electorates in regional New South Wales will have similar arguments.

It is time that the New South Wales Government takes our schools seriously by helping to create a better environment for our students and our teachers. The New South Wales Government must put the \$500 million allocated to the Cooler Classrooms Program to better use and promptly approve eligible and deserving schools. I note that the Victorian Government has pledged to fund 51,000 air purification units for schools. At the time of this announcement the New South Wales Government had not ordered a single air purification unit for our schools. Teachers, school staff and school students have been through so much this year already. They have had to adapt to a completely new style of teaching and learning, and at times have had to be on the front line of the pandemic. Our teachers, school staff and students deserve a safe and comfortable environment as they return to classrooms across the State.

### GINGER MEGGS ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:28):** This weekend saw the anniversary of one of my electorate of Hornsby's most famous faces, the Australian larrikin icon Ginger Meggs. Created by Jimmy Bancks, Ginger captured the attention of not just Australians but readers right across the world, becoming one of the most syndicated comic strips appearing in over 120 newspapers in 34 countries. It was this down-to-earth style, humour and ability to avoid trouble that kept people coming back for more. So popular, he was even described by Prime Minister John Curtin as Australia's Peter Pan—the boy who never grew up.

The community of Hornsby is proud of his local heritage. When Jimmy created Ginger Meggs, he based many of his popular strips on his life growing up in Hornsby. It was a time when the area was dominated by agriculture and orchards, and he lived beside the railway tracks in a weatherboard cottage. Jimmy and his parents, John and Margaret, moved to Hornsby when his father, a railway cleaner, got a job at the station. They would stay in Hornsby until 1910 when Jimmy was 20 years old. It is widely known that Ginger Meggs is based on Jimmy's

childhood friend, Charlie Somerville. Charlie and Jimmy came from working-class families and money was always tight. But they had a wonderful life and a life where they could roam free through the Hornsby area. Charlie would later become a councillor and eventually the Mayor of Hornsby.

I have long been friends with Charlie's late son, Hedley, and daughter-in-law, Delores Somerville. She told me Charlie came from a strong working-class family and he originally voted Labor. But as Charlie grew older, he came around to a Liberal way of thinking. She also said I reminded her of Charlie. I am humbled by this compliment, although I think Ginger Meggs certainly had more hair and of a different colour. Many of the stories and names of Jimmy's escapades around Hornsby remained unchanged in the comic strip. Charlie and Jimmy would often steal from the Higgins and the Foster families' orchards, which featured in the comic, as did Frank Buckle, the first captain of the Northern Districts cricket team.

Another friend of Jimmy's, George Lumby, featured. The Lumby family owned a hardware store in Hornsby and George grew up to be a highly regarded local business owner who sat on the board of Hornsby District Hospital. His contribution would see the Lumby Building constructed at the hospital, which only recently has been demolished. A memorial plaque will now remain in the landscaped gardens of the hospital. Jimmy went to school in Normanhurst; however, not being particularly good at school he left at age 14 and worked in various different jobs. It was his study under artist Julian Ashton that saw him further develop his art, and in 1913 he had his first drawings published.

The Ginger Meggs cartoon would not start until 13 November 1921. It was first called "Us Fellers" and initially the 12-year-old redhead, George Smith, was a minor character. He quickly became one of the more popular characters and his surname changed to Meggs. Its growing popularity led to Jimmy being rumoured to have been the highest paid black-and-white artist of his time. At the time of his death Jimmy had been drawing Ginger Meggs for 31 years. However, Ginger Meggs did not die with him. In 1953 the strip was taken over by Ron Vivian, who drew Ginger Meggs until 1973. James Kemsley took over from 1983 to 2007, and Jason Chatfield took over and still does the strip to this day.

Ginger Meggs has been honoured over the years on a postage stamp in 1985, on a commemorative coin in 2011, in a feature film in 1982, in a musical and in numerous books. In 1997 the park on Valley Road in Hornsby was renamed Ginger Meggs Park and the nearby walk, Ginger Meggs Loop. Also in Hornsby is a mural painted down Dural Lane, along with Jimmy Bancks Creek running through the Hornsby valley. In 1951 Jimmy said he hoped the character of Ginger Meggs lived longer than he did. One hundred years on Ginger Meggs may not have aged a day, but he is still capturing our hearts.

### TRIBUTE TO MAX STAHL

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:33):** The day 12 November 2021 was the day of the funeral of Max Stahl, who was my friend, colleague, companero, hero, legend of Timor-Leste, husband to Dr Ingrid Bucens and father to Malin, Leo, Barnaby and Ben. The date 12 November is significant as it was the day that the Santa Cruz massacre happened in the cemetery and area of the same name in Timor-Leste. Max, the filmmaker and war correspondent, was there hiding and filming. That was 30 years ago in 1991 and the world, including Australia, had not grasped the enormity of what was taking place on our doorstep. The Indonesian military had brutally occupied. There were murders, displacements, rapes, tortures and arbitrary detentions—the red book the standard operating procedures for military dictators.

Some 270 young Timorese and a foreign student named Bamadhaj were killed for their peaceful demonstration at the cemetery, asserting their rights for self-determination, as Max Stahl did in 1999. He never left the Timorese. He kept his cameras clicking and his film rolling. The images that were beamed to the world changed the course of the history and the struggle of Timor-Leste, and in 2013 that was recognised by UNESCO. Max knew that the film would be taken from him, so he buried it in a cemetery. After nine hours of interrogation, he went back and retrieved it. A local journalist named Ingrid Bucens, who is a constituent of mine, received the footage and it was broadcast to the world. Recently José Ramos-Horta said:

There are only a few key points in the history of Timor-Leste where the course of our nation turn toward freedom. This was one of those points.

It was the first time our message broke through to the world. Human rights networks went into action. Senators, Congressmen and Parliamentarians came to our side. And this happened when one man was willing to risk his life to document up close what was happening and smuggled the message out of our country.

That man was Max. I could not attend his funeral because it was in Brisbane, which was where he died, but the Ambassador of Timor-Leste, Inês Almeida—who is known to the Assistant Speaker and to the Parliament—was present. In the eulogy she said:

... he made our struggle his struggle, our hope his hope, and our determination his determination, from then on he joined us in our journey speaking truth to power around the world.

Max was actually Timorese as well, having been granted Timorese citizenship by the Timor-Leste Parliament, which is something I am told his family can be gifted as well if that is their desire. His youngest children, Leo and Malin, grew up in Timor-Leste; his adult sons were in the United Kingdom. Max was born Christopher Wenner, and in the United Kingdom he presented a program called *Blue Peter*, a BBC children's show, which a lot of people know—think Wiggles. That is who I am talking about: Christopher Wenner. He came to my attention when he was trying to transit through Australia under the name Christopher Wenner; Max Stahl was tricky for Immigration. So I went to then immigration Minister Philip Ruddock and we sorted it out so Max could travel. That was when I met him and we worked together in Timor-Leste.

I lived in the compound of José Ramos-Horta and so did Max. Max then came and worked with me. He asked me, "Can I use your office for a day?" but he never left. We were together 24/7. I will talk more about Max in another private member's statement, but he set up the Centro Audiovisual—Max style. He memorialised, documented and digitised the struggle and all the years after that. I was a member of the Centro Audiovisual board and I helped to make it happen, but there is more work to do. Before Max passed away he asked whether I could continue that work. He liked the model from the Australian National Film and Sound Archive Act 2008. I still have work to do, but I wanted to ensure that I spoke about Max in this Parliament because his wife is Australian and he died on our soil.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Lismore for her very good private member's statement and I welcome the member back to Parliament House. I do not think she has been in the Chamber for a while. We have missed you.

### VALLEY WAYS OUTDOOR MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:38):** I am pleased to announce that in February 2022 some of south-west Sydney's most talented performers will join emerging artists to take to the stage for the new Valley Ways Outdoor Music Festival in Camden. ARIA award winning band and Macarthur locals The Rubens are celebrating a decade of making music together, and the Camden community is the winner with the wonderful news of their presence at Valley Ways on 19 February 2022 at Onslow Oval. The Rubens will play alongside a line-up of other Australian talent including headline talents Skeggs, Middle Kids and Slowly Slowly, and supporting artists Stevan, Becca Hatch and Hollie Col. The year 2022 will mark a decade since the release of the band's debut album *The Rubens*, which went platinum. Valley Ways will kick off the band's new-year adventures on the road.

The New South Wales Government is very proud to be supporting the event and bringing it to Camden in 2022 and 2023. We hope the Valley Ways Outdoor Music Festival will continue well beyond 2023. The ethos behind the festival is to bring the best musical and creative talent to the bands' backyards and build on the live music culture that exists in the Camden and Macarthur regions. That will be achieved by incubating local talent and providing them with a platform to play in front of large audiences and learn from their peers. The Rubens plan on hosting the annual event in the town they grew up in. As a member of the New South Wales Government, I am so proud that we are investing in up-and-coming, emerging Aussie artists and giving them a platform. The music industry has had a very difficult time for the past two years, and I know that our talented Australian musicians are looking forward to returning to the stage and performing for local crowds.

I am thrilled that we are creating opportunities for the live music culture that exists in the Camden community. In 2011 The Rubens were unearthed by Triple J with their tracks *Cowboy Song* and *Lay it Down*. Only four years later, The Rubens song *Hoops* from the album of the same name topped the Triple J Hottest 100 on Australia Day 2016. We are very proud of local exports The Rubens and I know that many people will travel to our community to see them play live. Camden is an historic town with beautiful rural vistas, and I encourage those visiting the new festival to take the time to enjoy what Camden has to offer. The community looks forward to welcoming visitors to the festival in February, as do our local businesses, including bars and restaurants. Valley Ways will greatly benefit our local economy. The Rubens are a great local band and we look forward to seeing them perform live in Camden on 19 February 2022. I encourage residents of Camden and Macarthur and all other live music fans to purchase a ticket online now before the event sells out.

### WYONG ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:42):** The electorate of Wyong is fundamentally served by two surf clubs, though some residents are members of one of the 15 surf clubs on the Central Coast. Over the summer months our volunteers work on weekends to keep our local beaches safe. During the week the council lifeguards do an incredible job, but on the weekend it is over to the volunteers in red and yellow. The catchcry that we have is "Always swim between the flags and follow the directions of lifeguards and lifesavers, particularly in relation to rips." The two surf clubs that serve my electorate are Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club, which is the only surf club within the Wyong boundaries, and also The Lakes Surf Life Saving Club. It is located in the electorate

of the member for Swansea, but many people who live in my electorate are members. Those clubs serve the northern areas and are always looking for new volunteers to train as surf lifesavers.

It seems like each year our surf season starts earlier and earlier. This year we have been patrolling since the end of August and we have already conducted a number of rescues, particularly on the Monday of the long weekend when the crowds were particularly large. We expect quite large crowds this year, given that the COVID lockdown has ended and people are able to visit from Sydney. Our amazing volunteers make a lifesaving difference in so many different ways. It does not matter how much time you have to spare; you can gain your bronze medallion, complete a first-aid certificate, compete, support our nippers or simply help out with special projects by sharing your time and skills.

For families, nippers is a great way for children to enjoy and learn about the beach. There is even the option to support nippers as a group leader. If you want to improve your skills and fitness, you can try competing in the water. From board paddling to swimming, there is always something for people to enjoy, even if it just to keep fit. If being in the water is not your thing—and these days it is less and less my thing—there is still a place for you. You can learn to save lives as a first aider on the beach; you can get your certificate in using the radio, as I have; help out on patrols and still make a difference. It is quite an amazing feeling. The younger guys, or those who man the rubber duck, often go out and do the actual rescue, but when they get the patient to the beach it is a real team effort. Whether you are on the radio or part of the team that is providing assistance, resuscitation or first aid, it is something that everyone can get involved in.

Last season I did not have a good shoulder, so I spent a lot of time in the tower manning the radio. I was involved in three rescues. You learn that what you do on the radio—calling for ambulance assistance or liaising with the Central Coast surf lifesaving duty officers—is all a really important part of the whole rescue. Many new residents are moving into the Wyong area, and they may not realise the benefits of joining one of our local surf clubs. I encourage people to investigate whether it might be a lifestyle that they can get into. At Soldiers Beach we had 10 patrols; we are now down to seven, which means that we have only one weekend off in a month. Other than that, we have a half-day patrol during that time. Many of us are not getting any younger and we particularly appreciate having some younger new blood coming in to assist us with what we have to do.

Soldiers Beach can be quite a difficult and challenging beach with one rip in particular that is opposite the pipeline. Lots of people, particularly holiday-makers, get into trouble. It is a great way to stay fit while you learn those important skills and contribute to the community. I pay tribute to Phil Walls, the new president of Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club, and also to Sean Leicester, the president of The Lakes Surf Life Saving Club. Those committees do an absolutely incredible job to make sure that we have patrolling members on the beach every weekend and that the hundreds of nippers remain involved in activities. You cannot underestimate the job that they do. We are looking forward to a season where we have no deaths, which we have had for many years now. I wish everyone well for the upcoming year.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:47):** I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Wyong. I commend the incredible work of the more than 7,000 volunteer surf lifesavers at 15 surf lifesaving clubs on the Central Coast. They do an incredible job. As the member for Wyong articulated, we have not had one drowning death on a patrolled beach for more than almost five seasons, which is absolutely phenomenal and a true testament to the more than 7,000 volunteer surf lifesavers on the Central Coast. They do a truly amazing job every single year. As the member for Wyong said, it is important that young people and older people who are moving to the Central Coast visit their surf lifesaving club. There is a fantastic community spirit. I am privileged to have seven of the 15 surf lifesaving clubs on the Central Coast in my electorate. They are a great social point to meet and understand your community. They do a fantastic job. We know that they will have a busy season keeping people safe on our beaches, but hopefully we can keep that zero record going on the Central Coast.

#### **WELLBEING SUPERSPREADER PROJECT**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:48):** I recognise the work of a local initiative focused on mental health, known as the Wellbeing Superspreader project. It works not on COVID, but on people with mental health issues. Most of us are aware that one in five Australians will suffer from a mental illness at some stage during their life. There is a range of reasons contributing to those statistics, but for some it is simply because they have never learnt how to be well. In the upper Hunter we have a team of people known as Wellbeing Superspreaders working to help change this. All of these Superspreaders boast vast networks across the community and have been enlisted by the Where there's a Will foundation—an organisation dedicated to improving mental health and wellbeing across the upper Hunter—to voluntarily deepen their knowledge about wellbeing, and then over three months they work with a wellbeing coach, learning how to make wellbeing habits sustainable in their lives.

A comprehensive communications strategy is central to this behavioural change project, with everyone in Scone, Merriwa, Muswellbrook and Dungog encouraged to become a close contact of any Superspreaders they know. And it is working! These Wellbeing Superspreaders are being bailed up in the supermarkets, in the gyms, at bull sales and at school pickup. People are asking them what they are doing to help their wellbeing. Why are they doing it? How are they doing it? And what is the difference it is making in their daily life? The process is normalising the pursuit of wellbeing activities, reducing the stigma and strengthening community capacity to respond to the challenges that come with living in our rural communities. These Wellbeing Superspreaders include farmers, miners, beauticians, teachers and nurses—all types of people from all different backgrounds. I extend my thanks to them for stepping up to the challenge of creating a contagion of wellbeing in our communities.

In Merriwa we have Julia Hardy, Kylie Austin, Leanne Hunt, Darren Marshall, James Munro, Bruce Blackadder, Henry Killen and Rob Smith, who says, "There is still much uncertainty and no doubt a few curve balls still heading our way, but there are still plenty of simple things we can do today to improve our own wellbeing and that of those around us." I bumped into the Wellbeing supergroup at the pub in Muswellbrook, where they were meeting to discuss wellbeing activities. The group is made up of Leonie Craft, Natasha Deakin, Kimberly Feeney, Addie Parker, Jan Kamstra, Alan Baker, Ian Ingle and Ian Boyle, who told me, "We all come from a different walk of life. We've all got different family movements, different life skills, different jobs, but at the end of the day it was those few wellbeing exercises that have put us all in the same frame of mind, wellbeing wise that is."

In Dungog there is Lucy Miller, Liz Northam, Brad Lean, Katie Darmawan and Pete Maytom, who is a man I know well. He is a rock of the community. I met Pete last weekend at the Clarence Town rugby league club. There are not many people in the Dungog area who have not been guided or mentored by the very motivating Pete Maytom, be it in the pool, on the footy field or perched up on the bar. This all started in Scone with a small group including Catherine Chicken, Courtney Wicks, Renee Hunt, Neil Clydesdale, Rod Bailey, Daniel Nash and Danielle Brown, who told me, "It's never too late to start learning and to begin simple practices to help wellbeing. It also helps us to be open to the idea that everyone has something to teach us." The Wellbeing Superspreader project is a huge success, and I hope it comes to a regional community near you soon. The Wellbeing Superspreader project seeks to inspire sustainable behavioural change by using social learning theory to enhance mental health and wellbeing in our rural communities. It is a fantastic project and as a local member I plan to advocate for this going forward.

### REGIONAL JOB CREATION FUND

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:53):** This Government is doing some amazing things for regional New South Wales. One of my favourite programs is the Regional Job Creation Fund. I am a massive fan. The fund supports eligible businesses with co-funded grants of between \$100,000 and \$10 million to fast-track projects in emerging industries, help businesses expand operations, or incentivise them to relocate to regional New South Wales. My electorate has been a huge beneficiary of this fund, which is a credit to the many remarkable, hardworking and innovative business owners that call the Dubbo electorate home. One of those businesses is Native Secrets, which was started by Cherie and Phil Thompson in 2014. Native Secrets brings together traditional medical practices and essential oils from Australian natives to create high-quality natural skincare products.

As part of their process, Cherie and Phil use the invasive white cypress pine to make the oils. Removing the trees supports the return of native grasslands and animals, so it is a great outcome for our environment as well. Recently Native Secrets received \$200,000 from the Regional Job Creation Fund, which will enable the business to quadruple the capacity of its biomass tanks and create 10 full-time jobs, including new training opportunities for local Indigenous people, which is fantastic. Being a local herself, Cherie said it means a lot to her to be able to create opportunities for the Indigenous community members and to help bring people back together on country.

Another local who is passionate about providing opportunities for Indigenous people is Herb Smith. Herb is a proud Wiradjuri man from the Wellington Valley who says that he remembers his grandfather saying, "Good tucker and a full belly makes you sleep and have good dreams." Dreamtime Tuka supplies biscuits and slices to a range of other quite large businesses that include Qantas through a partnership with another Dubbo business, the Earlyrise Baking Company. Dreamtime Tuka received \$180,000 to buy new baking racks and trays, a conveyor system, an ultrasonic slice cutter and some sorting machines. That will help Herb and his team to make more delicious snacks as well as creating 10 new jobs—putting our region on the map for Australian native foods.

Another delicious venture that has benefited from the Regional Job Creation Fund is Spencer Cocoa in Mudgee. I know what members must be thinking—Mudgee means wine—and they are right, but there is a lot more to Mudgee than just the phenomenal wines. One business that is certainly proving that is Spencer Cocoa. Roughly twice a year chocolatier Luke Spencer visits cocoa growers in Vanuatu to select new season beans. In Mudgee they roast, grind, conch, and temper the cocoa into simply beautiful chocolate. Thanks to \$100,000 from

the Regional Job Creation Fund, Spencer Cocoa will be able to double its output and hire five more staff who live and work in the Mudgee region.

So if Mudgee is famous for wine, then it is over to Narromine for oranges. Since 1910 Mumble Peg has been proudly owned and operated by the Roberts family, supplying oranges and juice across the eastern seaboard and as far afield as Asia and Canada. Now Mumble Peg will be able to take its fruit selection and juice to the next level, thanks to a \$200,000 grant. Part of that is installing new equipment, including a colour vision grader and automated packer to help the automation process, while creating more than 37 new jobs over the next three years, which includes extra packers, sales staff and a grading line operator and much more. Those four projects I have highlighted stretch from one end of my electorate to the other and will create more than 60 direct jobs in businesses that were born in the region.

But of course it is not just about investing in businesses that are already here; it is also about attracting people from elsewhere to come and set up shop in regional New South Wales. When the Premier and Deputy Premier visited the region on 1 November, which was the first day regional travel was allowed, we announced a \$4.8 million grant to help engineering company Simmons Global relocate its operations from Western Australia to Narromine. That funding will deliver an advanced manufacturing hub, making everything from unmanned aerial drones to solar ultraviolet [UV] monitors that can tell teachers when students need to be playing in the shade. It will create around 250 full-time jobs, which will be an absolute game changer for the Narromine region, with a real focus on upskilling local Indigenous and young workers through apprenticeships.

Simmons Global CEO David Simmons said Narromine is the ideal location to establish its manufacturing facility and, as the member responsible for Narromine, I certainly could not agree more. The Regional Job Creation Fund aims to create more than 6,500 new direct jobs over the next three years, which already includes more than 540 slated for Dubbo, and that does not even consider the tens of thousands of indirect jobs that are being supported as well. As we know, these people will shop local, eat local, drink local and their kids will go to school. Well done on this excellent initiative.

#### OVARIAN CANCER

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:58):** Last Saturday I had the great privilege of attending a charity walk held on the Botany Bay foreshore between Ramsgate Beach and Brighton-Le-Sands in my electorate of Rockdale. The walk was in memory and honour of our much-loved Theckla Tsopanis of Sans Souci, who sadly passed away in November 2020 after a long battle with ovarian cancer. Theckla was 53 when she was taken by this horrible disease and she left behind her beloved husband, Michael, and her two cherished sons. I had the opportunity to walk and talk with Michael. What became apparent from his words was that Theckla was a woman who had fought her three-year battle with courage and fortitude that we could only hope to emulate under similar circumstances.

Ovarian cancer treatments can be gruesome and invasive but, no matter the pain, Theckla remained positive, concerned about her family and focused on the future—even when she knew her time on this earth was limited. As part of her journey, Theckla hand wrote and left behind a book for her family that was part journal, part conversation, part guide to life and part list of Mum's rules. It has helped Michael and the boys to navigate the tough first year since her death and it continues to guide and comfort them as the days and months pass. In her book, Theckla expressed a wish for her family and friends to run a fundraising event for ovarian cancer research so that something good could come out of her situation. Michael, her sons and her friends took that wish and acted on it, and after much hard work and planning it came to fruition last Saturday. Hundreds of people turned up to remember Theckla, to participate in the walk, and to raise money to find a way to end this horrible disease.

Over \$33 000 was raised in that one morning and all of it has gone straight to the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, which is the leading ovarian cancer research body in Australia. That money will help fund their crucial and often groundbreaking work on this insidious cancer. Ovarian cancer is the most lethal of all breast and gynaecological cancers and the most fatal of all cancers affecting women. Its particularly nasty twist is that early symptoms are often mild and easily overlooked, meaning that many diagnoses are not made until the cancer is well advanced. By that time treatment options are reduced, they are much more invasive and unpleasant and they have much worse prognoses.

For that reason, the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation has focused heavily on researching early screening options in the hope that ovarian cancer can be tested for on a regular basis and routinely caught at the earliest stages. This is an outstanding goal, and I was so proud to see the people of my electorate and beyond turn out in such numbers to support this great cause. It was yet another example of the communities we have the privilege of representing in this place.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:01):** It is my pleasure to update the House on the funding received by community organisations in Hawkesbury through the 2021 Community Building Partnership program. The program delivers positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion. In 2021, a total of \$400,000 was allocated to Hawkesbury. Every electorate across New South Wales, regardless of the electorate's political persuasion, also received \$400,000. Our children's safety is a top priority, and I was pleased to have \$47,000 invested for a safety fence at Oakville Reserve, which may sound like a simple thing but this fence is designed to stop footballs being kicked by children onto the road and then children running onto the road in pursuit. It is a well-received funding boost.

I give praise to Helen Palmer from Windsor High School P&C Association for her successful application for an outdoor gym, which staff and students of the school will benefit from. The investment was \$40,000. She was over the moon when I phoned her about it. One of the best jobs we have as MPs is giving the good news of funding grants. Faith and fellowship is highly valued by our Hawkesbury community. St Monica's parish community and visitors from afar will benefit from \$38,000 that will be invested to upgrade an extension to their gathering space. The Richmond Uniting Church, where Lester Vincent pitched for \$11,500, was successful. The investment will cover the purchase of a video system and its installation in the church. They have an overflow of people who come to the church and an auditorium that adjoins the church, so they will be able to participate actively through that video system.

I am proud to announce \$35,000 for new flooring and a rear deck for the Windsor Community Participation Centre, where a new ramp is being built that will improve access for clients with disabilities in wheelchairs. I congratulate One8OTC Ltd on successfully applying for \$30,000 for building refurbishment at the men's residential rehabilitation centre at Yarramundi. An important \$25,200 has been allocated to Kurrajong Heights Bowling and Recreation Club Ltd for the removal of a really old asbestos roof that will be replaced with a COLORBOND® roof. That bowling club supported a lot of the bushfire victims in the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20. Grose Vale Scout Group will be pleased with \$20,000 allocated for urgent safety repairs to the hall ceiling, the repair of termite damage and the provision of safe entry to the building. Powell Park Tennis Club will receive \$20,000 to resurface and repair the root-damaged tennis court. I congratulate Peter Bradford on a successful pitch. He is the president of the Powell Park Tennis Club and his advocacy is the reason the club received the funding.

Hobartville Public School is receiving \$20,000 towards a four-metre tall rope climbing structure and separate all-inclusive multi-play activity set, with underlying soft fall mulch and timber border. I applaud P&C president Darin McLean for submitting the application; it is not easy to get these applications in. I note that he was proud to announce the funding on the school's Facebook page today—well done. When I called the Colo High School P&C president, Jennifer Majarres, to let her know that \$18,000 would be going towards refurbishment of the school library, she was absolutely thrilled. On Monday, I visited the Richmond Literary Institute and announced \$16,000 towards improvements to the Archerfield Room, including the installation of roof insulation, an air conditioner and solar panels. Fitzgerald Aged Care will have \$16,000 invested towards the refurbishment of its existing clinic.

The list goes on, and I could continue for quite a while. The Community Building Partnership program is a wonderful project. The St John Ambulance Hawkesbury Division located at Hawkesbury Showground will receive \$7,352 for roof repairs. We are investing in organisations around the community. The Community Building Partnership program has been one of the most popular and successful programs in recent times. It engages the community, ensures accountability, is rigidly scrutinised and delivers outstanding projects that leave a remarkable blueprint for decades to come.

### KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE ROTARY CLUBS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:06):** Rotary Clubs provide a wonderful service to our local communities. Their purpose is to bring together people with various skills to support humanitarian service and advance community and international goodwill. There are three Rotary clubs in my electorate of Ku-ring-gai: the Wahroonga, Turramurra and Ku-ring-gai clubs. They support many community organisations that provide an extensive range of youth services, scholarships for children with special needs, support for local charities, celebration of academic excellence, mentorships for young people and much more, alongside supporting international goodwill projects. I have always supported the good work they do.

I particularly highlight a local matter of significance, which is the connection between the Wahroonga Rotary Club and the creation of the Wahroonga Park rotunda—one of the many examples of the positive contributions by Rotary to my local community. The rotunda is a very popular facility in Wahroonga Park that

was funded and constructed by multiple organisations, including Wahroonga Rotary. While many people enjoy the facility, the story of its construction and significance to Ku-ring-gai is just as important. It all began with Richard Geddes, former Mayor of Ku-ring-gai from 1996 to 1998. Richard always spoke of his plans to have a rotunda at Wahroonga Park, but unfortunately he died of a heart attack in 1999 before it came to fruition. I only met Richard once at the funeral of his twin brother, Donald, who was a barrister and councillor on Newcastle council and who coincidentally rose to be deputy mayor of that city.

Richard's dream became a reality after a steering committee was formed to begin construction in 1999. It included Rosalie Geddes, Richard's wife; Bob Howe, Richard's friend; Gordon Fuller, architect and president of the Wahroonga Chamber of Commerce as well as a member of Wahroonga Rotary; David Dobbin, then Mayor of Ku-ring-gai; Johanne Tobin, then Wahroonga ward councillor; and Rhonda Bignell, then general manager of the council. Additionally, the Wahroonga Rotary Club donated \$5,000, and an additional \$5,000 was donated by the Wahroonga Chamber of Commerce. With the help of donations from the public, the total amount of \$68,000 was raised in just four months.

The proposed rotunda was to be built in the Federation style to suit the heritage of the park and to be a useful facility for the whole community. It was therefore built to be of a size that would comfortably accommodate musicians and bands, but not so large that it dominated the park. Gordon Fuller together with Geoff Herman of the Australian Summer House Company designed and built the octagonal rotunda. It was completed in 1999 as a memorial to Richard Geddes and his 12 years dedicated to the council and the local community. Many people who knew him have no doubt that he would be pleased with the result. The rotunda continues to be enjoyed by many of my constituents as a venue for functions such as birthdays, family picnics, wedding ceremonies and photographs. The park also hosts several community events and festivals each year that would not be complete without the rotunda.

Importantly, the rotunda adds to the harmony within the park between the natural and built environment. I have personally enjoyed the facility with my family over the years, and it is a convenient meeting point for volunteers at events like Clean Up Australia Day. I acknowledge former mayor Richard Geddes, whose legacy continues through the continued use and enjoyment of the rotunda, as well as the Rotary Club of Wahroonga, whose financial backing and architectural contribution helped to make it a reality. The club has every reason to be proud of its role in helping to facilitate construction of the rotunda. As an honorary member of Wahroonga Rotary, I understand and greatly appreciate all the work it does.

I have spoken previously about how fortunate I was to study for a Master of Laws degree in Canada, which I could only have done with a Rotary Foundation Scholarship. I also commend the club for its contribution to the Wahroonga Park rotunda, which has benefited so many in our local community over the past 20 years. I look forward to seeing my community continue to benefit from it for many years into the future. I note that 2021 marks the centenary of Wahroonga Park, and the Rotary Club of Wahroonga is helping to organise a celebratory event in December. I hope to be attending and speaking at the rescheduled event to celebrate the park's history and to acknowledge the resilience that my community has shown during the recent COVID lockdown.

#### **DISABILITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:11):** I express my disappointment at the failure to achieve the Premier's Priorities and focus areas in our world-class public service in New South Wales. Supposedly the commitment to improving employment participation by people with disabilities is a key priority, but it has been an absolute failure by the Premier and the Liberal-Nationals Government. I was disappointed to hear during budget estimates that the disability Minister does not consider people with disabilities who are employed in the public sector to be his responsibility and part of his agenda. I commend the previous Minister for his work, although that was a big failure as well, as the employment of people with a disability has decreased from 4.7 per cent to 2.4 per cent under this Government. That is so disappointing because I think it is something we have done well historically, and it is something we should be doing so much better as a community.

The Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services has just walked into the Chamber. Employment of people with disabilities is going backwards on the Minister's watch. He says he has a plan in his head but it is not a written plan. I draw the Minister's attention to the Disability Inclusion Act 2014. The principles of the Act include enhancing and recognising people's right to participate in economic life. That definitely includes employment in the New South Wales public sector. The Minister's attitude is also reflected by the Premier, who has removed Auslan interpreters from his press conferences while we are going through a pandemic. That is not great support for inclusion across the community. His comments in his speech on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 were also a little disappointing.

Over the past two years the employment of people with a disability in New South Wales has gone from 4.7 per cent to 2.4 per cent. The New South Wales target is 5.6 per cent, which we are clearly failing to achieve,



whereas the Federal target is 7 per cent. One in five Australians live with a disability so I hope the disability Minister picks up his game and works with Minister Harwin to increase the employment of people with a disability. As a wheelchair user, I am going to stand up; I am not very good on my feet. I feel bad because for four years I have sat in my wheelchair in the Chamber and have not stood up. I have been waiting for ramps to be installed in this place. When I came to this place I had a series of meetings with the person who manages the building and its historic architecture. He looked down his nose at me and said, "This is the oldest parliament in New South Wales." I said, "There is a woman in the chair"—as there is tonight—"which is a celebration of what should be, what can be, not what was."

We are moving into a future of what can be for people with a disability. I have sat in my place for four years and this week is the first week that I have had a ramp to get in and out of the back of this workplace. It is an absolute disgrace that it has taken this long. Just before the most recent COVID lockdown members celebrated the opening of the Speaker's Garden. When I was first elected I was told, "We are going to put tiny chairlifts at the front of the Parliament for you to go up and down." I said, "That's not good enough. Tear up those plans. That's not inclusive, that's just a tokenistic inclusion of people with a disability." The chairlift at the side of the building has failed. It has taken four years to include me and my friends with a disability. It was not until the Speaker's friend from the Liberal Party fell off the ramp that we saw action. The Premier and the Treasurer need to find money in the budget to create inclusive spaces.

Hopefully I will soon celebrate a disability inclusion plan in this place, and work on that is being done in the background. We will also soon have captions. It is 2021 and around the world we are seeing captions in parliaments. In Ottawa a person with a disability was elected to its Parliament and the floor was built up so that person could work. For four years I have been wheeling around Sydney hospital, waiting for that inclusion plan to happen. For four years I have either not gone to events or been forced to wobble up the stairs as best I can. I have sat in my chair on purpose. I am not a great walker but I have sat down for four years on behalf of people with a disability across this State because of a lack of inclusive workplace structures. I thank the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. I am so glad that he is in the Chamber to hear my private member's statement. I commend the work of the previous disabilities Minister, but the disability employment rate has gone from 4.7 per cent to 2.6 per cent of the workforce. A lot of work needs to be done in New South Wales to reach our goals. I look forward to making sure that people with disability are not bullied and are fully included in the workplace.

### COVID-19 AND SYDNEY EVENTS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:16):** I commend the member for Gosford for that very important contribution and reality check for all members. Tonight I talk about the responsive, proactive and critical work of the City of Sydney under the leadership of Lord Mayor Clover Moore to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID hit our city hard. Each week the lockdowns cost the city economy about \$250 million, and the City of Sydney alone lost about \$149 million per week. Many in our community have lost their livelihoods or significant income, and some have lost their homes as well. Many have been ill with COVID, and we have had to live with movement and gathering restrictions that have stretched relationships and undermined mental health.

The City of Sydney has focused on helping vulnerable communities, small business operators and creatives survive the worst of the pandemic, and the council is now supporting our city to recover. It responded to the first wave of COVID by waiving inspection, footpath dining and other administration fees. The council gave an estimated \$7.8 million of rent relief to commercial tenants, plus more than \$2 million for childcare providers and almost \$3 million for social, cultural and creative programs. The council cancelled parking fees and provided parking permits for essential workers when public transport was a health risk. City of Sydney supported many organisations offering food security and community building projects and provided thousands of re-usable face masks for vulnerable residents, with a further \$5 million given to support vulnerable communities in July. Major grants for charities like OzHarvest helped to make sure that people with no money had nutritious food to eat.

City of Sydney supported sole traders, micro and small businesses by calling for extended New South Wales Government support and by advocating with businesses for the return of JobKeeper to provide funding certainty. Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully and I asked the State and Federal governments to underwrite pandemic insurance for the events sector. Late last year, City of Sydney worked with the New South Wales Government on the alfresco summer program, which supported artists, musicians and performers to activate the CBD. I note that people across Sydney are looking forward to the George Street long table lunch on 3 December. The council reallocated on-street parking spaces to expand outdoor dining so that the hospitality sector had a safe space for customers. City of Sydney approved 260 outdoor dining applications, which 90 per cent of businesses have said has been crucial for their survival. As a result, half of those businesses have employed two or more extra staff and nearly 60 per cent have reported increased turnover.

Support is continuing, with another \$4 million in business support grants becoming available from February next year. Having attended meetings between NSW Health officers and Lord Mayor Clover Moore, I can attest to her determination to ensure that everybody had access to vaccination in the City of Sydney. This collaboration meant that the local health district could vaccinate at hubs in Town Hall and at council community facilities in Glebe, Redfern, Surry Hills, Ultimo, Waterloo and Zetland, and get on-the-ground advice about outreach to vulnerable and isolated communities, particularly social housing tenants and First Nations people.

The pandemic has reminded us about the vital role of public spaces, especially green open space. During this last council term, City of Sydney has invested \$319 million to maintain and renew local roads, paths, playgrounds and parks. Since 2004 the council has added more than 24 hectares of new open space in its heavily built-up city centre. On behalf of my constituents, I thank the City of Sydney, Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully, as well as all councillors, council CEO Monica Barone and City of Sydney staff for ensuring we survived through the pandemic and are now ready to recover and renew. Experience overseas suggests that there may be more waves of illness and restrictions ahead, along with repeat vaccinations. I trust that City of Sydney will continue to act decisively to protect residents, businesses and communities into the future.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Rob Sinnamon who has announced his retirement after 20 years as the Manager of Yulgilbar Station. Rob has been the driving force behind the genetic program that Yulgilbar has implemented which has taken the Station to being one of the top cattle stations in the local area. Rob has been a great leader and has put together a fantastic team who have ensured that Yulgilbar Station has grown from strength to strength. I wish Rob and his wife Lorraine a long and prosperous retirement.

#### **PAUL MAYTOM**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to congratulate Mr Paul Maytom on his many years of dedicated service to Leeton and the local government sector in NSW. After 34 years as a local government councillor, 16 of which were served as Mayor, Mr Maytom has been awarded the Emeritus Mayor and Lapel Pin, and the Local Government NSW Excellence Award. Mr Maytom's legacy within the Leeton community centres on his passion for local businesses, sport, culture and the environment. He has given his heart and soul to the roles of Councillor and Mayor, and is highly respected across the Leeton community. I congratulate Mr Maytom on over three decades of service to the Leeton Shire Council and the NSW Local Government sector, and wish him all the best in his retirement.

#### **NORM BRENNAN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Mr Norm Brennan on his many years of service to local councils within the region. Mr Brennan was first elected to local government in 1995 as a councillor for the Conargo Shire Council - a role that he held for 21 years. Following the merger with Deniliquin Council, Mr Brennan was elected in 2016 to sit on the new Edward River Council. Since 2017, he has served as Mayor. Mr Brennan is widely regarded by community members and colleagues as a supportive, inclusive and passionate leader. He has been actively involved within the community outside of his roles in local council through the Tidy Towns project, and as a member of the Conargo Hall Committee. I thank him for his contributions to the region, and wish him all the best in retirement.

#### **MAYOR MICHAEL PEARCE-URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Uralla Shire Council retiring Mayor Michael Pearce, elected to council in 2008 and Mayor since 2012. Mayor Pearce became the first popularly elected mayor of Uralla Shire in 2016. After serving New South Wales in the NSW Police Force for 30 years, Michael continued to give to his community through his local council. Some of the major issues included fighting for Uralla Shire Council's autonomy with both the State Government and the former Armidale Dumaresq Council, major funding for Emu Crossing and Abbington bridges, and securing funding for the Bundarra sewerage project. Michael takes pride in the attributes of Uralla, initiating park improvements and promoting the hidden treasures within the Shire. Mayor Pearce's dedication included his contribution to the New England Joint Organisation as Chair of the meetings along with other committees and organisations within local government. I congratulate Michael on his 13 years of service to the Uralla Shire and for the many outstanding projects he has initiated and directed. I commend Michael for his sense of duty, enthusiasm and incredible energy leaving an impressive legacy as Mayor of Uralla Shire Council.

**BARRY AND HELEN PRESNELL-LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR GUYRA SHOW SOCIETY**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Barry, better known as "Moose", Presnell and his wife Helen for their energetic service to the Guyra District and the Guyra Show committee. Appropriately, "Moose" and Helen have been awarded Life Membership to the Guyra Show Society for their many years involvement in the Annual Guyra Show, helping with whatever needed doing from running the famous Show barbecue to helping in the shearing section. Their memories go back to the 1970s and the construction of the shearing pavilion. The Presnells are well known to Guyra locals and a big part of the Guyra country spirit. I congratulate Barry and Helen on their Life Membership to the Guyra Show Society as a fitting tribute to their service. I commend Mr and Mrs Presnell for their contribution to the Annual Guyra Show which is such an important part of the Guyra District.

**AUNTY ROSEMARY CURTIS – GLEN INNES PATHFINDERS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Aunty Rose Curtis of the Seventh Day Adventist organisation, Pathfinders, for her determined approach to finding solutions for unique individuals whose characters don't fit the mould. Sometimes fierce individualism combined with a set of circumstances can place a person outside society and they find themselves homeless. They don't fit in the system. In some situations that might be OK, but for an older person, the winters are cold and it is no longer a comfortable or safe place to be. There has been an occasion in Glen Innes when Rose found a solution for such a person with the assistance of CEO, Alan Brennan, Corporate Services Manager, Jo All and PA Karen Lawler which was "out of the box"; a quirky solution that worked for the individual who can't conform yet needs and deserves what society can offer. I congratulate Aunty Rosemary Curtis and Pathfinders on their compassion and courage, finding solutions outside the system that work. I commend Aunty Rose on her dogged efforts in serving the needs of others less able to do so for themselves.

**INVERELL COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED – SUPPORTING MEN'S HEALTH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise the hardworking members of the Inverell Community Men's Shed for their active role in the Inverell community and the recent recognition through the Regional Australia Bank's Community Partnership Program for 2021. The group received a grant through a program whereby account holders provide support to local groups. The Inverell Community Men's Shed provides a meeting place for men to gather for craft or just to sit around for a chat and a cup of tea. Over the years, the shed has contributed to the Inverell pre-schools and other non-profit organisations. An additional point of interest is the recent introduction to a Men's Shed in Inverness in the Highlands of Scotland who stay in contact weekly. I congratulate and commend the committee led by the president Greg Brabant, supported by vice-president and assistant shed manager Glen McKee, the secretary Garth Mitchell, treasurer Harald Siepmann and secretary Rhonda Brabant, for working hard to create such a successful organisation. The shed runs like a well-oiled machine thanks to the efforts of shed manager Darryl Campbell and his safety officers Glen McKee, Alf Newman and Trevor Gray.

**BLUE HEELER FILM FESTIVAL 2021**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Muswellbrook's Blue Heeler Film Festival has defied the COVID-19 pandemic with the 2021 competition proceeding and culminated recently in a virtual screening and awards presentation. The theme for this year's festival was 'DON'T PANIC!' in the context of Living with a pandemic. Congratulations to Joseph Brown of Aberdeen for winning the Secondary Schools Category with 'The Rise of the Magpies.' It was the 17-year-old's third success in the competition, which is a Muswellbrook Shire Council initiative, with Joseph previously the junior category winner in 2015-2016. The Open Category 'Golden Bluey' was awarded to Christina Mishell Maras of Sydney for her film 'Gus', a claymation about a dog's adventures in Muswellbrook. Highly commended in the Open Category was 'Bec' by Scone's Hugo Morgan, who is now studying film and television at Melbourne's Victorian College of the Arts. The Open Category Highly Commended also included Samantha Dennis-Serhan of Muswellbrook for 'A New Hope', Liz Creevey and Luke Marriot. Secondary Category Highly Commended were Caitlin Barlow, Zac McDonnell and Archer Wake. This was the eighth staging of the festival giving emerging Australian creatives the opportunity to showcase their short films and their incredible talents as short filmmakers.

**VALE KEVIN HALLETT OLYMPIC SWIMMER (1929-2021)**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I would like to note the recent passing of Australian swimmer, Kevin Hallett, who competed at the 1948 London Olympic Games and the 1950 Auckland Empire Games. Kevin was born in Singleton in October 1929 and thanks to the generosity of his hometown, which raised £500, allowing their local hero to go to London for his shot at Olympic swimming glory. Despite suffering tendon problems in both shoulders, Kevin contested his heat of the 220-yard breaststroke but did not qualify for the final. Among his

other sporting accolades is a hat-trick of NSW Country Water Polo Championships as a member of the Singleton team during 1961-63. Kevin Hallett's contribution to swimming was recognised with his induction into the Hunter Academy of Sport's Hall of Fame and life membership of the Singleton Swimming Club. In July of this year, as the Tokyo Olympic Games commenced, Kevin received his copy of the Australian Olympians' Oath – his family says the line that resonated most with him was 'Once an Olympian, always an Olympian.' Kevin Hallett passed away two days short of his 92nd birthday. Vale Kevin Hallett – Australian Olympic Swimmer and proud son of the Hunter Valley.

#### SHIRLEY EDWARDS

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the outstanding efforts made by Shirley Edwards of Sanctuary Points who has her house packed with donations to be distributed to local women and girls in need. Shirley Edwards has donated over 440 bags full of essential items to the Share the Dignity's 'Its In The Bag' Christmas Appeal. The bags of essential items will be distributed to organisations such as Southern Cross Housing, Southern Domestic Violence Services and Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre. These bags will be given to women and girls experiencing homelessness, sleeping rough, or seeking refuge in domestic violence shelters. Shirley has been collecting essential items which include handbags, essential toiletries and gift items to donate to the charity's appeal for six years. Congratulations to Shirley and everyone involved, great team effort.

#### MACARTHUR CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—If you have never been to the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living, I would highly recommend you do so. The centre is at the forefront for innovation in terms of sustainable creations and practices. The description of the centre on its website sums it up perfectly: "The unique facility is entirely self-sufficient. It generates its own power, recycles and reuses all rain and waste water, and managed organic waste on site". Those at the centre also do an incredible job promoting what occurs at the centre to wider community. The centre provides tours to the general public and school children, which is particularly important in terms of educating future generations. It also provide information regarding sustainable eco-businesses, eco-building and gardening. I am always amazed by the work occurring at the centre and the number of people that lend a hand to help the centre thrive. It truly is a wonderful community facility and one that everyone should visit. Well done to those at the centre. I look forward to seeing what innovations and creations you come up with down the track.

#### RHONDA SAMPSON

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise one of Campbelltown's many outstanding artists – Rhonda Sampson. When I say one of Campbelltown's outstanding artists, I mean it, because there really is a plethora talent in our community. Rhonda was the recent recipient of the Indigenous Changemaker Award at the 2021 Western Sydney Women's Awards. The award was recognition for the many brilliant pieces that the artist had recently constructed. Anyone that has visited Campbelltown Sports Stadium lately would have likely walked past a mural at the entrance. The creator behind it was none other than Rhonda. It is just one of many works that Rhonda has throughout the Campbelltown area including an Aboriginal piece at the South Western Sydney Vaccination Centre in Macquarie Fields and a creation on the side of shipping container, located just off Appin Road. She even helped create a piece for Yellow Umbrella. Rhonda's creations really do stand out and certainly help brighten up Campbelltown. Once again, on behalf of the Campbelltown community, I would like to say congratulations to Rhonda on receiving such a previous award. I cannot wait to see what creations you conjure up in the future.

#### ANNE GAULT

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker I extend a huge congratulations to Grenfell Local, Anne Gault. Anne is taking on the mammoth challenge of walking 20kms to raise money for the Hamlin Fistula Hospitals in Ethiopia. These hospitals find and treat patients suffering from fistula. According to the World Health Organisation, obstetric fistula is an abnormal opening between a woman's genital tract and her urinary tract or rectum and can result in constant incontinence, shame, social segregation and health problems. Hamlin Fistula Hospitals in Ethiopia help women suffering from obstetric fistula by providing surgery and recovery. Anne is wanting to help these hospitals that help so many people. Between July 2020 and June 2021, 1,567 fistula repair surgeries were carried out. It is estimated that approximately 60,000 surgeries have been performed since the establishment of the first fistula hospital in Addis Ababa. Anne will be walking from the 25km sign on the Bimbi Road towards Grenfell on Monday 29 November 2021. Anne is asking people to sponsor and donate to the walk/charity. I congratulate Anne again for stepping it out to raise much needed funds for a very worthy cause.

### **'CUPPA WITH A COP' AT WOODSTOCK**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to highlight the 'Cuppa with a Cop' at Woodstock event held recently in my electorate. Earlier this year I was presented with a petition signed by members of the Woodstock community in which they expressed concerns about policing at the village. Following meetings and representations around the same time, it was a pleasure for me to host 'Cuppa with a Cop' at the Woodstock CWA Hall. I am grateful to Senior Constable Jon Gayford, Inspector Adam Beard Officer-In-Charge of Cowra and Blayney Sectors, as well as Chifley Commander Bob Noble for giving their time to support this initiative and for listening to some of the concerns held within the village. I am also very grateful to Terry Reynolds, Anna Williams and Ann Graham of Woodstock CWA for their support and wonderful hospitality on the day. Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank Postmistress Denise Norbury who initiated the petition, which lead us to the opportunity to come together in a 'Cuppa with a Cop' style format. Thank you so much to all who came along on the day.

### **KAREN WOOD ADVANCED ARDLETHAN COMMITTEE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the hard work of Karen Wood from the Advanced Ardlethan Committee for making the opening of the Ardlethan and Beyond Museum possible. The Museum which will also be used as a community building houses treasured memories of this region. Karen has led a dedicated team of community members and volunteers who have fought tirelessly for many years to see the project come to life. It's wonderful that people will now be able visit the Museum and see the preservation of the town and regions and its history. I am so pleased to hear that the Ardlethan and Beyond Museum will now be open to the community for their use and enjoyment!

### **JUNEE ROUNDHOUSE VOLUNTEER TEAM OF THE YEAR**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the volunteer team at the Junee Roundhouse Rail Museum for being awarded the 2021 Riverina Volunteer team of the year. The team of volunteers at the Junee Roundhouse Rail Museum maintain the Museum and rolling stock at the Roundhouse, as well as caring for the gardens. They play an integral role in keeping Junee's rail history alive. I was able to congratulate the volunteer team in person and understand why they deserved the award so much. Volunteers are keeping our local communities running. They devote a lot of time and energy into their local communities and projects and it is great to see so many passionate volunteers in my electorate. Congratulations to the Volunteers at the Junee Roundhouse Rail Museum. You should be proud of your efforts and accolades.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL BUSHCARE – 25 YEARS LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate Lorraine George and Alan George from Caringbah South for achieving 25 years of long service to Sutherland Shire Council's Bushcare program. Lorraine and Alan love our natural environment and were founding members of the Bushcare group at Wattlebird Bushland Reserve in Caringbah South. Turning up week after week, Lorraine and Alan have worked with their fellow volunteers to remove weeds and plant new vegetation to help transform what was an old horse paddock into a green sanctuary circled by homes. Thanks to the work of Lorraine, Alan and the group, Wattlebird Reserve now has a good diversity of native species and recently the team was excited to discover native orchids there for the first time. Lorraine and Alan are part of Council's 700 strong group of Bushcare volunteers that do an invaluable job caring for 120 bushland reserves in the Shire. Their work is essential to help restore and preserve our beautiful natural areas. I acknowledge the quiet but significant contribution to our Shire community by Lorraine George and Alan George and commend them on this long service award.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL BUSHCARE – 20 YEARS LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate Cronulla residents Annette McGaw, Darryl Chappelow, Jeanette O'Driscoll, Frank O'Driscoll and John Olovich, on reaching the impressive milestone of 20 years volunteer service to Sutherland Shire Council's Bushcare program. The Bushcare program has more than 700 volunteers helping restore and preserve 120 bushland reserves. Annette and Darryl have had a challenging job as volunteers at John McKinn Park behind Wanda Beach, working hard to keep this exposed area clean from litter and free of weeds, including the invasive Bitou Bush. The popular Bass and Flinders Point has a beautiful strip of remnant littoral rainforest and Jeanette and Frank have been dedicated to protecting this special area. They are regular attenders and help rally the local group to upcoming activities. John is a founding member of The Esplanade Cronulla group. He loves to get stuck into the bigger jobs of targeting woody weeds like Privet and Coprosma. His hard work and dedication has had a significant positive impact on improving the biodiversity of Bate Bay. I acknowledge the

tireless work and dedication of these five constituents and their contribution to looking after our beautiful natural environment.

#### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL BUSHCARE – 10 AND 15 YEARS LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—I congratulate six constituents on long service with Sutherland Shire Council's Bushcare program. Cronulla's Jennifer Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald, Catherine Dyson and Caringbah South's Hazel Bull are celebrating 15 years of service, while Angus Dyson from Cronulla and Martin Timmins of Caringbah South have been volunteering for 10 years. Jennifer, John, Catherine and Angus have toiled away in Gunnamatta Park at Cronulla to restore and preserve this busy location, looking after garden beds trampled by visitors. These volunteers have been dedicated to looking after trees in the park by building garden beds to prevent against the impacts of compaction. Hazel has made a significant contribution at Beauford Park in Caringbah, with her weeding skills and ability to identify a vast number of native and exotic plants species proving invaluable to the local group. Martin has volunteered his time at both Kareena Park in Caringbah and Alcheringa Reserve in Miranda and is known for his willingness to get stuck into some of the bigger jobs like removing the woody weed Privet. I celebrate the commitment and hard work of these six volunteers to maintain and preserve bushland reserves within the Shire.

#### **WYNDHAM COLLEGE YEAR 11 ACHIEVERS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to recognise Wyndham College in Nirimba for their partnership with Western Sydney University. Wyndham College provides a unique opportunity for year 11 students to study a university course whilst undertaking their preliminary studies. Students studied units across finance, health, history, marketing and science. I would like to recognise the following students for their efforts and achievement: Tyler Lennoz, Madeleine Hand, Brayden Brown, Cassandra Kuadra, Stephanie Huang, Gaurav Issrani and Rachael Mibus who each received High Distinctions. Scott Sheeden, Jasmine Attard and Tarah Thorburn for receiving Distinctions. And Jacqueline Attard and Enelee Paul for receiving credits. These students have received early entry to Western Sydney University and most a \$20,000 scholarship. There are many families from the Seven Hills electorate who send their children to Wyndham College due to its focus on skills training, senior studies engagement and connections with Western Sydney University. It is fantastic to see so many local high school students gaining credentials from a university whilst still studying in high school. I wish all these students the very best for their HSC year.

#### **TOONGABBIE ANGLICAN CHURCH UPDATE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to recognise Toongabbie Anglican Church at Pendle Hill for their terrific work in recent times during the COVID-19 outbreak and looking after their local community. Toongabbie Anglican Church has a large community with individuals and programs across all age groups. It was fantastic to see Toongabbie Anglican Church receive \$31,000 as part of the Community Building Partnership allocation to the Seven Hills electorate this week. I know the funds will assist in upgrading their facilities for church members and wider community use across the greater Toongabbie area. The Church will use these funds to renew the old carpet in their main auditorium and replace it with practical carpet tiles to make the space more useful and hygienic. I would like to thank Susan Burgess for the great work she is doing with Toongabbie Anglican Church. I look forward to visiting the Church again in the future to see the new upgrades and hear about all the terrific things they have been doing in recent times. I also want to acknowledge the new pastor, Mike Hastie, and wish him well with leading Toongabbie Anglican Church into the future.

#### **FIRST WINSTON HILLS SCOUT GROUP UPGRADE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to recognise the 1st Scout group in Winston Hills, who have done a terrific job to push through COVID-19 as a community. The 1st Winston Hills Scout Group caters for children aged 5 years old, right through to young adults aged 18. This organisation does a fantastic job in teaching these individuals how to improve their decision-making and learn new things in an active way. The Winston Hills facility has received \$20,000 which they are put towards the installation of new floors at the Bundilla Scout Camp in the dining area and Character Home. It was great to see the local Scouting groups receive money as part of this grant program, which will help them continue to be such great organisations within our community. I look forward to catching up with the 1st Winston Hills Scout Group again soon to see the results of the Community Building Partnership grant via the New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet and what it has delivered for their community.

#### **BLACKTOWN CITY FC UPDATE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—After the impacts of COVID-19 during the recent outbreak, it is great to see Blacktown FC thriving in every way. I thank the new Board of Blacktown City FC for their enthusiasm

of supporting growing talent in the local football community across the Blacktown area and indeed across greater Western Sydney. In particular, I thank executive chairman of Blacktown City FC Bob Turner for his incredible efforts in building the success and local engagement of the club. I note the club's pathway program, girls' football academy and school holiday camps that I know many locals from the Seven Hills electorate attend and will continue to grow their personal development of the sport and support of Blacktown City FC across the area. I also note the appointment of David O'Keefe as head of women's football at Blacktown City. I can't wait to see Blacktown FC play soon and continue their success in the New South Wales FFA Cup. It is a great local club that the local football community love to support.

### **RUBY HAYLOCK**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I wish to extend my congratulations to Bowral's young jockey Ruby Haylock for her fantastic results in the Sapphire Coast Turf Club's Melbourne Cup Day meet. Ms Haylock, 23 and a former Chevalier College student, rode four winners in the November 2nd race, going from a four-kilo claimer to a three-kilo claimer all in a day's work. The tone of the day was set in the first race, when Ms Haylock rode Readapt to win the 912m Maiden Plate. One victory is impressive enough, but Ms Haylock clearly had more to achieve. Continuing to exceed expectations, she rode Miss Anarchy for the win in the 1412m Maiden Plate, Globalize in the 1612m Benchmark 50 Handicap, and finally Endymion in a four-length victory in the 1212m Benchmark 50 Handicap. Galloping to victory four out of her five races, Ms Haylock should be incredibly proud of her results! She has certainly represented the Southern Highlands well and I wish her every success in the future.

### **WELBY MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Southern Highlands is buzzing with activity once again, as shops reopen, community groups gather, and local sport resumes. Cycling is back in the Highlands with Welby hosting a mountain bike race tomorrow, Friday November 19. The Race is organised by the Southern Highlands Cycling Club and will feature multiple categories, making it accessible to those wanting to try racing for the first time as well as the most avid cyclists. Over the last couple years COVID restrictions have hampered the cycling club's ability to keep a regular schedule, but they now hope to really get back into the swing of things with regular training and races once again. Southern Highlands Cycling Club president Zac Hulm has done a great job getting cycling events up and running again, and I hope this year they are able to bring even more Highlanders to the sport. Good luck to all the participants of the Welby race tomorrow!

### **WOMEN'S CRICKET COMPETITION**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—It's the most wonderful time of the year in the Southern Highlands. No, I don't mean Christmas: Cricket season! And this year, it is not just the men who are gearing up for an exciting competition. The Highlands District Cricket Association's Tina McPherson Cup ran for the first time in the 2020/21 season, as a small competition with only a few teams. Only one year on and what was previously a four week event with only four teams, will this year run for 10 weeks, with up to half a dozen teams participating. The women's competition has the support of the Southern Highlands community spurring them on, and their list of local sponsors is quickly growing. The men on the HDCA cricket board and clubs are also backing the girls, who previously had joined in with the men's grades prior to the establishment of an adequate women's competition. It's really fantastic to see the women's competition gaining in both popularity and numbers, as well as community enthusiasm. I wish all the players a great cricket season ahead!

### **BRADMAN FOUNDATION ANDREW LEEMING**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Bradman Foundation and Museum, a core institution in the Southern Highlands, has appointed Andrew Leeming as their new CEO following the retirement of Rina Hore earlier this year. Mr Leeming has a hard act to follow in Ms Hore, but his passion for the game of cricket and respect for the Bowral legend, Don Bradman is evident and makes him a great fit for the position.

Mr Leeming has already made important contributions to Australian sporting and social history in Bowral, as he oversaw and curated the restoration of Sir Donald Bradman's boyhood home at Shepherd Street in Bowral. The restoration was widely acclaimed and even won the National Trust's 2013 Award for Conservation and Heritage. Mr Leeming's philanthropy experience as a former advisory board member of the Wellington Foundation, a not for profit educational foundation, will be also be beneficial to his role at the Bradman Foundation. I congratulate Mr Leeming on his appointment and I am sure he will see the Bradman Foundation through many more years of inspiring the love of cricket and the great Don Bradman in the Highlands and beyond.

**MARIAH WILLIAMS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Mariah Williams, from Parkes. Australian National and Olympic women's hockey player, Mariah Williams was selected for the Hockeyroos throughout the Trans-Tasman Series in New Zealand, in the lead-up to the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo. The Hockeyroos emerged from a testing 2020, which saw them isolated in Western Australia following the outbreak COVID-19, playing the bulk of their hockey against the Western Australia under 18s boys side, to maintain relative match fitness in the lead-up to the Tokyo Olympic Games. The Australia – New Zealand travel bubble allowed the Hockeyroos to apply their skills at an international level against the New Zealanders just in time to prepare themselves for the biggest sports stage in the world. Being selected at the highest representative level of women's hockey is an enormous achievement, and this was Mariah's second time representing Australia at the Olympics, having played for Australia at the Rio Games in 2016. Although the Hockeyroos were knocked out of the competition in their quarter-final battle against India, the team's efforts did Australia proud, and Mariah did her hometown proud, too. I look forward to seeing Mariah's ongoing representative career and continued sporting accomplishments. Congratulations.

**JANNALI EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the wonderful teaching and support staff at Jannali East Public School for the creative ways they have supported the school community during COVID-19. As their motto states, the incredible teachers continued to "inspire excellence" by providing opportunities for students to stay connected and engaged throughout the remote learning period. This included the Jannali East Public School "Iso-Archibald" competition. The theme of the art competition was "fathers and father figures" and students could use any medium to create their masterpiece. Entrants could be students or family members and were required to paint their subject either in person or virtually. The winners of the four categories were selected by the school administrative staff and an outdoor exhibition of all artistic entries was presented on the school fence for our community to enjoy. I thank the amazing teaching and support staff at Jannali East Public School including Principal Katherine Horner, Assistant Principals Kathy Hails, Jade Kemp, Jason Raper, Liam Smith, Liz Duffy for making this creative initiative possible. I commend the entire community at Jannali East Public School for getting creative throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period.

**ROBYN ALLAN**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the incredible Robyn Allan of Como for her contribution to surf lifesaving over many decades. Volunteers like Robyn are at the heart of our community. Robyn has been an instrumental volunteer at Elouera Surf Life Saving Club ("Elouera") for many years, first becoming involved in surf lifesaving as a surf sports official in 1982. Since this time, she has generously donated countless hours to supporting young athletes in our community. Robyn's volunteering journey has led her to participate as a surf sports official at numerous local, state and national titles alongside many surfboat carnivals and five International Life Saving World Championships. Additionally, Robyn is a regular age manager at Elouera's annual surf awareness clinic which educates community members about water safety. In recognition of her incredible efforts, Robyn was awarded Elouera's 2021 President's Medal for her sustained an outstanding service to the club. Robyn's immense impact has also previously been recognised by Surf Life Saving Sydney in 2020 with the Surf Sports Official of the Year award and in 2012 with the President's medal. I thank Robyn for her service to our beach loving community and extend my best wishes for the future.

**CAMDEN HAVEN PAH & I SOCIETY INCORPORATED**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I welcome the newly elected Committee of the Camden Haven Show Society who were successfully nominated last Sunday to manage the showgrounds in 2022. The Camden Haven Poultry Agricultural Horticultural and Industry Society Incorporated could best be described as the heart of the community as they build and strengthen relationships with a range of community organisations and support local business. In times of emergency like the 2019 bushfires, the Show Society opened its gates offering refuge for local people and their animals. In June the Society hosted a Community Appreciation Afternoon to lift the communities' spirits from a stressful time following drought, fires, floods and the COVID pandemic. People were treated with live music, free food and activities for the children, all hosted by the hardworking Society members. Congratulations to the new team: President Greg Watson, Vice President Ron Porter, Secretary Vicky Angel, Treasurer Rheannon Chapman and Committee Members Ron Chapman, Alison Haylett and Ron Penfold. Although COVID has interrupted the Show over the past two years, membership skyrocketed in 2021 to over 80 members reflecting the community support for the organisation.



### UPPER LANSDOWNE PUBLIC HALL

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate the Upper Lansdowne Memorial Hall Committee on their successful Community Building Partnership grant for essential repairs and upgrades to the Hall. Built in 1925 the Upper Lansdowne Memorial Hall was erected to honour those who fought and died in the Great War and to provide a community hub where residents can come together often for special events on the local calendar. Today, the Hall is used for arts and craft groups, social catch ups, concerts, food nights and special events hire, all focussed on building and strengthening the local community. It was a pleasure to recently announce \$14,725 towards a \$21,501 project to replace rotten framing and cladding as well as extending the eaves, renew faulty windows, fix a sliding door and conduct repairs to reduce the risk of ember attacks. I recognise the hardworking Committee: President Ian Turier, Vice President Rita Preece, Secretary Helen Breingan and Treasurer Andrew Tilbrook for their outstanding commitment to the efficient management of the Hall which is layered in history and memories for so many people who recognise it as the heart of the Upper Lansdowne community.

### KEVIN ATTWATER GOLF

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to congratulate golfer Kevin Attwater of Port Macquarie on his hole-in-one recently at Emerald Downs Golf Club. Port Macquarie's Emerald Downs Golf Course is a picturesque landscape which meanders through the residential community of Emerald Downs. Bordering the Lake Innes Nature Reserve it incorporates natural wetlands, lakes and ponds and is a tranquil home for an abundance of wildlife – including a local koala population. This peaceful setting was disrupted recently when Kevin Attwater, stepped up on the tee of the 15th hole, 113m Par 3 and did what most golfers can only dream of – sent the ball home in one. Arnold Palmer famously said "what other people find in poetry, I find in the flight of a good drive". I can only imagine that while watching his hole-in-one drive, Ken shared great affinity with the golfing great. I'm sure those who have played golf understand how elusive a hole-in-one is and so it should be celebrated when someone manages the feat. Congratulations Ken and may your future rounds be blessed with no worse than par.

### KAREN BINSTADT

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise local resident Karen Binstadt for her efforts to raise awareness of neuroendocrine tumours. This year over 5,100 Australians will be diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumours (NETs) or 1 every 2 hours. This makes NETs the seventh most diagnosed cancer in Australia, and yet most people would never have heard of it. Whilst commonly found in the gastrointestinal tract and lungs, NETs can develop throughout the body as a result of mutations in neuroendocrine cells. Karen is working to increase awareness of NETs as 70 per cent more Australians are diagnosed with NETs than ovarian cancer, yet there is minimal awareness of the disease which sadly receives no Government funding for support services. NETs affects men and women equally and from children to the elderly. It takes an average of 5 to 7 years for a correct diagnosis to be made due to healthcare professionals' lack of knowledge of symptoms. This results in over 60 per cent of Australians having Stage 4 cancer at diagnosis. I commend Karen for her dedication to raising awareness of this debilitating disease and I wish her well for the future in reaching her goals.

### NEW ERA FOR BLUE HAVEN

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the NSW Parliament congratulates Kerrin Hunter as the inaugural Chief Operating Officer at Blue Haven Illawarra. Ms Hunter has more than 25 years' experience in the corporate and aged care sector in diverse roles including nursing, human resources and regional management, as well as deputy CEO of another large aged care organisation. She has a Master of Business, majoring in HR Management, and she is also completing a Master of Law in Enterprise Governance. With her passion and strong local knowledge, Kerrin will be a great addition to the new management team at Blue Haven Illawarra and I congratulate her on this appointment.

### BONDI2BERRY BIKE RIDE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The annual Bondi2Berry bike ride to raise funds and awareness for Dementia Australia is once again including Kiama on its route in recognition of our internationally recognised dementia-friendly initiatives. This year popular SBS Tour de France commentator Mike Tomalaris will join in the festivities – hyping riders up on the start line in Bondi, supporting the Mayor and team during the Kiama pit stop in Hindmarsh Park and welcoming the finishers in Berry. For Dementia Awareness Month in September, Kiama Municipal Council recognised three local Dementia Champions – Dennis Frost as Chairman of Kiama's Dementia Action Group, Graham Fairbairn – a carer for his wife Robyn who recently started a monthly Blokes Caring Support Group – and Lynda Henderson, who cares for her friend Veda and Lynda gave evidence at the Aged Care Royal Commission.

### **REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE KIAMA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledge the members at Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Kiama on recently handing over some bespoke aprons for Slow Food Saddleback Committee members to wear at local food events and functions. These aprons are produced from donated materials that have been revamped, sewed and embroidered by Reduce, Reuse, Recycle members and volunteers. I acknowledge and thank the Coordinator Celia Ward. The aprons will get their next outing at the celebration of Terra Madre (Mother Earth) Day on Sunday 12th December when a special afternoon tea will be provided with a showing of a film at the Kiama Pavilion with tickets on sale shortly.

### **KIAMA PILOT PROJECT FOR YOUTH**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Local youth mental health umbrella group Kiama and District Stronger Community is partnering with WithYouWithMe (WYWM) in a pilot project to help under-employed and unemployed youth in the Kiama area. Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Youth Project lead Kane Presland, who is also working with local High Schools, and KDSC Board Members Derek McMahon and Matt Brown. Free online training valued up to \$7,000 per participant will be provided by WithYouWithMe to at least 10 local youth to develop job ready skills for the tech sector as an alternative pathway to University, TAFE or undertaking a trade course. This is a great initiative targeted at helping local youth find employment opportunities and a career path for those young people interested in technology, which is very welcome news for our local community and I congratulate and thank those involved.

### **NORTH WAGGA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—The rich history of North Wagga Wagga is being preserved for future generations, thanks to a dedicated group of residents. Members of the North Wagga Residents' Association are in the process of installing 26 heritage signs at landmarks and historic locations across their suburb. The signs will preserve the unique stories that lie behind the buildings, landmarks and locations, adjacent to the Murrumbidgee River. The residents' association is also publishing a book, penned by historian Sherry Morris, to provide much more information about the history of North Wagga's landmarks. History enthusiasts can use the heritage signs and accompanying information to take a self-guided walk of North Wagga. From old pubs to long-forgotten businesses and natural landmarks, visitors who take the tour will enjoy a leisurely stroll through the suburb. Many residents have contributed to the cost of the project, which is helping to preserve their history of their suburb. I commend the residents' association for their efforts to not only record the history of their suburb, but to also share it with the wider community. The Wagga Wagga region has a rich tapestry of history and I am delighted these pieces of it have been preserved.

### **KIM BARTLEY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker ... I want to recognise Dubbo's Kim Bartley, who has retired as a journalist after 40 years. Kim started her career at Lismore's Northern Star, and worked at a couple of community papers before she and husband Peter Bartley settled in Dubbo in 1991. They have three sons, James, Charles and Anthony, of whom I know they're immensely proud. Kim started at the Daily Liberal in 2000 and over the next 21 years she'd work under 11 editors, and 5 different owners. It was a tumultuous time for the whole industry as advertising revenues dried up and companies cut costs. But Kim's adaptable. She started her career on a typewriter and ended it filing stories remotely from a laptop, editing videos and posting on social media! She mentored many young journos over the years, and I'm sure everyone in Dubbo would've been moved by a tribute or uplifting human interest piece with Kim's by-line on it. The Bartleys have been great supporters of mine over the years and I'm incredibly grateful. I know Kim's looking forward to spending more time with family, including her sons in LA. Thank you Kim, congratulations and all the best!

### **DUBBO'S WESTERN WOMEN'S MASTERS HOCKEY LEAGUE TEAM**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker... winning any title is special, but winning with friends who you've been playing with for decades is something to treasure. That was the case for Dubbo's Western Women's Masters Hockey League players on Sunday, when they scored a 2-1 grand final win over Parkes at Pioneer Park in Dubbo! Dubbo player and local hockey association president Tracey Hardie-Jones was delighted to get the win, not only because it capped a successful season but it was one secured by a group of close friends and it continued an exciting time for the sport in the city. A number of the Dubbo players have performed at a high level in the past, but they have also played alongside each other at a local level for a number of years. There's not many sports where you can keep on playing like this for so many years. While those connections helped Dubbo perform so well in the competition this season, the impact of coach Graham Waters was also key. Congratulations to the team, and best of luck for next year!

### MAX POTENTIAL

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker ... I want to congratulate this year's participants of Max Potential, an innovative youth development program which pairs high school students with local community and business leaders, who guide them in delivering a community project. Blainey Pearce, Caitlin Healey, Holly Consadine, Mia Geddes, Mingyeong Kim, Natalie Standen, Evie Tanke, Harry Ehlen, Mary Geowyn Medrano, Angelique Hyland, Timothy George and Brett-Lee Cochrane-Owers – great work! Max Potential is all about working to reach the potential you have within – and it's a lifelong process! I think COVID caused a lot of us to reflect on the role we play in our communities. For me it's been a reminder that leadership isn't always about doing things yourself, but reaching out to the people around you! Like the Max Potential coaches, who I hope these young people can look to for guidance in the years to come as they continue on their journeys. Bruce Roberts, Benjamin Edmunds, Bradley Jachmann, Tara Stokes, Jaime Adams, Jahymi Dowel, Pearl Daly-Swords, Robert Lewis, Kerrie Edwards, Sophia Louison, Marilyn Frost, Stephen Hawkins, Adelaide Lindley and James Heesterman – thank you for investing in your communities by mentoring their future leaders!

### ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—In June 2021, schools and students across the state were required to shift to online learning as a result of the recent lockdowns. I take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Principal Miss Maria Femia and her staff at St Brendan's Catholic Primary School for their terrific work in assisting their school community throughout the Pandemic. Despite most students learning from home, St Brendan's Catholic Primary School ensured its school community remained well-connected despite online learning, helping students to reach and in many cases exceed their learning targets and in devising several initiatives to keep students engaged. I also acknowledge the efforts of parents and guardians of students of St Brendan's Catholic Primary School who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support their children with online learning. I am delighted that all students have now resumed face-to-face learning, and are able to be reunited with their friends, peers, and teachers. Once again, I congratulate Miss Maria Femia, teachers, staff, parents, students and indeed the whole St Brendan's Catholic Primary School community for their exceptional efforts in navigating through these most challenging times.

### SEFTON INFANTS SCHOOL

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—In June 2021, schools and students across the state were required to shift to online learning as a result of the recent lockdowns. I take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Principal Ms Sharna Labbe and her staff at Sefton Infants School for their terrific work in assisting their school community throughout the Pandemic. Despite most students learning from home, Sefton Infants School ensured its school community remained well-connected despite online learning, helping students to reach and in many cases exceed their learning targets and in devising several initiatives to keep students engaged. I also acknowledge the efforts of parents and guardians of students of Sefton Infants School who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support their children with online learning. I am delighted that all students have now resumed face-to-face learning, and are able to be reunited with their friends, peers, and teachers. Once again, I congratulate Ms Sharna Labbe, teachers, staff, parents, students and indeed the whole Sefton Infants School community for their exceptional efforts in navigating through these most challenging times.

### ST EUPHEMIA COLLEGE

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—In June 2021, schools and students across the state were required to shift to online learning as a result of the recent lockdowns. I take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Principal Father Peter Mavrommatis and his staff at St Euphemia College for their terrific work in assisting their school community throughout the Pandemic. Despite most students learning from home, St Euphemia College ensured its school community remained well-connected despite online learning, helping students to reach and in many cases exceed their learning targets and in devising several initiatives to keep students engaged. I also acknowledge the efforts of parents and guardians of students of St Euphemia College who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support their children with online learning. I am delighted that all students have now resumed face-to-face learning, and are able to be reunited with their friends, peers, and teachers. Once again, I congratulate Father Peter Mavrommatis, teachers, staff, parents, students and indeed the whole St Euphemia College community for their exceptional efforts in navigating through these most challenging times.

### ST CHARBEL'S COLLEGE

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—In June 2021, schools and students across the state were required to shift to online learning as a result of the recent lockdowns. I take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Principal Rev Father Maroun Youssef and his staff at St Charbel's College for their terrific work in assisting their school community throughout the Pandemic. Despite most students learning from home, St Charbel's College

ensured its school community remained well-connected despite online learning, helping students to reach and in many cases exceed their learning targets and in devising several initiatives to keep students engaged. I also acknowledge the efforts of parents and guardians of students of St Charbel's College who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support their children with online learning. I am delighted that all students have now resumed face-to-face learning, and are able to be reunited with their friends, peers, and teachers. Once again, I congratulate Rev Father Maroun Youssef, teachers, staff, parents, students and indeed the whole St Charbel's College community for their exceptional efforts in navigating through these most challenging times.

#### **CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I extend my sincere congratulations to Year 10 students of Canley Vale High School who have been named finalists in NRMA's Future of Transport Challenge 2021. Students Ameera K, Dan P and Justin B delivered their UVRA Sanitations Proposal. The proposal outlined the use of the power of Ultraviolet Light rays to improve transport hygiene, incentivising public transport use and decreasing traffic congestion. A second team from Canley Vale High School also received an honourable mention for their Public Transport Rewards App, which cleverly rewards individuals for their use of public transport to encourage safer roads. These students were Brandon H, Gary T, Kevin H and Leng Chhun T. Congratulations to all the students and teachers involved on this impressive achievement.

#### **ITALIAN ARMED FORCES DAY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On 4th November, I was delighted to join the Italian community to commemorate the Festa Delle Forze Armate or Italian Armed Forces Day. I thank Mr Antonio Bamonte of the Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri (Sydney) for the kind invitation. The wreath-laying ceremony was held in St Fiacre Church in Leichhardt and was well-attended by members of the Sydney chapters of the Italian armed forces in ceremonial attire. These included representatives from the Guardia di Finanza, Carabinieri, Marinai, Alpini, Avieri and Bersaglieri. Also in attendance was distinguished guest the Consul General of Italy Dottore Andrea De Felip who addressed the gathering and spoke of the efforts of the Italian armed forces in various combats and of those who have lost their lives in Italian military efforts. I was honoured to deliver an address on the role of the Italian Armed Forces in the liberation of Italy and the sacrifices of the many who lost their lives in defence of their country. I take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the organisers of the ceremony which I was honoured to share with them.

#### **ST JOHN AMBULANCE FAIRFIELD DIVISION EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to St John Ambulance NSW Fairfield Division on acquiring a new Emergency Response vehicle. The new vehicle was purchased with funding received from a grant as part of the 2020 Community Building Partnership program. It is now a part of the St John Ambulance Emergency Response Plan and will be used to transport St John Ambulance Fairfield Division volunteers to assist in areas impacted by bushfire and floods. The new vehicle has also recently been utilised at the Prairiewood Vaccination Clinic where St John Ambulance NSW Fairfield Division provided clerical and clinical assistance throughout the lockdown period. I congratulate St John Ambulance NSW Fairfield Division once again on the addition of the new Emergency Response Vehicle and thank them for their continuous efforts in assisting the community when needed.

#### **SHAYNA HUMANITARIAN SERVICES**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I extend my appreciation on behalf of the Fairfield community to Deacon Oliver Sliwa and the members of Shayna Humanitarian Services for their contribution to the COVID-19 effort throughout the June 2021 lockdown. The team at Shayna Humanitarian Services was kept busy throughout this period distributing food hampers to members of the community impacted by the pandemic. They also assisted in the distribution of food packages through the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program and I am grateful for their assistance in reaching as many community members as possible. Shayna Humanitarian Services also offered a Spiritual Care Package for parishioners who were not able to attend church services due to health restrictions. These were delivered in a unique manner via a drive-through contactless pick-up at St Hurmizd's Cathedral, St Mary's Church, St Peter's Cathedral and St Peter's Church. I commend Deacon Sliwa and Shayna Humanitarian Services for their care and commitment to the community during this period and I thank them for their ongoing service to the residents of Fairfield.

#### **WYONG DRAMA GROUP**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)**—Congratulations to the Wyong Drama Group who have begun celebrating their 70th Year Anniversary. The Wyong Drama Group's journey begun in 1952, their official 70th Anniversary will be in 2022. Wyong Drama Group has been entertaining the Central Coast for over the last 60 years. The group has hosted over 200 major shows since its inauguration in 1994, they have hosted the Central

Coast Theatre Festival, a festival for one-act plays and home of the WOSCARS and have won many awards. Congratulations on also being the Resident Drama Group at the Red Tree Theatre. Well done, Wyong Drama Group and Merry Christmas. Wishing you all the best for 2022.

### WYONG ROOS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)**—I congratulate the Wyong Roos on their new partnership with Paladin Sports. Paladin Sport will now be the exclusive apparel partner for the Wyong Roos for the 2022 season and thereafter. Paladin Sports have been involved and had partnerships in major sporting teams throughout Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The Wyong Roos started in the local community in 1910 and is one of today's most progressive Rugby League Clubs in NSW. Congratulations on all the Club has achieved. I wish the Wyong Roos a Merry Christmas and all the best in New Year as well their 2022 season.

### PRECIOUS PLASTICS

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge the powerful environmental work of Precious Plastics Northern Rivers. Precious Plastics Northern Rivers is made up of local recycling enthusiasts who meet online through the Precious Plastics global network. The group have a vision to create not only a charitable enterprise, but to offer financially viable solutions to addresses our growing waste concerns and give back to local communities. Founded with the support of the Precious Plastics global network, the Northern Rivers team are a not-for-profit organisation that provide blue-prints and support for localised recycling projects. They aspire to see recycling facilities established across the northern Rivers that create a direct pathway between producers of waste and local recyclers. The Precious Plastics Northern Rivers team gained much needed funding earlier this year through a Southern Cross Credit Union Community grant that has assisted them to purchase recycling equipment that will shred, melt and remould certain plastics, enabling waste such as milk bottles to be turned into materials that artisans can use. I applaud the ingenuity and passion of these local eco-warriors and I look forward to seeing their model of a circular economy in full swing in our community.

### LINC ALSTONVILLE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognize the remarkable dedication of the volunteers of LinC Alstonville and thank them for the service they provide to our community. For over 20 years LinC Alstonville - a church-founded, local not-for-profit organisation - has worked with a team of trained volunteers to offer free-of-charge services such as transport, shopping, visits, and small garden jobs for the most vulnerable in our community. The dedicated volunteers at LinC Alstonville support people who may not be able to access assistance through private or government agencies. Daily the team of 48 LinC volunteers provide transport for clients to medical appointments, assist with weekly shopping for those that are housebound, and visit lonely and isolated clients in need of connection. I recognize that access to services in regional areas like ours is a huge challenge and organisations such as LinC Alstonville are credited for filling the gaps by assisting the aged, families without support, or those new to the area. I commend LinC Alstonville president, Mark Quilligan who is a powerhouse of energy and service and I applaud all of the volunteers for their motivation, commitment and dedication to service.

### MARGUERITE FULLER

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I commemorate the life of the late Marguerite Fuller and the significant contribution she made to the community of Alstonville. I offer my sincere condolences to her family and friends on her passing. Born in 1937 in Birmingham, UK, Marguerite married in 1954 and emigrated to Australia with her husband. Upon retirement they settled in Alstonville. Marguerite worked with the Alstonville Tidy Towns Committee restoring the historic Croquet Club house at Lumley Park and collected historic photographs of local people and places. Alongside like-minded friends, she oversaw the creation of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society [APHS] in October, 2001, and became the founding President. She promoted NSW Heritage Week, organised competitions in schools, promoted the centenary celebrations for McLean's Ridge Hall and the CBC bank, promoted the Alstonville Agricultural Show and initiated work on the history of the Alstonville Masonic Lodge. One of Marguerite Fuller's greatest coups was in persuading Ballina Shire Council to lease the Alstonville Historical Society the run-down Crawford House for a year. Together with her husband and a group of volunteers they worked hard to restore the building's interior to become what it is today - the Crawford House Museum.

### ST JOHN AMBULANCE VOLUNTEERS

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—At the beginning of November 2021, members of St John Ambulance completed their final shifts at the Prairiewood Vaccination Clinic, Prairiewood Youth and Community Centre. Throughout the recent COVID-19 lockdown, St John Ambulance volunteers worked long, exhausting days to support over 90,000 vaccinations administered to the local community. Prairiewood Vaccination Centre

was first opened to deliver priority Pfizer vaccines to teachers and school staff within the Fairfield Local Government Area. The centre then expanded to include residents of the Local Government Areas of concern. During this time, the Local Government Areas of Blacktown, Fairfield and Cumberland went from COVID-19 hotspots to leading NSW in high vaccination rates. This is a testament to both the willingness of the community to get vaccinated and the tireless efforts of those who worked and volunteered on the frontlines during the pandemic. Thank you to the volunteers at St John Ambulance, who have spent hours of their own time, outside of their professional life, to work alongside groups of dedicated nurses and additional vaccination staff to ensure our community was properly safeguarded against the transmission of COVID-19.

#### **SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Settlement Services International [SSI], is a community organisation and social business that supports a broad range of vulnerable members of our community, including refugees, asylum seekers, children and young people in foster care and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. SSI aims to help individuals overcome difficulties in life and break through barriers. They are always there to provide assistance to our community and empower those who need it most. On the 3rd November 2021, SSI's People and Culture team coordinated an expert panel discussion about COVID-19 and vaccinations. I was pleased to attend and speak at the session alongside prominent and high level members of the medical profession including Krishan Thiru, Paul Griffin, Dipti Zachariah and Rose Lovelock. All speakers highlighted the importance of adhering to the public health measures during this challenging period and discussed methods to effectively engage people from diverse communities, provide support and overcome language barriers during health pandemics. Thank you to SSI for keeping communities and vulnerable members of our society at the centre of your efforts. Western Sydney is home to a large multicultural community and the work that you continue to undertake in supporting them is essential.

#### **BLACKTOWN WORKERS CLUB**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Thursday 4th November 2021, I was delighted to visit the newly renovated Blacktown Workers Club, with Morgan Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, Kay Kelly, President, and Jack Miller, Senior Vice President, Blacktown Workers Club Group. Following months of hard work, the long awaited refurbishment and modernising of this community hub has been completed. I was privileged to have had the opportunity to tour the remodelled facility. The entire team at the Blacktown Workers Club have done a remarkable job to reenergise and transform the club to adapt to a growing Western Sydney, ensuring they meet the broader community's desires and needs. The Blacktown Workers Club will continue to provide thousands of members of our community the opportunity to gather in a family-friendly, welcoming and accessible, with new and upgraded restaurants and facilities. I am immensely proud that the renovations at the Blacktown Workers Club, completed during the COVID-19 pandemic were also able to employ more than 400 workers, 85 per cent of which were local residents living in Western Sydney. Thank you to the Blacktown Workers Club for the wonderful tour and supporting and bettering our community.

#### **ALISON COVINGTON**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—The Annual Third Sector Award, CEO of The Year, recognises and celebrates the best Not-For-Profit practices in Australia. This year, it was awarded to Alison Covington, Founder of a Not-For-Profit based in the Electorate of Prospect, Good360. The charity Good360 was established to provide much needed care and assistance through the distribution of non-perishable products to vulnerable members of our community. Their work is essential and greatly impacts those in our community who are struggling financially. During the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown, residents throughout the Cumberland City Council and across Western Sydney have benefited from over 4,127 boxes, containing 134,232 items valued at \$897,283.00. Alison is well deserving of this award. Through her and the Good360 team's superb efforts, they have been able to stop surplus and brand-new products being wasted in landfill. Alison and her team have been able to help thousands of Australian residents in Western Sydney, during what was an extremely challenging time for our community. Alison is a role model to us all and your efforts do not go unnoticed. Keep up the great work and thank you for all you do for our community.

#### **NEWCASTLE AIRPORT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Newcastle Airport was last night announced as Major Airport of the Year 2021 by Australia's peak airport body, the Australian Airports Association [AAA]. Major Airport of the Year is awarded annually to an airport with over 500,000 annual passengers which displays excellence across all aspects of airport operations and development. Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock and his team have endured very tough times during the COVID pandemic but have continued to strive to deliver exceptional customer service for our region. Prior to the pandemic, Newcastle Airport contributed more than \$1.16 billion to the state's economy each year, including \$300 million direct to the visitor economy which supported over 5,700 full-time employees

across tourism and the Airport cluster. This award recognises the significant economic benefits and the thousands of jobs that Newcastle Airport provides for our economy. This is the third time that Newcastle Airport has gained this prestigious award previously winning it in 2011 and 2018. I congratulate Dr Cock and his team for their dedication and hard work in ensuring first class services and experiences are being delivered at our regional Newcastle Airport. It's a great achievement for the entire Hunter region.

#### **THE COUNTRY WOMEN OF MAITLAND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Just like many communities across New South Wales, Maitland is home to an amazing league of Country Women that belong to the Country Women's Association [CWA] of New South Wales. Recently, I was invited to attend the Maitland Branch of the CWA for morning tea and their 2021 Annual General Meeting. I enjoyed hearing what they had achieved over the last 12 months despite the interruptions of COVID. I was also very pleased to advise the branch of their recent success in the 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. Maitland CWA President, Barbara Heckman said she was 'over the moon' when told of the branch's success. The Maitland CWA will receive \$19,600 to build a storage cupboard, renovate the men's toilet, install a new kitchen in the caretakers flat and provide repairs to the rear awning. I hope the next 12 months see a lot more of their plans for the Maitland community come to fruition. Particularly some of the volunteer run projects they have in mind for the New Maitland Hospital. And as always the scones, jam and cream were delightful.

#### **AUSMUSIC T-SHIRT DAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Today I will join with my Parliamentary colleagues to celebrate Ausmusic T-Shirt Day. Ausmusic T-Shirt Day is a nation-wide celebration of Australian music that reminds us how lucky we are to have such a strong local music scene, with many highly talented and successful artists across all genres of music. This day is used to raise money for Support Act, a charity helping artists and music workers who are facing hardship due to illness, injury or some other crisis that impacts on their ability to work in music. COVID-19 tore at the heart of many creative industries, perhaps none more so than the live music industry. For such a very long time there were no places to perform, no audiences to interact with, no shared moments in the beauty of the music, and no income or livelihood for the artists, music workers and venues. I encourage Maitlanders to join me in celebrating and supporting the re-emergence of our local music industry on Ausmusic T-shirt Day and throughout the coming months.

#### **WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims this November 21st has many objectives. This Day provides a platform for road traffic victims and their families to remember all people killed and seriously injured on our roads. This Day will focus on the reduction of traffic speeds. Low speeds have the potential to prevent many deaths and serious injuries, in particular those of pedestrians and all other vulnerable road users – children, elderly and those living with disabilities. This Day also provides an opportunity to acknowledge and praise the vital work, and the unsung heroes, of the emergency services who far too often must try to cope with the aftermath of an accident while providing critical and urgent care. On this Day of Remembrance I encourage our community members to stop for a few moments and think of those they may have lost, or who have been injured in road accidents. I encourage the people of Maitland to try to reduce accident numbers by observing speed limits and road signage, and to be aware of their surroundings and possible dangers when driving.

#### **CCBA LEP DIGITAL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I wish to congratulate the entire team at LEP Digital, who were honoured with the 2021 Central Coast Excellence in Micro Business Award in the recent Central Coast Business Awards. This year the awards were run virtually by Business NSW to ensure the safety of everyone in our community. The Central Coast Business Awards cover 10 different categories which recognise the ingenuity, strength and resilience of businesses on the Coast. LEP Digital are an innovative digital content and marketing agency based at Erina in my electorate of Terrigal. The team provides services to businesses and individuals not only on the Coast but across the country. Mister Speaker, I wish to again congratulate LEP Digital and wish them the best of luck when they represent the Central Coast region in the upcoming State-wide Business Awards.

#### **TIM PITTOLO**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, today I take the opportunity to congratulate Tim Pittolo who after taking out the award for Trainer of the Year at the 2021 NSW Surf Life Saving Awards, represented NSW in the Australian Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence. At the NSW awards volunteers from the Central Coast took out seven awards in total, one third of all the awards. Tim has made an outstanding contribution not only to Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club but across the Central Coast through his work in Surf Life

Saving education programs. Throughout COVID-19 lockdowns Tim continued his work to deliver localised education to new members on digital platforms. The dedication of trainers in Surf Life Saving NSW ensures that our beaches will be safe for residents and tourists for many years to come. I would like to congratulate both the nominees and winners of these prestigious awards and extend my thanks to all surf lifesaving volunteers for their incredible work.

#### **DAVISTOWN RSL NETBALL CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I would like to recognise members and parents of the Davistown Netball Club who recently demonstrated a huge act of generosity. As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions on community sport, the Netball Club were refunding season membership fees. The club decided to ask parents if they would like to donate this refund to local organisation, Central Coast Kids in Need and in total, \$1,274.50 was donated. This is an impressive act of generosity, Mister Speaker. Central Coast Kids in Need, or CCKIN, is a small volunteer not-for-profit which have operated under the capable Presidency of Louise Gladden since 2007. The organisation raises funds to assist local families with accommodation and other costs to stay with their sick children whilst they are undergoing specialist treatment in Sydney or Newcastle hospitals. It is one which I strongly support and am so proud of, Mister Speaker. Finally I want to thank Davistown Netball Club's President Lauren Holland, the rest of the committee and the Davistown Netball community for this great initiative. I wish the club the best of luck in future Netball seasons.

#### **BARBARA KETLEY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to extend a huge congratulations to Barbara Ketley, who in September was elected President of the Central Coast Regional Advisory Council of the NSW Business Chamber. Barbara is the CEO and Creative Director as well as the founder of Milestone-Belanova, an incredibly successful marketing agency located at East Gosford, which has been servicing the community for over 20 years. Her wealth of knowledge will be greatly appreciated by businesses across the Central Coast. I would also like to congratulate Rod Dever who has been elected Vice President of the Advisory Council. A big thank you to Frank Sammut, the outgoing President who has led the Advisory Council for the past four years. Congratulations and I look forward to working with Barbara and the rest of the Central Coast Regional Advisory Council to support businesses across the Central Coast.

#### **MOSS VALE HIGH SCHOOL 2021 YEAR 12**

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

#### **BILL WOODS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr Bill Woods, a retired doctor and former Goulburn man. Mr Woods turned 100 on Saturday 2nd October 2021. He received congratulations from the Queen, Governor General and State Governor. Mr Woods now lives in an aged care facility in Sydney. He grew up in Goulburn, the son of Dr Robert Grieve Woods and wife, Minnie. He was named after his grandfather, William Cleaver Woods, also a doctor. The final year of Mr Woods schooling was completed at Sydney's Shore College. With three of his uncles also doctors it was clear which direction he was headed in. He enrolled in medicine at Sydney University but his studies were interrupted by war. In 1941 he joined the Australian Field Ambulance, the 2/14 Light Field Ambulance and First Armoured Division. He returned to University in 1945 and completed his degree in 1949. He married family friend Joan Chisholm on May 14, 1955. They had four children together Robert, James, Susan and Richard. A zoom call in Bill's favourite room to celebrate his 100th birthday was organised by the aged care facility. Happy Birthday, Bill!

#### **RUTH GISSING**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Ruth Elizabeth Gissing will be remembered for her many decades of service to the community of Wagga Wagga. Born at Old Borambola in 1922, Mrs Gissing was descended from two well-known Wagga Wagga families, the Brunskills and Blakes. Mrs Gissing, who died in July aged 99, spent much of her schooling away from Wagga Wagga and was a boarder at Presbyterian Ladies College in Sydney. After completing her schooling and returning home, Mrs Gissing became involved in community affairs. She



joined the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment, volunteering at Wagga Base Hospital and at an army hospital at Wagga Showground. This dedication to the Red Cross spanned eight decades. After the war, Mrs Gissing met husband Morris, who had returned after serving in the Army Signals Corp. They were married at St John's Church on May 26, 1948, and had a son Peter and a daughter Margaret. Mr Gissing went on to serve five terms as mayor of Wagga Wagga, with Mrs Gissing engaged as mayoress. Mr Gissing died in 2013. Mrs Gissing was dedicated to her family, which grew to include Peter's wife, Judy, Margaret's husband, Barry, seven grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

### **CALLAGHAN COLLEGE JESMOND SENIOR CAMPUS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The annual NSW Education Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence acknowledged the achievements and outstanding efforts of students, educators, parents and schools. Callaghan College was a recipient of the Secretary's School Achievement Award for its Faculty Leadership Improvement Project (FLIP) initiative, which ran across its three campuses. The award is presented to schools that successfully create a sustainable learning environment through a whole-of-school project. The schools must have a significant improvement in learning outcomes and opportunities, and excellence in student learning. Through the FLIP initiative, each of the remarkable College Instructional Leaders have shown the value of efficiently leading for impact. They each effectively led targeted projects to address areas of need in their faculty, and have built the capacity of their teams through distributed leadership, as well as developing a high level skillset themselves. Most importantly, the College Instructional Leaders have positively impacted the learning culture at each of their campuses. Well done to Jesmond Senior Campus Instructional Leaders Barbara Davis, Bruce Killen, Cale Wallace, Jamie Mitchell, James Ostermann, Jeff Riley, Jivvel Kilham, Neil Wright, Paul Colla, Sara Pendergast, Stephen Ley, Stewart McKinnon, and Suzanne Rich.

### **NNSW FOOTBALL AWARDS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Despite another COVID-19 impacted season, Northern NSW Football recently held their annual presentation night to celebrate the 2021 season. The awards recognise and celebrate the best teams, players and clubs throughout Northern NSW Football's seven member zones.

Congratulations to Lambton Jaffas and former Newcastle Jets Goalkeeper, Ben Kennedy, who was named the Bill Mahoney Goalkeeper of the Year, conceding just 15 goals in 16 games. Congratulations to Lambton Jaffas coach, Shane Pryce, who was named joint Coach of the Year.

Congratulations go to the Adamstown Rosebuds, who were chosen as the Club of the Year, with the Club also winning the Fair Play Award. Congratulation to Edgeworth FC who took out the Club Championship. Obviously the COVID interruption was a disappointing way to end the year but I look forward to seeing everyone again, bigger and better, in 2022. Congratulations to all the award winners on a fantastic season. You have done yourselves and your clubs proud. Thank you to Northern NSW Football Chair, Helene O'Neill, and CEO, David Eland for all your work during another tough season impacted by the pandemic.

### **GILLIAN MASON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Congratulations to HMRI and The University of Newcastle clinical research assistant, Gillian Mason, on her recognition as the inaugural 2021 Brilliant Women in Digital award recipient. Gillian is a physiotherapist and Manager of the Stroke Register, Hunter, and has more than 15 years' healthcare experience supporting patients and carers in communicating their needs in the rapidly changing health environment. She has used her skills 'from both sides of the bedside' to transform the way that people's lived experience is valued and included in the design of human-centred, digitally enabled, accessible health systems. Gillian is proud of contributing to an inclusive digital health future by being visibly, authentically herself at work. She hopes her impact is for women living with illness and disability to see pathways to leadership positions for them in the industry, and for health system users to feel safe and assured that their needs are being considered, with a system designed to their needs. This award recognises and celebrates women in digital health for their incredible achievements and aims to raise awareness about the opportunities in the digital health sector for women and aims to inspire others who are interested in digital health.

### **ROZ CARTER**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Every year, each of Northern NSW Football's zones recognise their volunteers, coaches, referees and clubs with Newcastle Permanent Community Awards. This year, Newcastle Football announced our very own Roz Carter from Maryland Fletcher Football Club as the Newcastle Permanent Volunteer of the Year award recipient. Roz joined the club well over 20 years ago, when it was known as Plattsburg Football Club, and when her children, Ben and Mel, were active players. She has held many positions during her time, President, Vice President, Committee Member, Gear Steward, Canteen Manager, often holding more than one position at once, and has received life membership for her efforts. It has been highlighted that Roz

is a happy, caring and dedicated volunteer, and the Maryland Fletcher Football Club community have expressed how lucky they are to have her, and how pleased they are that Roz's efforts have been acknowledged. Congratulations on your achievement, Roz. It is clear that both past and current members of your club not only appreciate your enthusiasm and selflessness in volunteering, but they also appreciate the person under the volunteering hat.

#### **TED BICKFORD**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise Ted Bickford, also known as the 'Graffiti Buster'. Ted volunteers to remove graffiti from the Great Lakes and teach his skills to local school children through special programs. Ted has recently celebrated 10 years of working with students at Great Lakes College, Forster campus, teaching them respect for other people's property and what it takes to remove graffiti and keep a region graffiti-free. Ted has been removing graffiti in the Great Lakes voluntarily for 26 years and is still proudly going at the age of 84. I offer my deepest thanks to Ted for his continued hard work in keeping our region as pristine as it is, and for his work in teaching future generations these values. Thank you and congratulations, Ted, for a decade with Great Lakes College Forster and for 26 years being our proud Graffiti Buster.

#### **WINGHAM TIGERS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I recognise players from Wingham Rugby League Club, the Tigers. Front rower Aaron Groom has been awarded the 'David "Zippy" Steel All Grades Player of the Year. Aaron was a newcomer to the Tigers this year and also scooped the first grade Player of the Year Award, and Coach's Award. Brannon Murray was named Rookie of the Year and Bob Staff, Clubman of the Year. Jonty Hemmingway and Layne Watson shared the League Tag Player of the Year, while Ethan White was named Under-18 Player of the Year. Adam Kerr was awarded the reserve grade Player of the Year. Life Membership was awarded to club historian Graham Steel while Club President Scott Blanch and Tanya Atkins and Sharelle Lewis are on the honour board. This comes as 100 years of rugby league was celebrated Wingham this year. Congratulations to all players and those who were recognised with awards and honours. I wish the Wingham Tigers best of luck for their next season.

#### **MAX LOMBE 90TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I'd like to take this opportunity to wish a very special gentleman in the Engadine Community a happy 90th birthday which was celebrated on 7th November 2021. Max has always been an integral part of our community and I wish him good health and happiness for the future.

#### **HOLROYD LITTLE ATHLETICS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Holroyd Little Athletics celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2021. They were the sixth Little Athletics Centre established in NSW and have a long and proud history as a member of the Mid-West Metropolitan Zone and Region 7. They are based out of Holroyd Sport Ground and are warmly regarded by the local community. Little Athletics is a uniquely Australian sport for children aged 4-16 years based upon the sport of athletics (track and field) and the events are specially modified to suit the ages and abilities of children. A wide range of running, jumping, throwing, and walking events is conducted and offers young people activities and skills that will stand them in good stead for their sporting future. 2021 has been a tough year for all sports and especially grassroots sport. My best wishes to Holroyd Little Athletics for another successful 50 years.

#### **AHIMSA PEACE SYMPOSIUM**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 2 October I was delighted to be the Guest of Honour at the Ahimsa Peace Symposium 2021 to celebrate the 152nd anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. The Symposium 2021 is a tribute to the global peace hero Mahatma Gandhi. It commemorates his birth and aims to increase public awareness and understanding of Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Ahimsa (non-violence) as a non-violent approach to foster lasting peace within and across diverse & vulnerable communities. The focus of the symposium was on how Ahimsa supports the global agenda for "Women, Peace and Security". Mohandas Karamchand ("Mahatma" or "Venerable") Gandhi's values of Ahimsa — social action, justice and peace through non-violence — have universal relevance today as much as they did in the years leading up to the independence of India from the United Kingdom in 1947. Thank you to the Saroni Roy Foundation [SRF] and Western Sydney University's Humanitarian and Development Research Institute [HADRI] for their invitation to attend the inaugural Ahimsa Peace Symposium and I wish them well in their work promoting the legacy and beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi.

#### **PLUIM GROUP – WEST GOSFORD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I wish to congratulate Pluim Group, a Central Coast construction company, who have been selected as the successful tenders to build the new Umina Mall – to be called Lone Pine Plaza. Pluim Group is a family-owned construction company founded over seventy years ago and who have

become one of the largest and most successful builders in NSW. Laundry Hotels has entrusted Plum Group to deliver a state-of-the-art commercial development on its site in Umina Beach, where the former Umina Mall stood. It was an honour to be a part of the official ground-breaking ceremony on November 15 and to have Arthur Laundry, owner of Laundry Hotels, mark the occasion with a stirring speech about the challenges this development encountered and what the future holds for this site. I thank all those who have helped get this development off the ground including Member for Wyong and Shadow Minister for the Central Coast, David Harris MP, Former Councillor Richard Mehrtens, Matthew Wales from the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, staff at Central Coast Council and the entire community for never losing hope.

**REGIONAL POOL LIFESAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS – DAVARA MARSHALL, RONNIE JORDAN AND JACOB FALCONER**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Congratulations to our young surf lifesavers who swept the field in their respective categories during the inaugural Regional Pool Lifesaving Championships held at Peninsula Leisure Centre, Woy Woy on 19th June 2021. Fantastic result for Umina's U15 competitor Davara Marshall whose outstanding performance placed her 1st overall in the women's events. Incredible effort Davara, you are a champion for our community. Umina's U13 male competitor Ronnie Jordan dominated the field by taking out all events in his age group. Well done Ronnie for such consistent top performance! Not to be outdone, Ocean Beach's U14 male competitor Jacob Falconer outclassed his field with impressive results and another star performance! I commend each of you for your commitment, effort, skill and dedication to your sport and to the safety and wellbeing of everyone who visits our beautiful Central Coast beaches. You are our leaders of the future. And a heartfelt thank you to your parents, coaches and every person who supports you to be such outstanding members of our community and our surf lifesaving teams.

**SCOTT TIPPING**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Thank you to Coastie Scott Tipping for his dedication to supporting others through tough times. Scott, a long term local advocate for R U Ok? Day says that for him "it's about understanding how people are going. It's about seeing how people are and checking in, and it's about connecting with someone". I want to acknowledge Scott for his dedication to this cause not just on this one day, but every day. Scott even embarked on an 11-day jet-ski trip from Melbourne to Brisbane in 2017 to promote the importance of the day and to encourage people to start conversations about mental health. Scott is a wonderful example of how we can support each other to get through tough times by taking time to connect with each other, to ask and to listen. Thank you Scott, you are an inspiration to us all.

**ROTARY CLUB OF WOY WOY DONATION DRIVE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I wish to encourage my community to get behind the Rotary Club of Woy Woy as they collect toiletry items for two very exceptional charities on the Central Coast – Coast Shelter and Share the Dignity.

The Rotary Club of Woy Woy is asking the community to donate toiletry items including soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoos, conditioners, male deodorant, tissues and razors to be given to Coast Shelter. While, for Share the Dignity, the Rotary is asking the community for female hygiene products including tampons, pads and incontinence items. To get involved contact Julie Allen on 0401 226 367 or by dropping by Ettalong Beach Medical Centre, 61 Picnic Parade, Ettalong, and speaking with Sue Tee. We all know that COVID-19 has had a particularly hard impact on those most vulnerable in our society and giving donations during this period is greatly appreciated. I warmly thank the work of the Rotary Club of Woy Woy for organising this donation drive and send my continuing appreciation to Coast Shelter and Share the Dignity for all the work they do helping our Central Coast community.

**MIDDLE HARBOUR YACHT CLUB'S LAZY DOG VICTORY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I congratulate Mosman resident Shaun Lane and Quentin Stewart for successfully claiming back-to-back national MC38 titles. The event was one of the first that the Middle Harbour Yacht Club has hosted since June and was a huge success. The MC38 Australian National Championship is a yearly competition. This year's event also included competitors from the Middle Harbour Yacht Club, the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club and the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia. The championship event took three days, with Lazy Dog being declared the winner by a single point. Our Middle Harbour Yacht Club is one of Australia's largest and is a national leader in its sail training and education program. I would also like to commend chairman Rob Aldis for the club's MC38 title and its success in getting back to the water. Congratulations to Shaun Lane and Quentin Stewart for winning back-to-back titles, and I wish them and the Middle Harbour Yacht Club all the best in their future endeavours.

### **REDLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL DEBATING**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate the Redlands Year 6 Debating team for reaching the semi-finals of this year's National Independent Schools Virtual Debating competition. They are competing in the Primary School division, which features 32 teams from around the country. The debating team completed an undefeated start to the competition, notching two wins from their first two debates. They successfully debated 'cyclists should have to pay a registration fee to use the roads' and 'domestic cats should not be banned from Australia'. Reaching the semi-finals is a fantastic achievement. This team has demonstrated exceptional debating skills. I commend the Head of Junior School, Ari Guha, and all the teachers involved for supporting our young people's debating endeavours. I congratulate all the Year 6 Debating team students for taking the floor and showcasing their debating skills in this competition. I wish them the best of luck as they move into the competition's semi-finals, and also as they prepare for starting High School next year.

### **MOSMAN ROWERS SECURES CBP2021 FUNDING**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate the Mosman Rowers for their successful application to secure funds through the Community Building Partnership program 2021. This funding will allow the club to install brand new solar panels for more sustainable and environmentally friendly power. Mosman Rowers is a much-loved local club for sport and a place for our community to come together to dine and socialise. The club has been operating since 1911, and they are now leading the charge on sustainability. The installation of a 24 kW solar system will save 24.75 tonnes of CO2 per annum and significantly increase energy efficiency and reduce electricity costs by 11 per cent each year. I want to acknowledge the club's successful reopening after the latest lockdown and wish them all the best for a busy and successful summer. Congratulations again to President Kathrina Doran and the rest of the team at Mosman Rowers for securing this well-deserved funding that will assist in delivering greener and more sustainable energy.

### **SYDNEY INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE SECURES FUNDING THROUGH CBP2021**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate the Sydney Institute of Marine Science, based locally at Mosman, for their successful application and well-deserved funding through the Community Building Partnership program 2021. Over the last few months, the Sydney Institute of Marine science team has been busy working on different research projects that continuously positively impact our environment, particularly here in Sydney Harbour, the crown jewel of Sydney's waterways and marine life. The Living Seawalls project is one of the many research projects conducted by SIMS and focused on creating more habitats for marine life by installing panels along Sydney Harbour. The funding through the CBP2021 will help increase outreach capacity at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science. Minor internal works for the SIMS teaching laboratory, upgrades to existing AV systems and the purchase of teaching equipment will be supported through this funding. Well done to CEO Professor Martina Doblin and General Manager Mark Scognamiglio and the team in securing this well-deserved funding. I wish the SIMS team all the best with their continued research and projects.

### **KRISTY HANLEY – MUMSAFE FITNESS FOR MUMS GOONELLABAH**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I'd like to acknowledge Lismore local and fitness trainer Kristy Hanley and her wonderful fitness program MumSafe. MumSafe is a specialized exercise program for mums and seeks to deliver safe and effective exercise to local mums at every stage of motherhood. Hosted on site at Kadina Park MumSafe is incredibly popular with local mums. As a young mum herself Kristy seeks to fill a gap that exists in the fitness industry as well as providing a fun and social environment for mums to exercise and take some time out for themselves. MumSafe is part of a national organisation and Kristy has trained to be a certified MumSafe trainer. Kristy spoke of her sessions for mums recently with the Lismore App which runs great local stories, she says that "We do stretches to reverse the burden of pregnancy and motherhood, feeding especially. Open the chest, strengthen the back, reversing that position that we get stuck in. As well as trying to reduce the shoulder and neck strain." This type of fitness program is truly like nothing I have seen before. I strongly commend Kristy for her efforts and her fabulous program for local women.

### **TENTERFIELD PONY CLUB SEASON BEGINS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It's great to see the Tenterfield Pony Club back in action with around 60 riders taking to the Tenterfield Showground to participate in the hacking, sporting and show jumping events. The competition was held on Saturday November 6 after being delayed by COVID 19. The Tenterfield Pony Club told the Tenterfield Star recently they were happy with the turnout and the competition was a roaring success. This is great to hear. It was wonderful to read about it and see the pictures of so many happy faces back doing what they love. It is especially exciting to see so many young people getting involved in the pony club. The Tenterfield Pony Club is part of Zone 13 and will go on to compete at competitions in Uralla, Inverell, Bundarra, Guyra and Armidale. I congratulate Club President and delegate to zone Bruce Lyons, Club Secretary Jennifer

Donadel, Club Treasurer Gina Carpenter, Club Delegate to zone Steve Parker, Chief Instructor Liz Bulmer, Club Safety Officer Scott Koch and Club Member Info Protection Officer Paula Petrie on all their efforts getting the competition up and running. I congratulate the committee and the entire club on this outstanding competition.

#### **SERPENTINE GALLERY - 15 YEARS IN NORTH LISMORE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I acknowledge an outstanding 15 years of Serpentine Gallery being an iconic arts and community space on Bridge St North Lismore. In coming months Serpentine Gallery will move to a new location in the Lismore CBD. The Serpentine Gallery started in 2006 by a small group of local artists and has since become a hub of not only great local art but of discussion, community gathering and political activism. Founding member Corrine Bat-Rawden told my office that when she initially laid eyes on the site in North Lismore she immediately said 'that would be a great place for a gallery' so she went and set one up. The Serpentine has always had a range of interesting, thought provoking and boundary pushing exhibitions many of which I have had the pleasure of seeing. Their most recent exhibition was New Life – all about celebrating spring, its current exhibitions are the Politika exhibition and Pictures from the Sleeping Lizard. I recognise founding member Corrine Bat-Rawden, President Megan Moore, Vice President Beau Ravn, Secretary Julia Lincoln, Admin Extraordinaire Sonia Barton and previous President Fiona McConnachie. I wish the Serpentine Gallery well in their new CBD space.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TWO MATES BREWERY SOUTH LISMORE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Two Mates Brewery on finally getting to brew and can their product after 18 months of hard yakka. The Two Mates Brewery on Engine St South Lismore is such an exciting new craft brewery opening up in South Lismore. Co-owners Grant Smith and Andrew Newton are two great mates and have thrown everything into opening up this business. It is so wonderful to see products flying off the shelves. Despite facing some challenges throughout the process Two Mates Brewery have created such a buzz in Lismore. In particular, I commend Two Mates for their investment in South Lismore. South Lismore is an incredible community and have long been wanting for a destination like this in their backyard. This brewery really puts South Lismore on the map. As well as brewing quality craft beer products the brewery will have a community garden, a playground for the kids and live music. The brewery will be much more than just a brewery but more a community hub. There are already a great range of craft brews to purchase including Dog Spike XPA (extra pale ale), Rivers Mid Larger, Lager Than Life and 5th Wheel Mid.

#### **ST CLAIR AND DISTRICT MEN'S SHED**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge St Clair and District Men's Shed in my electorate of Mulgoa, who play a vital role in the mental health and wellbeing of men in our communities. I wish to congratulate St Clair and District Men's Shed on their recent success in the 2021 Community Building Partnership program where they received \$8,250 in funding for the installation of air conditioning. Congratulations to St Clair and District Men's Shed!

#### **OMER CATIC AND CRAIG CULLEN**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to acknowledge St Clair residents and businessmen, Omer Catic and Craig Cullen on the Grand Opening of the showroom to their highly acclaimed C & C Air Conditioning business.

Both men served out their apprenticeships after completing their education at St Clair High and Erskine Park High deciding to go into business together seven years ago. They both have a strong focus on supporting the surrounding community, whether that be living locally and their kids attending schools in the local community while also employing locally. Local Otag teams and junior rugby league teams have C & C Air Conditioning to thank for sponsorship, to which Omer and Craig said one of the most rewarding things they do is to give back to the local kids. On December 1st, the business will be hosting the Grand Opening, kicking off at 5pm it will be a fun-filled event for the whole family, with show bags, sausage sizzle and a jumping castle, with the focus on a huge Christmas tree to be lit at the start of dark. Congratulations Omer and Craig on this amazing achievement!

#### **BRITTANIE SHIPWAY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Local Mulgoa resident and talented actress, Brittanie Shipway, has made her silver screen debut, starring in the short film, Intelligent Design. Intelligent Design was filmed earlier this year in Parramatta and tells the story of a young yuppie couple who set out to design their own baby; from the baby's gender, right down to eye colour, height and everything. But if you play with biology, will you even be able to recognise your own child? Having starred in many plays and musicals, Brittanie found the challenge of film very different. With her knowledge and background in Shakespeare was not much help when it came to screen acting as she felt it is completely different. Brittanie estimates losing about 26 months of work due to the

pandemic and is looking forward to more opportunities next year. She has recently gotten into writing which started at her Aunt and Uncles house here in Mulgoa, being lucky enough to have won grants from Create NSW and Australia Council to workshop her plays and musicals. Congratulations Brittanie on your recent success, I look forward to seeing more from you and good luck for the future!

#### **DI WATSON**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge local Mulgoa resident and talented photographer, Di Watson, in celebrating 30 years as a wedding and portrait photographer. Her journey began in 1991, when she photographed her first wedding officially as Di Watson Photography. She has seen many changes in photography in the past three decades with the biggest being changing from film to digital photography. Di says the best thing about being a wedding photographer is being able to meet and connect with lovely people. To be able to capture images that showcase their unique love story, the moments, family and friends and creating memories for them to cherish forever is priceless. As well as being a photographer, Di has also been a veterinary nurse and receptionist at Penrith Vet Hospital for 36 years. Adding to her talent, she also started Farmstay Australia, a website directory to promote tourism to rural and outback Australia for farmers opening their doors to travellers for accommodation and camping. She also raised a total of \$7,000 through Farmstay to help farmers suffering from drought. Congratulations Di on your incredible achievements, you should be extremely proud of all that you have accomplished!

#### **MACKENZIE GODFREY**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—The NSW Office for Veteran Affairs [OVA] administers the Premier's ANZAC Memorial Scholarship [PAMS] which funds a study tour for young people. Scholars learn about the causes and effects of world conflicts and visit the battlefields where Anzacs have fought, to learn about and commemorate their service. I congratulate Mackenzie Godfrey, Year 12 Captain of Mount Annan Christian College who was invited as a representative of the 2021 PAMS to participate in the Remembrance Day Service hosted by the NSW Government at Martin Place. Mackenzie, along with Nicholas from Epping boys High School recited the "In Flanders Field" Poem and laid a wreath at the Cenotaph. Mackenzie was a wonderful representative for Camden at this very important service and I congratulate Mackenzie for her leadership and support for our veterans.

#### **NATIONAL TREE DAY 2021**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—National Tree Day started in 1996 and has grown into Australia's largest community tree planting and nature care event. Since 1996, 26 million trees have been planted with over 5 million volunteers who have contributed 10 million hours to this day. To recognise National Tree Day, Macarthur Anglican School, Kindergarten students participated by planting 40 trees that are native to the Cumberland Plain, within Camden. I thank the students, teachers, school and everyone involved for their contribution to clean the air and for creating and restoring the natural habitat of flora and fauna within our community.

#### **REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Remembrance Day marks the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month which was the time and day that the World War One armistice between the Allies and Germany was signed in 1918. Last week, I had the honour of attending Remembrance Day commemorations in Macarthur Park right in the heart of Camden to recognise the sacrifice of so many Australian men and women. Together with the President of the Camden RSL Sub-branch Iain Richard-Evan, Senior Vice President Con Diomis and other Sub-branch members we commemorated this solemn day. On Remembrance Day we commemorate the men and women who lost their lives serving their country from all wars and conflicts. We also thank those men and women who have served and are serving our country to protect our freedoms. On behalf of the Camden community I pay my respects to, and thank these men and women. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PASQUALE MARASCO**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Mr Speaker, I offer my sincerest condolences to the family of Mr Pasquale Marasco after receiving news of his recent passing on 28 September, at 96 years old. Born in 1924 in the town of Martirano Lombardo in the Catanzaro province in the region of Calabria, Italy, where Pasquale met his wife Alba and they married on 30 May 1946. In 1951, the Marasco's migrated to Australia for a better life and opportunities for their children. Through good times and bad, hard work and sacrifice, the Marasco's achieved their dream of—a long and happy life together. It was an absolute pleasure to be able to share in their 75th wedding anniversary celebrations earlier in the year. I send my deepest sympathies to his wife Alba Marasco, five children; Gina, Mafalda, Evelina, Gianna and Pasquale Jnr, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

### PENRITH SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)**—I wish to offer my congratulations to the recently announced student leadership team of Penrith Selective High School for the 2022 school year. The leadership team for 2022 includes, Captains: Gabriel Cant and Andre Dubier, Vice Captains: Joshua Gange and Veerja Patel and Senior Prefects: Athena Xian Tian and Rachel Mathew. Student leader's play an important role and I have no doubt these students will make positive and valuable contributions across their school community.

### PENRITH GAELS CLUB

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)**—I wish to acknowledge Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Association for their ongoing support of numerous local charities, schools, community groups and sporting clubs. Recently, following their annual charity golf day, President, Mr John Grieve presented a cheque for over \$11,000 to the Nepean Hospital Ronald McDonald Family Room (the Family Room). Run by a team of volunteers the Family Room offers those with a newborn in Nepean Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit a home away from home with easy access to the hospital. Thank you Penrith Gaels Club for your generous donation to this worthy organisation.

### SEE SOMETHING DO SOMETHING CAMPAIGN

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Speaker, As tomorrow is White Ribbon Day, I would like to acknowledge Central Coast Council, the NSW Police Force, the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Waters Liquor Accords and Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee for developing the See Something Do Something campaign. The campaign encourages people who witness any form of abuse or violence to act rather than be a bystander. The campaign also provides important tools and educates people on how to report domestic abuse. By working together to construct the campaign, Central Coast Council, the NSW Police Force, the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Waters Liquor Accords and Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee have taken a vital step towards limiting the number of domestic assaults that go unreported. Domestic violence is a prevalent issue nation-wide and Central Coast Council, the NSW Police Force, the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Waters Liquor Accords and Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee should be proud of their efforts in trying to stop it. I thank Central Coast Council, the NSW Police Force, the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Waters Liquor Accords and Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee for creating the See Something Do Something Campaign.

### HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Speaker, Today I acknowledge Hunter Joint Organisation, which along with its 10 Member Councils and Central Coast Council has been announced as a finalist for the Climate Champion Award in the Cities Power Partnership's 2021 Climate Awards. The Cities Power Partnership Awards recognise the work of local government organisations in working towards a zero-carbon future. The Hunter region was the first region within the country to have all Member Councils join the Cities Power Partnership. Each of these councils including Lake Macquarie and Central Coast Councils have been working hard to ensure that they embed their partnership commitments into their governing documents. The Climate Award finalists were selected from a number of entries that had been submitted by diverse communities Australia wide. Hunter Joint Organisation's recognition in this format highlights the strength of local councils in aiming to create a better future for generations to follow. I congratulate Hunter Joint Organisation on their achievement and for their dedication in striving for a zero-carbon future.

### HERITAGE OF EAST LAKE MACQUARIE INAUGURAL HERITAGE WALK

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Speaker, I acknowledge Heritage of East Lake Macquarie on planning their inaugural heritage walk. Heritage of East Lake Macquarie is a volunteer group that consists of history enthusiasts who aim to capture stories relevant to East Lake Macquarie through the recollections of those that experienced important historical events. Heritage of East Lake Macquarie have invited the people of Swansea to join them on their inaugural heritage walk on 19 November, which will commence from the Rising Sun ANZAC Memorial at the Swansea RSL Club and end at the boat ramp at Thomas Humphreys Reserve. During the walk, participants will hear a range of stories including those about Swansea's four bridges and two wharves and cattle thieves and boat builders. In case of poor weather, the group have also prepared a virtual tour at the Swansea Centre, featuring pictures from the past and present, as well as local people speaking of their experiences at some of the sites. I congratulate Heritage of East Lake Macquarie on planning and developing the event and thank them for their efforts in preserving Swansea's history.

### CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Speaker, Today I acknowledge Central Coast Council on their efforts in recognising National Recycling Week. Central Coast Council have been participating in a number of National Recycling Week events over the years, including the Garage Sale Trail for the past 7 years. This year, they will also be partnering with Cleanaway to celebrate a new e-learning platform that consists of a number of interactive quizzes and webinars. Those that participate in the quizzes can also go in the running to win a range of prizes including gift cards and recycling packs. Central Coast Council is also holding 3 webinars on issues such as recycling, soft plastics and food waste. By celebrating National Recycling Week in this way, Central Coast Council are encouraging the local community to be mindful of the environment and join the reuse and recycle movement. I congratulate Central Coast Council for their efforts in recognising National Recycling Week and thank them for the work they have done in encouraging the local community to look after the environment.

### COMMONWEALTH DAY 2021

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, Commonwealth Day is an important day on the calendar for both its historical significance and the social importance that it carries. Earlier this year, I had the honour of joining the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to mark the occasion with a fantastic luncheon alongside other Members of Parliament. Commonwealth Day celebrates the Commonwealth of Nations which is a network of 54 countries that dates back to the origins of British colonialism. I would like to thank the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Ms Helen Minnican, for inviting me to this fantastic event. I am continually fascinated by our imperial ancestry and the systems of Government, democracy and law that it entails. The theme for 2021 was "Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating and Transforming." This highlights how the Commonwealth is working towards positive and holistic outcomes in the international community in areas such as trade and environmental protection. Thank you again to Helen Minnican for hosting me at this interesting and insightful event.

### EXTRA CARE AUTOS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I have never met a group of people who have a greater passion for cars than Sayeed Parvez and the team at Extra Care Autos. Earlier this year, I had the honour of helping open their brand new service centre at Revesby alongside an enthusiastic crowd of local residents and customers. The new service centre is simply outstanding for a local business. Their state of the art facilities and equipment is incredible and it is amazing to see how far the automotive industry has come over the years. The Opening Reception event was a great initiative to show off their quality work within the community while showcasing the skills and services that the business has to offer. Extra Care Autos has been operating in the community for over five years now and they have become a trusted brand and service provider for the entire St George region. I wish Sayeed and the team all the best for many more years of fantastic service to our community.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise today to thank Georges River Council for hosting me at a fantastic breakfast for this year's International Women's Day. It was fantastic to hear from three inspiring, motivated and successful local entrepreneurs at the event including: Co-founder of early childhood education series Teach Ted, Sarah Cummings, Executive Director of Intimo, Philippa Aslanis and Cafe owner turned Business Consultant, Katherine Blizzard. It was also outstanding to hear from my good friend and General Manager of Georges River Council, Gail Connolly, about the importance and success of women throughout the region. International Women's Day is an incredible initiative which aims to promote the importance of female participation throughout society as we continue to create a more equal future. Almost 150 representatives from across local businesses and government bodies attended the event and it was fantastic to see that our community has complete support for this initiative. More than \$3000 will also be donated from ticket sales to women's crisis accommodation throughout the St George area. Thank you again to Georges River Council for inviting me to this outstanding event.

### OATLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Belinda Stanton and the Oatley Football Club for receiving \$30,000 in funding to upgrade lighting at Renown Park. This funding is thanks to the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership program which has provided \$300,000 to local groups and organisations across the St George area. Belinda and the team do an outstanding job at providing top quality training to players young and old. Whether you are just starting out, rising through the ranks or playing for fun, the Oatley Football Club is the place for you. I also wish to congratulate the organisation for hosting their successful Pink Ribbon Gala Day event again this year to encourage female participation both on and off the field. This was a fantastic event and I was proud to see so many women getting involved in this event. This new



lighting will allow the Oatley Football Club to offer more training sessions in the evening. It will also mean that they can host some fantastic evening events. Congratulations again to Belinda Stanton and the Oatley Football Club for a huge 2021.

**The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 18:22 until Friday 19 November 2021 at 9:30.**