



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: While we cannot have visitors in the Chamber, I acknowledge the presence of a number of visitors at the side door, who are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, and welcome them to the Parliament.

Announcements

CHAMBER BROADCAST SYSTEM UPGRADE

The SPEAKER: A significant technical upgrade to the Legislative Assembly Chamber broadcast system will begin in December. This is the first time that the Parliament has been in a position to install a state-of-the-art highly reliable broadcast system that will significantly reduce the risk of the type of issue that affected the Chamber last Friday.

In October the construction of the new broadcast control rooms was completed in the Information Technology Services area and will be fitted out to be ready to support the next round of work. This will allow installation to proceed with minimal disruption to members and staff in the Chambers. These upgrades will begin over the summer break with work to conclude as soon as possible in the new year. That is good news. I again thank the former Treasurer, and now Premier, for enabling a lot of work through extra funding.

Bills

CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL CONSENT REFORMS) BILL 2021

Returned

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

CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LOSS OF FOETUS) BILL 2021

Returned

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

Business of the House

ROUTINE OF BUSINESS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave, I move:

That the routine of business for the House for the sitting week commencing 23 November 2021 be amended as follows:

- (1) Members may only give general business notices of motions in writing; members may lodge general business notices of motions not exceeding 100 words in length by emailing the Legislative Assembly table office by 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday sitting days and noon on other sitting days, for inclusion in the *Business Paper* for the next sitting day. Thirty general business notices of motion can be given each sitting day. The Whips, in consultation with the crossbench, shall advise the Clerk of the order the general business notices of motions are to be entered in the *Business Paper*.
- (2) Members may only submit community recognition statements in writing; members may submit up to four written community recognition statements per sitting day, with the procedure for the submission of written community recognition statements to be followed as provided in Sessional Order 108A, with four written community recognition statements able to be submitted on 23 November 2021 before 3.00 p.m.
- (3) The House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of private members' statements.
- (4) The following items and any consequential actions required of the Speaker may not be orally reported to the House but will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*:

- (a) receipt of messages from Her Excellency the Governor and His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor;
- (b) reports, including reports of the Auditor-General, received by the Speaker and Clerk out of session and tabled since the last sitting of the House;
- (c) tabling of statutory rules and instruments and Government responses to petitions;
- (d) committee reports and Government responses received since the last sitting of the House;
- (e) receipt of petitions with less than 10,000 signatures; and
- (f) lapsing of business.

Motion agreed to.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SUBSTRATUM) BILL 2021**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the introduction without notice, and passage through all stages at this sitting of the Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021.

Motion agreed to.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT
COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit consideration this day of general business order of the day (for bills) No. 7 [Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2021] standing in the name of the member for Summer Hill.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SUBSTRATUM) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Rob Stokes, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (12:05): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021 is to extract those parts of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021, debated last week in this place, that are necessary for the acquisition of substratum—that is, the underlying layer beneath the surface of the ground—at Callan Park and Parramatta Park to enable construction of the Sydney Metro West. The remaining provisions of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill have been referred to a committee by the other place. It is therefore important, for reasons that I will briefly outline, to extract those parts of the bill that enable the acquisition of that substratum in advance of the consideration of the other provisions by the Legislative Council committee inquiry.

The bill amends the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 and the Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001 to allow Sydney Metro to acquire the substratum or "underground" land of Callan Park and Parramatta Park, which are located along the alignment of the Sydney Metro West. Delaying that process may impact the delivery of the Sydney Metro West. In a nutshell, substratum acquisition is another way of saying the acquiring of underground land to tunnel for a public purpose. The tunnels are planned to be approximately 40 metres to 90 metres underneath Callan Park and Parramatta Park. I assure the community and my parliamentary colleagues that they are not intended to impact the surface of parklands, including at Callan Park and Parramatta Park. There are many examples of tunnels for trains, metros or motor vehicles that run underneath parklands with no impact to the surface land—for example, the St James tunnels that run underneath Hyde Park.

As mentioned, while the provisions in the bill were originally in the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021, it is important to prioritise the enactment of the specific provisions in this bill to make the necessary amendments as soon as possible to ensure that the Sydney Metro West project can be delivered. As members would be aware, the Sydney Metro West project will support a growing city and deliver world-class metro services to many more communities. It will provide greater access to job opportunities in the Eastern Harbour City for people in the west of the city, and allow people in the Eastern Harbour City to access jobs and opportunities in

the Central River City. Greater Sydney Parklands will also support a growing city and deliver world-class parkland services to more communities. The Sydney Metro West project will connect our city together, tying the eastern city to the central and western cities in much the same way the Greater Sydney Parklands seek to, stitching our city's parklands together through a blue and green grid.

The Sydney Metro West project is a once-in-a-century infrastructure investment that will transform Sydney for generations to come. It will double rail capacity between the two CBDs, link new communities to rail services and support employment growth and housing supply. I am aware that the member for Bega, the former Minister for Transport and Roads, will give a valedictory speech in this place later this afternoon or tomorrow. In putting forward the bill, it is important to note his leadership and vision in leading the Sydney Metro West project. It is humbling to follow in his footsteps and do my best to deliver on the commitments he made and secured the funding for. His vision ensured that these projects can be delivered. It is important to recognise the incredible contribution of the member for Bega. If I am able to make half the contribution that he has made to this place, I will be doing very well.

I will outline the provisions of the bill in more detail. The provisions of the bill are proposed to commence once they are passed and enacted on the date they are assented to. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts a new provision into the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 to enable the acquisition of the substratum or the underground of Callan Park, or a part of the underground of Callan Park, for a public purpose. Schedule 2 to the bill inserts a new provision into the Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001 to enable the acquisition of the substratum or the underground of the principal trust lands of the Parramatta Park Trust—that is, Parramatta Park or a part of the underground of Parramatta Park for a public purpose. Again, it is important to note that the substratum of Callan Park or Parramatta Park must be acquired for a public purpose, which is already a long-established concept in statute and common law and is defined in statute law as "any purpose for which land may by law be acquired by compulsory process under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991."

In conclusion, the bill prioritises the enactment of necessary amendments to the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 and the Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001 to ensure the timely delivery of the Sydney Metro West project. As we look to bounce back better after the pandemic and focus intently on economic recovery, it is essential for our State that we get on with delivering the Sydney Metro West. The bill will enable us to do that without further disruption. I understand that the Opposition does not oppose the bill. I am grateful for its cooperation on this important piece of infrastructure that will benefit communities across Sydney and New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:11): I lead for NSW Labor in debate on the Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021, which is before the House to allow for the Sydney Metro West project to continue. The broader Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill was debated in this place last week and is now the subject of a more detailed review of a select committee in the other place. I was advised by the Minister's office that an unintended consequence of the delay of that bill may be a delay in the tunnelling under Callan Park and Parramatta Park for the purpose of building the Metro West.

I wrote to the Minister on behalf of NSW Labor members to note that advice and express our continued concerns with some other details around the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill about lease terms, governments contracting out and the like, which will be subject to scrutiny in the other place. However, I committed at the time, and I stand by the commitment now, that NSW Labor will support the passage of limited legislation that facilitates the progress of the Sydney Metro West project. It should not be subject to unnecessary delay just because some of the more detailed issues around parklands are being considered in the other place and the select committee will not report back until February next year.

I offer the support of NSW Labor for the bill, with respect to those provisions. The limited bill that we agreed to was to progress that piece of transport infrastructure from Sydney. I note the Minister mentioned that there is no expectation that there will be any surface damage as a result of the tunnelling. As someone who is from the Illawarra and has seen a lot of underground mines and the like in place, I understand that it can easily be done without surface disturbance. However, if there was surface disturbance then NSW Labor would expect those parklands to be restored to the state they were in before the tunnelling commenced.

Again, NSW Labor members will not oppose this piece of legislation because we do not want to stand in the way of the continued progress of the Sydney Metro West while we deal with our substantive concerns with some elements of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021. We will explore those through the select committee process. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to have their say through that process, and we will consider the detail of that bill next year. We did not have fundamental concerns with the provisions contained in

the earlier Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021, and we will not stand in the way of the passage of this legislation.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:15): The Opposition does not oppose the Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021, and I endorse the remarks made by the member for Wollongong. In his second reading speech the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads commended his predecessor for this outstanding piece of infrastructure, but I make the point that the \$27 million infrastructure investment in the Sydney Metro West was to include an underground station at Zetland. That is located in the heart of Green Square, the largest urban renewal project in Australia's history. It currently has a population of 33,000 people, and it is anticipated it will grow to 74,200 people by 2041. It made sense in the original plan to have an underground metro in Green Square as there is complete congestion both on the roads and at Green Square railway station, but for some reason plans for an underground station were removed from that critical area.

Whilst the Sydney Metro West is currently under construction, and bearing in mind the cost of that infrastructure project, I ask the Minister on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Sydney and me as local member to reverse that decision. If the opportunity to construct another expensive metro station is missed, the chance to deal with that population density will have passed the State by.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:17): Briefly, The Greens support the passage of the sensible Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021 before the House today. I do not think anyone wants to stand in the way of the metro. We can address this thoughtful proposal and then look at the wider issues of the gross State product later on. I acknowledge that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads and his staff have acted very promptly to make sure the project can proceed. As it goes through my electorate and The Greens have been working a lot with the metro, we want to make sure the project proceeds. I acknowledge the effort that has gone into the bill, and we will not be opposing it.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (12:17): In reply: I thank the member for Wollongong, the member for Heffron and the member for Balmain for their contributions to the debate on the important Greater Sydney Parklands Legislation Amendment (Substratum) Bill 2021 and for the magnanimous and tripartisan way in which they have approached the issue. In relation to the contribution by the member for Heffron, extending the Sydney Metro West to Zetland would be a significantly circuitous route to get to Parramatta. I would have thought that the metro station at Waterloo, which is a separate metro project, is probably the best way to address the member's concerns. That having been said, I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ROB STOKES: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL CONSENT REFORMS) BILL 2021

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 19 November 2021

No. 1 **OPP No. 1 [c2021-178A]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[9], proposed section 61HK(3)(b), line 17. Insert "substantial" after "was a".

No. 2 **OPP No. 1 [c2021-179A]**

Page 7, Schedule 1[24], proposed section 583(1)–(4), lines 21–31. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) The Minister must conduct reviews of the reviewable provisions to identify if—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the reviewable provisions remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the reviewable provisions remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) In conducting the review, the Minister must consider the transcripts of criminal trials—
 - (a) conducted during the review period, and

- (b) to which the reviewable provisions were applicable.
- (3) The first review must be commenced within 6 months after the period of 3 years after the commencement date.
- (4) Subsequent reviews must be commenced every 5 years after the end of the 6-month period.
- (4A) A report on the outcome of each review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 1 year after the last day by which the review must be commenced.
- (4B) The Minister must, at least 6 months before each review, table in each House of Parliament a report on the training that has occurred during the review period in relation to communicative consent, detailing—
 - (a) the type of training provided, and
 - (b) the number and kinds of persons to whom it has been provided, including whether it has been provided to police officers, judicial officers or legal practitioners, and
 - (c) how effective the training has been.

No. 3 OPP No. 2 [c2021-179A]

Pages 11 and 12, Schedule 2[19], proposed section 368(1)–(4), line 31 on page 11 to line 8 on page 12. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) The Minister must conduct reviews of the reviewable provisions to identify if—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the reviewable provisions remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the reviewable provisions remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) In conducting the review, the Minister must consider the transcripts of criminal trials—
 - (a) conducted during the review period, and
 - (b) in which a consent direction set out in sections 292A–292E was—
 - (i) given, or
 - (ii) requested by a party to the proceedings to be given.
- (3) The first review must be commenced within 6 months after the period of 3 years after the commencement date.
- (4) Subsequent reviews must be commenced every 5 years after the end of the 6-month period.
- (4A) A report on the outcome of each review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 1 year after the last day by which the review must be commenced.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (12:19): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The Government will be supporting the three amendments that were agreed to in the Legislative Council on Friday. I acknowledge the commitment of the Parliament to ensuring that this important bill is in the best possible form that it can be. The first amendment is one that I indicated during the consideration in detail stage in this place that I was seriously considering and about which I was tempted to move. This amendment concerns the tempered form of affirmative consent provided for in the bill, which was included by the Government after careful consideration to ensure that a person with an impairment is not unfairly disadvantaged by the expanded reasonable belief test. The expanded reasonable belief test goes beyond the Law Reform Commission recommendations, as part of our reforms. This provision has been mischaracterised as a loophole or a defence. It is neither. An offender with a cognitive impairment or mental health impairment will still be able to be convicted of a sexual offence under the Crimes Act if all elements of the case are established beyond reasonable doubt.

It is important to put that in perspective. Some materials circulated by stakeholders to parliamentarians stated that clinical opinion "says that only in rare cases of severe cognitive or mental impairment would an accused's judgment be so impaired that they would be unable to take steps to ascertain consent". That underscores the need for this provision because we are talking about exceptional circumstances where this provision would operate and exceptional cases where an accused would satisfy the high test of having a clinically significant mental health impairment or cognitive impairment to the standard of proof demanded by the bill. Even if an accused were able to do so, a jury could still find the accused guilty if they are satisfied the complainant did not consent and any belief the accused had of consent was not reasonable, taking into account all of the circumstances of the case, including anything the accused did or did not say or do.

The prosecution still has the opportunity to prove that any belief that the person had was not reasonable in the circumstances or any other aspect of knowledge, such as actual knowledge or recklessness. The bill provides

that the requirement to say or do something will not apply to a person who, at the time of the sexual activity, shows that they had a defined cognitive impairment or mental health impairment that was a cause of them not to say or do anything. This amendment inserts the word "substantial" in front of the word "cause", such that the cognitive impairment or mental health impairment will need to be a substantial cause of the accused person not saying or doing something to ascertain consent. The Government supports the introduction of an affirmative model of consent, and it is vital that it operates effectively and in the interests of justice.

In addition to the Law Reform Commission's extensive consultation and drafting, the Government consulted further with more than 20 expert legal and women's safety stakeholders on the precise drafting of the bill. We received feedback from law enforcement and members of the legal profession, among others, about proposed section 61HK (3) that the exception was appropriately drafted and embodied in the affirmative consent principle of the bill and still held a cognitively impaired person to the significant standard in proposed section 61HK (4). The Law Reform Commission was so concerned about the potential injustice of a person with a cognitive impairment being subject to affirmative consent that it was one of the key reasons that it did not recommend affirmative consent. The Law Reform Commission stated at paragraph 7.114 of its report on consent:

Some contend that the reform could adversely affect the rights of accused persons by:

...

- criminalising people who are unable to take such steps due to personal circumstances beyond their control (such as cognitive impairment).

The Government considers that the existing definitions of "mental health impairment" and "cognitive impairment" enshrined in sections 4C and 23A (8) and (9) of the Crimes Act set an appropriate standard. However, the Government recognises that adding the word "substantial" to the phrase "a cause" will alleviate some of the concerns that have been raised about the calibration of this threshold. "Substantial" is probably implied already without the amendment; it is difficult to see how something could be a cause but insubstantial. That said, the Government is content to accept the amendment to make explicit what is probably already implicit.

There was some discussion in the other place as to whether the wording should be amended to refer to "the cause" rather than "a substantial cause". As Minister Ward said, replacing the words "a cause" with "the cause" may create confusion and difficulty, including if there are several contributing factors. Questions of medical and legal causation may arise in the course of an accused establishing that a person has a clinically significant mental health or cognitive impairment and in establishing that mental health or cognitive impairment was a cause of them not doing or saying something in the context of the alleged sexual offence. Additionally, if a person suffered from more than one clinically significant mental health or cognitive impairment, proving which was "the cause" of the accused not doing or saying something at a particular moment rather than a "substantial cause" may also be difficult. The drafting choice of the indefinite article "a" rather than the definite article "the" in this context is therefore important to avoid undermining the intent of the provision as a whole and, in the Law Reform Commission's words, "criminalising people who are unable to take such steps due to personal circumstances beyond their control".

Accordingly, the Government supports the use of the wording "a substantial cause" in proposed section 61HK (3), as this allows the courts to apply the exception in appropriate circumstances. The second and third amendments relate to the statutory review provisions of the reforms as they apply to the Crimes Act 1900 and the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. As I outlined in this place during consideration in detail, on balance the New South Wales Government considers that the review may be better informed at the five-year mark after the commencement of the reforms. As these reforms will only apply to sexual offences alleged to have arisen after the provisions commence, there will not be much of a database or a case base within three years that would allow a meaningful review; however, the Government appreciates the importance of ensuring that the reforms are operating as intended and is content to accept the review mechanisms as amended.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the contributions by members in both this place and the other place, and the spirit in which these important and constructive discussions have generally been had. I recognise again and thank victim-survivors, peak bodies, frontline services, legal experts, academics and those across the criminal justice system for their thorough and thoughtful engagement over the past few years. I particularly commend victim-survivor Saxon Mullins for her extraordinary bravery in sharing her lived experience and for her tireless advocacy in this space. I thank the commissioners of the Law Reform Commission's review on consent, including Chair Alan Cameron, the Hon. Acting Justice Carolyn Simpson and the Hon. Justice Paul Brereton. I also thank my team and officers in the Department of Communities and Justice for their work over many months on these reforms.

This bill will make important commonsense amendments to strengthen our laws as they relate to consent and reinforce basic principles of common decency—that consent is a free choice involving mutual and ongoing

communication and that consent should not be presumed. This affirmative model of consent is not onerous. It does not make consensual sex illegal, it does not stop consensual sex and it does not require a written agreement or script, or stifle spontaneity. It is a matter of common sense and respect. I commend the amendments agreed to in the other place and the bill as a whole to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (12:28): Common sense and respect, indeed—I agree wholeheartedly with the Attorney General. I also agree with him in thanking the many stakeholders, people and groups who have worked tirelessly for years to bring this legislation to fruition. We will shortly be accepting three amendments. I thank the Government for agreeing to the amendments moved by my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe in the Legislative Council. I thank my colleague the shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and shadow Minister for Women, Jodie Harrison, the member for Charlestown for helping the Opposition to respond to this legislation, which was dropped on us quickly. It required quite a bit of work to bring the Opposition's response to fruition quickly and I thank her for being part of that team.

In a moment the Parliament will create history in New South Wales and have a new affirmative consent model. But for those uneducated in parliamentary procedure, I note that the Act commences on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation. Members have waited for three years for the modern slavery legislation that passed the Parliament in 2018. I urge the Minister and the Government to do all that is necessary to prepare the Government and its agencies to bring this bill to fruition. Let us hope that it is proclaimed sooner rather than later. I congratulate everyone involved.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:30): I thank the stakeholders who have supported and provided advice and information to the shadow Attorney General and me at very short notice. Their advice was certainly frank and fearless, and that is the way it should be. While I acknowledge that we did not quite get to all of the amendments that some of the stakeholders were seeking, this piece of legislation goes a long way. I thank all of the stakeholders, including Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, from today known as Full Stop Australia; Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy; in particular, Saxon Mullins; and the Women's Legal Service. All of those stakeholders acknowledge that the bill goes a long way to sending a very clear message that affirmative sexual consent is what is required in New South Wales. A lot of advocates have been calling for this for a long time, and it is good to finally have this legislation before the Parliament in its amended form. I reiterate my thanks to the stakeholders who pulled together information for the shadow Attorney General and me at short notice and who spent a lot of time bringing us up to speed. I commend the amendments to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:32): On behalf of The Greens I contribute to debate on the amendments to the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Consent Reforms) Bill 2021. I acknowledge that the bill that has come back from the Legislative Council has been strengthened as a result of amendments that were moved in that House. I note that the amendments moved by the Opposition in the upper House were based on the amendments moved by The Greens in the Legislative Assembly. It is very curious that the Government made it clear that they were not supportive of The Greens amendments in this Chamber. Something obviously happened in the days between debate on the bill in the Legislative Assembly, debate on it in the Legislative Council and this debate on the amendments to the bill. The Opposition obviously came to a decision on what its position was on some of those amendments, some of which it chose not to vote for in the Legislative Assembly.

That is important to note because an incredible amount of advocates and experts, particularly the Women's Legal Service, survivor-advocates like Saxon Mullins and Rachael Burgin, and many others from Domestic Violence NSW and key organisations have been advocating for these final reforms. It is important to note that things may have shifted and changed, but at the end of the day the outcome is what matters. We now have a stronger bill as a result, the State will have stronger affirmative consent laws and review of the reform, which is much needed, will occur sooner.

Finally, I acknowledge the incredible and tireless efforts of survivor-advocate Saxon Mullins, who I know is watching this debate. She has led this reform. Members in the Chamber were the ones speaking about the reform, but we would not be talking about it and delivering it had it not been for her strength and commitment to seeing affirmative consent legislated in New South Wales. These affirmative consent laws are for Saxon, for the survivors of sexual assault and sexual violence, and for all of the next generation of young people who will not have the same trauma inflicted on them as a result of the strengthening today of the sexual assault and sexual violence laws in New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**Second Reading Speech**

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (12:34): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2021 is to ensure that a commissioner or assistant commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] or anyone holding a like position within that body, which oversees the NSW Police Force, is eligible to be appointed or reappointed to another office within the LECC provided they do not hold any combination of those offices for more than ten years. Currently, there is a five-year cap on serving in any one role or in a combination of roles at the LECC.

Those conditions were put in place for reasons that were good and proper. Similar conditions apply to the offices of New South Wales Auditor-General and commissioner of the ICAC. However, the probity concerns that apply to the LECC, although significant, differ somewhat from those other bodies. The LECC concerns itself with oversight of the NSW Police Force, which means that unlike ICAC or the Audit Office, which are both concerned with oversight of the Executive, the potential risk of the renewal of a commissioner's term of office being dependent on the Government that they may have to investigate does not apply.

At present, the offices of both the Chief Commissioner of the LECC, Reg Blanch, and Commissioner Drake will fall vacant in early 2022. Currently, the LECC is running very smoothly and has the confidence and respect of all stakeholders. However, that has not always been the case. There is some concern that a lack of continuity in the commission's senior leadership could undermine the commission's effectiveness, along with the confidence and respect it has generated across the board. The bill does not bind the Executive, but it does give the government of the day some options in regard to providing continuity of leadership of the LECC. That is an important consideration for this House, given the vacancies that will occur early next year. The bill merely gives the Government the tools to preserve the experience at the heart of the LECC's senior leadership and enable the commission to continue its good and necessary work. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:37): I thank the member for Summer Hill for her comments. I lead for the Government on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment Bill 2021. The Government supports the bill. On 12 November 2021 the second reading of the bill was moved in the other place by the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC. The bill is a short one. As acknowledged by the honourable member, some concerns have been raised about the form of words in certain provisions of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 following its amendment by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Amendment (Commissioners) Act 2021, which commenced on 17 June 2021.

Unfortunately, there may have been an error, in that, while one clause of schedule 1 to the Act was amended, a corresponding clause that also required amendment was not amended, which created an inconsistency between the two provisions. For the avoidance of doubt, the bill before the House corrects that error. Therefore, as the member for Summer Hill has mentioned, consistent with the will of this Parliament and as expressed during debate earlier this year, the purpose of the amendments is to ensure that a commissioner of the LECC who has served a full five-year term is eligible to be appointed to and take up the role of Chief Commissioner. The amendments establish a cumulative limit of 10 years in all relevant offices of the commission and five years in any particular relevant office. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms JO HAYLEN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

LICENSING AND REGISTRATION (UNIFORM PROCEDURES) AMENDMENT BILL 2021**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 17 November 2021.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:39): I lead for the Opposition on the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment Bill 2021. The bill proposes to amend the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002 to establish an overarching legal framework that will enable any New South Wales government agency to issue a licence in a digital format and be lawfully recognised. The amendment will also make the Act easier to follow by updating outdated language. The Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002 was designed to create a consistent approach to licensing and registration across New South Wales regulators by establishing standard procedural provisions that can be adopted by regulators on an opt-in basis. With the growing demand for digital licences from New South Wales citizens, the Act must be amended to reflect our changing world. In his second reading speech the Minister stated:

... there are currently over 100 pieces of New South Wales legislation that refer to licences, registrations, accreditations, permits, authorisations, approvals or entitlements, most of which use different terms and processes. The Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act provides a mechanism to have central uniform procedures while still allowing regulators to maintain their own legislation to manage the unique and specific issues that exist for different authorisations.

The intent from the Minister is admirable. As I am sure every member of the House would agree, as more and more business of government is conducted digitally we must ensure that legislation is updated to reflect this reality. I note that the Minister has foreshadowed the further development of the digital licensing scheme by the Government in his second reading speech, indicating plans to further digitise trade licences such as the home building contractor licence and high-risk work licences. The amendment to the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002 will establish part 46 of the Act, which will enable a licensing authority to issue a digital licence without having to make individual amendments to its own legislation. New section 80N in part 4B of the bill outlines:

- (1) A licensing authority may issue a licence in a physical form, digital form or both.
- (2) The licensing authority may vary the form and content of the digital form of a licence at any time so long as the licence still complies with the particulars or other matter required by this Act or the relevant licensing legislation.

New section 80O outlines the rules regarding the inspection of digital licences, including making clear that a holder of a digital licence must produce the licence in a way that enables the person to properly inspect the licence. Further, the holder of a licence is not required, when a person is inspecting the digital form of the licence, to hand over the device used to display the digital form of the licence. New section 80P makes clear that provisions in the Act, or another Act or law, are satisfied if the holder carries on them the device on which the digital form of the licence is capable of being displayed.

The bill will allow for regulations to add further types of instruments as a licence in the future, along with outlining a general definition of a licence that can apply across multiple authorisations. Under the bill a government agency will be able to choose the technology best suited for the issuing of a digital licence should it not wish to use the Service NSW digital platform. The uniform licensing provisions in the bill are opt-in, allowing for all agencies that adopt the provisions to still be able to modify their applications to facilitate their requirements.

While the uniform licensing will be opt in, information sharing and digital licence provisions will be opt out to ensure that all agencies benefit from these new provisions. Of course, with the shift to so much more of the business of government being conducted online, data security is always a concern and the Opposition will always closely monitor any legislation and its implementation to ensure it does not put citizens' data at risk. As we continue to expand the ability of government agencies to issue digital licences, we must ensure that we do not leave people behind. I am pleased to see that this bill allows for a licence to be issued in a digital form, physical form or both. This flexibility will also give government departments greater agency in determining what licences are appropriate for digitisation.

The bill will also establish a single, standardised renewal period under the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002 which will extend the period in which an applicant can apply to have their licence renewed to within 12 weeks before the expiration date. It will also allow for a licence to be restored if it was cancelled in error rather than the current system which requires the individual to reapply for a licence. Further, the proposed amendments will provide greater transparency over licensing decisions, including requiring a show cause notice to be issued which would give an individual a chance to refute a cancellation, suspension or other disciplinary action before it is taken.

Apart from amending the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002, the bill will also amend a further 24 Acts and regulations across a range of portfolio areas. This includes the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013, Architects Act 2003, Commercial Agents and Private Inquiry Agents Act 2004, Design and Building Practitioners Regulation 2021, Surveying and Spatial Information Act 2002 and Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013. The Opposition has engaged with stakeholders from across industries impacted by the proposed changes to ensure the proposals are workable for industry and do not have any unexpected consequences.

I thank the Minister and his staff for their work in this space, in particular the introduction of the digital driver licence and digital white card. As the Minister stated in his second reading speech, already 153,000 individuals across the State are using a digital white card. These have been positive changes within Service NSW and the broader licensing infrastructure. This bill makes commonsense changes that will streamline the licensing system. The Opposition will not oppose the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:47): I speak in support of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment Bill 2021. For the record, I applaud the Minister for Customer Service for his wonderful work on digital licence initiatives, which has led to this bill being introduced. Additionally, as the Minister for Digital, he has systematically transformed the way that citizens of this great State interact with government. Digital licences continue his great work in the digital space and all he has accomplished for this State's digital transformation, including the world-leading QR code check-in system and of course, Dine & Discover NSW, which I am sure members on both sides of this House have used as well.

The bill establishes an overarching legal framework for the issue and use of digital licences in New South Wales. Once in place, any regulator can rely on the framework to support upcoming and future digital licence initiatives across the State. Under the Department of Customer Service's digital trade licence program, the Government has been working to digitise certain occupational-related licences and other authorisations, making it easier for customers to go wallet free. I think that is really important. The SafeWork NSW digital general construction induction training card, known as the digital white card, was the first digital form of occupational-related authorisation to go live in early 2021. Under the State's next stage of its digital transformation, the Government plans to roll out certain occupational licences in digital form during the first half of next year.

It is expected that home building licence certificates will be available in digital form in early 2022. This will kick off with the release of digital contractor licences, followed by digital supervisor certificates and digital tradesperson certificates, which is great news for tradies and for small, medium and large companies—for example, cabinet makers such as my brother, my cousin and my dad. The home building licensing scheme covers various classes, including specialist trades such as air-conditioning, electrical, plumbing, draining and gasfitting licences and certificates.

The next phase, which is really important, will focus on releasing the SafeWork NSW digital high-risk work licences. These initiatives will open the digital pathway to thousands and thousands of people who can opt in and reap the benefits. Since 1 July 2021 there have been around 123,919 licensed contractors, 50,321 qualified supervisors, 3,552 certified tradespeople and 380,000 licensed high-risk workers. With the high uptake of digital driver licences and digital white cards, it is expected many of these holders will choose to go with the digital option and go without the plastic. They will be able to say goodbye to the plastic licences clogging up their wallets and have quick and easy access to all the work licences they need on their smartphone. Hopefully we will see others follow this step as well. Other licensing regimes where the digital option could extend after digital high-risk work licences have been rolled out range from building certifiers and property agents to, potentially, motor dealers.

The strong demand to digitise other authorisations will likely accelerate other digital licence initiatives across New South Wales and contribute to a digital transformation en masse. Beyond digitising driver licences—I note that my licence is digitised—and occupational trade licences, there would be scope to consider digitising all sorts of other government-issued authorisations and documents. I can see this overarching framework being used in a wide range of different areas. Potentially this could include the Seniors Card, birth certificates, the Working With Children Check, recreational fishing licences, boating licences, emu licences—I do not have an emu licence—paintball permits and the regional seniors travel card, among many others. It will become an "if not, why not" in terms of digitising government licences, documents and other types of authorisations. Having the kids' birth certificates digitised will be a great step forward. Every time my little James or Sammy needs to update myGov or the childcare centre wants to see something we spend 24 hours trying to find the birth certificate for either one of them.

Digitising these authorisations involves regulatory reform to ensure its legal validity as the relevant licensing legislation contemplates physical authorisations. The digital licence framework in this bill will enable any New South Wales regulator to issue a licence under the relevant licensing legislation in a physical form, in digital form or in both forms, meaning that each form is legally valid. The framework also clarifies how a digital licence can be used lawfully. Relying on the framework in the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment Bill 2021, NSW Fair Trading and SafeWork NSW can lawfully offer a digital form of home building and high-risk work authorisations under their respective licensing schemes next year, which is great news. Both regulators can look to the framework to see how various legislative obligations can be satisfied or how they apply when a digital form of a licence is used. Other processes involved in digitising a licence can be done administratively and each regulator is best placed to manage this.

While technology is certainly playing an increasing part in our lives, digital licences are still a relatively new technology and not everyone may be able to access digital licences or will be comfortable using them. There is still a need to consider digital inclusion, which means that having a choice of both physical and digital forms of licences is important. The framework recognises that and provides the option to have both forms, which is particularly significant as digital licence products are progressively introduced. Like other digital licence initiatives pursued, both physical and digital forms will be available. That means licence holders can choose either or both forms based on their personal preference, putting customers at the centre of what we do. Holders will need a MyServiceNSW account and the Service NSW app to opt in and access the digital form of their licence. I acknowledge the Minister, the department and the staff; the app is just fantastic.

As part of that process, the holder's consent is obtained within the app to ensure compliance with privacy requirements. Once a digital licence is available to a holder in the app, it will be an officially issued authorisation. Regulators will develop educational and communication material, which will be publicly available on relevant government websites and within the app as digital licence products are piloted and released, so that licence holders and the broader community know how digital licences can be legally used. The digital licence amendments will commence on assent to facilitate and support the upcoming rollouts. Over time, other New South Wales government agencies are likely to follow suit and start to shift towards and consider adopting digital licence initiatives as part of this framework. That is exciting news for people in this space.

In addition to supporting the rollout of digital licences under the digital trade program, the framework can be relied on in the same way to support future digital licence initiatives, not just occupational licences, that other regulators of this State decide to pursue. The framework will provide the legislative backing for digital licence projects in this State so that the Government can continue to provide better outcomes for customers and make their interactions with government a whole lot easier. These reforms will form an integral part of the Government's commitment to delivering digital services now and into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:56): I speak in support of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment Bill 2021. I will specifically focus my contribution on the intent of modernising the Act and its importance and significance as we move forward, and also on the provisions that will ensure that people who do not necessarily access things digitally do not get left behind. I think it is really important that we strike that balance, particularly as someone who represents a large rural electorate where a number of people still struggle with internet access or do not have a modern smartphone. It is really important that they too can access the licensing and registrations that they require.

When the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act, otherwise known as LRUPA, was originally enacted in 2002 it was a very forward-thinking Act. It was designed to create uniform procedures for licences and registrations and to facilitate digital transactions between customers and regulators. For example, the Act already enables customers to apply for licences digitally and regulators to issue notices digitally. However, technology has advanced significantly since LRUPA was enacted and, while the Act was forward thinking in its provisions relating to electronic transactions, it still contains references to technologies and processes that are now considered obsolete. The amendment bill removes and updates those provisions because the Government believes it is important to bring the Act into the modern, digital age as well as to reflect customer expectations around interactions with government.

The bill's new digital licensing provisions will enable all regulators to issue a licence in a digital form, not only those that currently use LRUPA. As members have heard, the digital driver's licence and white card have been extremely popular. In fact 153,000 white card holders have chosen to use a digital white card; that is incredible uptake across New South Wales. Now that customers have experienced the benefits of digital licences, such as convenience and added security features, there will be an increasing expectation from customers to have all of their licences available on their phones. The amendments in the bill create a framework for digital licences in New South Wales, which will be vital now and in the future.

The bill also increases the number of ways in which customers can interact with government to manage their licences. As it currently stands, LRUPA specifies that an application for a licence or registration can be made in writing or by means of electronic communication. While it is wonderful that the Act allows digital applications, not all customers want to interact with government in that way. That is where I turn my attention to the constituents in my electorate because the majority of them drop into one of the five Service NSW centres in Cootamundra. The services those centres provide to our communities are second to none. I commend the management and teams who live and work in rural New South Wales. They really understand our customers and they should be highly commended for the way they look after them. But those customers should not be left behind. The alternative for them should not be completing long and tedious paper application forms.

To reflect their needs, the bill will enable them to make an electronic or non-electronic application, with non-electronic applications covering written and face-to-face interactions. The point of having Service NSW

centres is so staff can interact with customers face to face. The staff at those centres do a wonderful job. The bill will enable them to carry on and even amplify that work. Modern licensing legislation is extremely important for the effective administration of licensing schemes. It is especially important when the legislation contains uniform procedures intended to apply to a broad range of regulators, licences and customers. The amendments contained in the bill will make LRUPA more customer centric and will ensure that the Act reflects digital processes. I thank the Minister and his team for introducing the legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:03): On behalf of the Government I am delighted to speak in support of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment Bill 2021. At the outset I note the excellent contributions from the member for Oatley and the amazing and impressive contribution from my colleague from the National Party and fellow Whip, the member for Cootamundra. She understands how important this legislation is for the good people of the Cootamundra electorate. They have to travel great distances to access services. Many metropolitan MPs do not understand the sacrifices regional people make to have access. The easier we can make access to digital services for regional people, the better off they will be. It gives quality time back to them, rather than their having to arduously fill out paperwork. The member for Cootamundra feels very passionately about that. I think that the Cootamundra electorate has five Service NSW offices. The people of Cootamundra are exceptionally well served by the member and equally by Service NSW.

I support this bill and acknowledge the great work the Minister has been doing with digital transformation, which has seen a complete rewriting of what people expect from working with the Government. This is the Government serving the people of New South Wales, looking after them and making their lives easier. I love that the Minister has abbreviated "Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Amendment" to "LRUPA". Like everything, he tries to make even the name as simple as possible. The Minister, his team and his department are listening to the valuable feedback they receive on a daily basis from our constituents. This bill goes a long way to showing how the Government responds to the people of New South Wales, to help make their lives easier.

I will address this bill's amendments that establish an overarching legal framework for digital licences in New South Wales. Almost all people in New South Wales have digital licences, which have made our lives much easier. Coupled with the access to venues through QR codes, what used to be arduous, nightmarish transactions with the Government have now become almost a joy to do. Most transactions to do with licences can be done online, without even leaving home. This is a long way from what we saw decades ago, when going down to the Roads & Traffic Authority building was not a pleasant experience, especially during lunchtime. Now those transactions can be done on a laptop at home, and that is all because of the digital transformation Minister Dominello has led.

I acknowledge also the incredible inroads this Government has already made in modernising government processes. The people of Service NSW are there to help. They are so focused on customers. The team at the Service NSW office in Erina, whom the Minister has visited multiple times, has saved hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars for the people of my electorate, including one lady who saved up to \$14,000 on one visit. I think that that is the record for the largest reimbursement to a resident of New South Wales. She called in to see the team, and that was the benefit of it. It is also about the customer focus this Minister has driven from the top down.

I acknowledge also the great work being done by the department to continually upgrade and modernise the services and adapt to what our customers, the people of New South Wales, want. To date, this Government has already taken bold steps to drive innovative solutions that converge digital and physical experiences for New South Wales consumers. I like to call them customers because they are customers, not only individuals but also businesses and the public sector. The support the Government has provided to businesses of all sizes during the COVID-19 pandemic has been nothing short of astounding. This State again led the way in providing that support through a one-stop shop, Service NSW, to get them the additional support and comfort they needed during what may be the toughest time this State has ever seen.

The honourable members in the Chamber and watching live on the video stream will recall that a number of amendments were initially made to recognise the trial of New South Wales digital driver licences. These were followed by a broader set of reforms after the trial proved to be an unequivocal success, with the Minister for Customer Service introducing the Road Transport Amendment (Digital Licensing) Bill 2020 in this House, to ensure that digital driver licence cards had the same legal status as plastic driver licence cards in this State. Very rarely now do people carry their wallets or purses. Most people rely on all the information being captured on their phones. It makes working, travelling and living daily life so much easier. Not having to lug a wallet around in my back pocket is a good thing. It means that I do not jam receipts into it and carry everything else that comes with it. It is a great system.

In March 2021 the Government introduced the first digital form of occupation-related authorisation in New South Wales with the SafeWork NSW digital general construction induction training card, also known as

the digital white card. I note that the Opposition does not oppose this excellent piece of new legislation. It recognises how much easier the Government has made it for tradies around New South Wales to do these sorts of transactions with government. Indeed, it is a credit to the Minister that the Opposition fully supports this new legislation. Industry and tradespeople have applauded this digital initiative. They have given positive feedback that the digital form is easy to use and access. It has also proven to be convenient and timely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the need for digitisation was accelerated. This legislation is responding to the needs of customers to ensure that we provide a seamless, smooth transition for them to continue with their daily business. They do not want government interfering in business and making it more complex. These sorts of initiatives are making it easier.

Following the successful rollout of the digital white card, the Government will be working towards introducing other digital forms of licences in 2022, including NSW Fair Trading home building licences and SafeWork NSW high risk work licences. It is a great way to digitally keep track of all of the information that really matters. The Government is advancing its commitment for customer-centric licensing reforms by establishing a statewide overarching legal framework for digital licences. That is so important. The framework will enable any New South Wales Government agency to issue a licence in a digital form and to ensure that digital licences are lawfully recognised in this State. It will apply to any licensing legislation in New South Wales and will also capture a host of authorisations issued under any Act or statutory rule in New South Wales—with the ability to add more by regulation. It will contribute to the mammoth effort by this Government to adopt a whole-of-government approach to service delivery that is agile, responsive and in line with emerging technologies and customer expectations.

New part 4B of the bill makes it clear that a regulator may issue a licence in a physical or digital form or, if necessary, in both forms. That will provide legal recognition of the digital form of a licence, as the digital form is of equal value to its physical counterpart. Licensing authorities will be able to rely on new part 4B if they decide to offer a digital form of a licence. It is critical that the law addresses how various compliance and enforcement requirements that contemplate the use of a physical licence can be satisfied when a digital form of a licence is used. I am happy that the framework addresses those core matters and provides a streamlined approach for meeting legislative obligations with digital licences.

These amendments will ensure legislative clarity, so that licence holders and regulators know how various legislative obligations can be satisfied or how they will apply when a digital form of a licence is used. For instance, a requirement for a holder to physically surrender a licence due to a cancellation will not apply to a digital form of a licence. This requirement is important for a physical licence as it can continue to be used as long as it remains in the possession of the holder. However, a digital licence is linked to the relevant government licensing system. The status of the licence is updated digitally and in real time and will reflect when a licence has been cancelled. *[Extension of time]*

I repeat, this is a fantastic amendment to a great piece of legislation. I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Minister's staff: Jane Standish, Matt Dawson and the fantastic and indefatigable Priya Pagaddinnimath—who is present in the Chamber. The Minister continues to do great work. I often give him feedback from people in my electorate and across the Central Coast. His door is always open. The Minister is keen to listen to feedback and to make changes to digital technology, especially when it benefits the people of New South Wales. I thank the Minister for his ongoing action in this area. I congratulate the team who put this bill together on their vital engagement with stakeholders and for taking the time to listen to the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate interrupted.

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

Announcements

ROOM BOOKING SERVICE

The SPEAKER: I am pleased to advise that members and staff wishing to book meeting rooms and venues can now contact the Parliament-wide room booking service on extension 2200 or RBS@parliament.nsw.gov.au. The room booking service offers a simpler and easier way to book rooms. In the near future—that is, early next year—IT upgrades such as the rollout of Microsoft 365 will make it even easier and simpler, with members of staff able to book most meeting rooms in the Parliament through their Outlook calendar. More information on the room booking service is available on Parliament's intranet site and will be emailed. Current phone extension numbers used to make bookings will continue to be active now that the room booking service is active.

*Question Time***FLAMMABLE CLADDING**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:17): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. On 26 October the Minister stood in Darlinghurst and finally announced the start of work to remove dangerous flammable cladding from apartment buildings. When the television cameras left, did his officials bolt the removed dangerous flammable cladding back on the building?

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:18): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The answer is: Not to my knowledge.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:18): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to ensure that New South Wales remains the visitor capital of the Asia Pacific?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:18): That is a great question from the member for Mulgoa, and I thank her for her work. We were at Badgerys Creek last Friday, I think it was, with the Prime Minister and the entire clan. We saw the construction of the second airport, an airport that has been talked about since I was a kid, talked about by Labor for decades, talked about by the previous New South Wales Labor Government—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: But, just like everything else in this State, it is being delivered by the Liberals and Nationals. Albo was the infrastructure Minister federally for many years, and what did he do? Nothing. It is the Liberals and Nationals federally and the Liberals and Nationals at State level that are bringing on this airport, making western Sydney the gateway to the world. This is going to be the best airport, not just in the country but globally, and many people, many tourists, as they come into Australia, will be landing in western Sydney.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Transformation will occur as a result of our third city, Bradfield, which is coming on, with the airport being its heart and soul. What I learned as well was that a lot of the spoil from the WestConnex project is being used at the second airport as part of the ground.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: For fill.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: For the fill, yes.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: The girls know.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes. It was pretty amazing, I thought. It is our infrastructure projects that are building the next wave of infrastructure projects in this State. The proposed transformation of 850 hectares of land near Kemps Creek will mean 17,000 new jobs. Everyone wants to come to Australia and they will all want to come through western Sydney. It is just non-stop. Everywhere we go there are things happening—right across our State. I was with the jobs and investment Minister this morning, the great Stuart Ayres, at the fish markets.

Mr Ryan Park: How many times have you announced the fish markets?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We keep announcing it when it keeps happening. You should see the construction out there. The member for Sydney said he had never eaten fish in his life—he is allergic to fish—but he is so excited about the fish markets that he is going to start eating fish, he is going to get into the prawns, even oysters, and he is going to love it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is amazing. What a transformation of the fish markets. Multiplex are doing that job, with 700 jobs during construction and, once completed, another 700 jobs.

Ms Jo Haylen: How are those workers going to get there?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They will be fine. You ought to fix that issue up. You could ride your little electronic scooter down to the fish markets. We will get to the scooters. The fish markets are underway.

They are going to be a major tourist attraction, not just nationally but internationally as well—a \$750 million investment.

Mr Ryan Park: How many fish?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Keira will like to know that it will be completed in 2024. I know he likes announcements, but we are all about delivery as well.

Mr Ryan Park: You will adjust your seat by then.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Probably five times. We will see—getting a good sense of this State, getting a great sense of this State. Then we have the long lunch, which the Minister and I put together on Friday, which will be in Parramatta and Sydney, driving activity back into the CBD both here and in Parramatta. We know that hospitality has gone through a very difficult time, despite the fact that those opposite just want to boost up premiums. Hospitality and tourism are going to be back in Sydney. Tourism is our fourth-biggest export. Did members know that? Tourism is our fourth-biggest export—coal, students, professional services and tourism. I was out on Sunday with the member for Sydney and the Minister for the arts as we put together the topping out ceremony of Sydney Modern, the art gallery—we have to change the name, but the art gallery extension.

[Interruption]

I will keep going if you want me to. I was going pretty well.

The SPEAKER: I cannot grant the Premier an extension of time; the Opposition has objected and the jump was missed.

Mr Ryan Park: The member for Mulgoa had one job.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, it is not her fault; it is my fault. We have a rule.

ROAD TOLLS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:24): My question is directed to the Premier. While the Government has been in power, tolls on western Sydney have grown at 4 per cent per year. On the Eastern Distributor the toll in 2011 was \$5.45. It is now \$8.48. On the M2 the toll was \$5.37. It is now \$8.36. On the M5—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128. Statements should be strictly to make the question intelligible.

The SPEAKER: May I have a look at the question? I have warned the member for Londonderry before. The question is a speech, it is not part of the context. The question is out of order. I will give the Opposition another question, but I rule that question out of order.

COALMINING INDUSTRY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (14:25): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting mining communities in regional New South Wales?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (14:25): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. That is how you ask a question. If the member for Londonderry wants the member for the Upper Hunter to help her write a question, I am sure he will be happy to do that. This is what you get when you get Liberals and The Nationals in government: You get a government that stands up for regional and rural communities. That is exactly what the member for Upper Hunter does. He ensures that our communities continue to get the investment they both need and deserve. The Labor Party failed to invest in regional New South Wales and we are fixing the wrongs that those opposite left behind. We will make sure that regional communities continue to be a great place to live and work.

I was with the member for Upper Hunter only a few weeks ago when we announced the latest round of Resources for Regions program, which is an important project that supports our mining communities. This program saw about 93 projects announced and delivered across the State. This was a \$75 million investment that was made through round 8. When you look at the life of this program, around \$420 million has been invested in our communities since 2012. These projects are important because they are road projects, they are projects that support sporting infrastructure, libraries, art galleries, bridges and transfer stations. All of those investments are important and critical infrastructure in our local communities. This investment is making a difference.

The member for Upper Hunter has already announced the \$6.39 million that will go towards the Muswellbrook Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre. We have also seen the member for Tamworth announce \$1.844 million that will go towards upgrading the Gunnedah airport. Why is this important? This means we can attract private investment into the local area. Or the \$2.28 million that is going into improving and replacing the hockey fields in Parkes. That funding was announced by myself and Sam Faraway from the other place. We were joined by Hockeyroos and Olympian Mariah Williams, who was talking about the importance of an investment such as this in the community. It supports the local council in building the facilities needed. Not only does it support the locals, it also allows provides them with the facilities to host competitions and carnivals into those communities, which we know in regional New South Wales are huge drivers of the local economy.

These projects are important, but this Government is also about building a better future for our communities. That is why in April it announced a future fund for future generations to support future jobs—the new Royalties for Rejuvenation fund, which will involve setting aside \$25 million to ensure coalmining communities remain strong and have the support they need to develop other industries in the long-term. This fund will be entrenched in future legislation. The proposed changes to the Mining Act will include a future fund; it will be a locked box. The legislation will outline the purpose of the fund and arrangements for payments into and out of the fund. It makes no sense for the Government to tell these communities what their future should look like. That is why the Government is delivering on its commitment to establish expert panels to ensure the community and industry play an important role in shaping the fund's priorities.

Locals are best placed to know the community's needs and emerging opportunities. The expert panels will provide comprehensive advice that will guide long-term decisions on the fund's investment. The Government will shortly announce the interim panel for the Hunter. It is also important to acknowledge that coalmining still has a strong future in New South Wales. Our Future of Coal statement highlights that. While demand remains for our quality coal, we will continue to export to the world, while planning for a diversified economy over time. We will ensure mining towns continue to have highly skilled well-paid jobs in growth industries, which will lock in their economic security long into the future. That will ensure young people have the opportunity to remain in the town where they grew up. Royalties for Rejuvenation is about ensuring that coalmining communities have a strong future for decades to come. We want the community and industry to have their say. My department will release the exposure draft of this bill for public consultation and feedback this week. [*Extension of time*]

I look forward to bringing the amending bill back to this place early next year. During the recent budget estimates, I told the committee that these bills are important in regional communities. Members of this place and the other place will be able to read this draft exposure bill over the summer holiday break. I look forward to engaging with them and the mining sector to ensure that we drive the bill forward and establish the importance of this fund. It is the Liberals and Nationals in government who are continually building a safer and stronger regional New South Wales. We are driving the investment into our mining communities. We are building and delivering on the projects and the infrastructure that they both need and deserve. It is the Liberals and Nationals in government who will continue to do this for decades to come.

ROAD TOLLS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:31): My question is directed to the Premier. While the Government has been in power, tolls on western Sydney have grown at 4 per cent per year. Meanwhile, tolls for the North Shore over the Harbour Bridge and tunnel have not increased once, not even by CPI. Why does his Government continually entrench a two Sydneys divide every chance it gets?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:32): This is really sad. It is very, very sad, this divisive politics on that side of the House. We represent everyone in this State—every single person. Who is the architect—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I know that the Premier is able to speak through lots of interjections, and sometimes he even responds to them, but the level of interjection on the last answer and so far on the 20 seconds of this answer, has been too high. I tolerate some interjections, but the constant and repeated interjections, and the level of interjections are unacceptable.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They are interjecting because they know they are wrong. They are interjecting because they want to hide the truth. They are interjecting because they know that they were the architects of the 4 per cent. The facts do not lie. Labor signed up to the ED concession. Of all the concessions, it is the longest one. It goes all the way out to 2048 at 4 per cent. In 2048 the toll under Labor's ED would be \$25. That is the fact. It is undisputed. We know of all the five most expensive toll roads based on distance in this State are built by whom? Labor. Those opposite come into this place, they dance around, they try to throw facts at it that there is a two-tiered society. That is not true.

This is the return of the old Labor way, which the people of New South Wales rejected in 2011. They have gone back to form. When the Leader of the Opposition came into this place, he was full of hope and optimism. It was all there. He was encouraging the people of the State. Now Labor members are running around causing divisions everywhere they go. I refer to our track record when it comes to western Sydney. There is infrastructure investment everywhere. There are new hospitals and at Jordan Springs, you love that school, don't you?

Ms Prue Car: Are you serious?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: When you rock up to the Jordan Springs school, do you say, "Can I just thank the Liberals and Nationals. Did you know, Mr Principal, it was the Liberals and Nationals that delivered this great school for you."? Is that what you say? They love us. They know it was the Liberals and Nationals. I understand that everyone expresses their gratitude to us in different ways. When the member for Londonderry interjects, she is really grateful and she is expressing how grateful she is.

Ms Prue Car: You're very sensitive about this, aren't you, Dom?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Jordan Springs? Not at all! We know that we will continue those record investments. Labor opposed WestConnex and Labor opposed the construction of WestConnex, and still does. Without that road, we know that Parramatta Road would be an absolute car park. The people of western Sydney would be stuck in traffic day in, day out. We will back in our infrastructure agenda every single day of the week because the politics of envy and the politics of being divisive belong in the past. The Liberals and Nationals govern for every single person across this State. That is why we are delivering record schools, record hospitals, record public transport—infrastructure investment everywhere.

Ms Jo Haylen: How is that going, Dom?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is going fantastic. Do you know that you can get the tram or get on your electric scooter—beep, beep, beep—to go to the fish markets, which is the second-biggest tourist attraction in New South Wales? Who would have known that?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: At the rate we are going there will be more people visiting the fish markets than visiting the Opera House because it is going to be that great. Right across the board we know that the Leader of the Opposition was the architect of the tolls when he was in a previous Government. We on the Government side of the House do not apologise and we are not going to play divisive games. We are going to keep building a brighter future for New South Wales. Labor will continue to oppose, obstruct and protest but we will continue the great progress we have made since coming to office. We will be coming through and making sure that the infrastructure is there to make a real difference to people's lives, wherever they live.

JOBS GROWTH

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:37): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will he update the House on jobs in New South Wales and any alternative plans?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:37): I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question and for her interest in jobs. I note her concern that the Leader of the Opposition is not doing his job because today marks 173 days since the Leader of the Opposition announced that he would have a 100-day plan of positive policies for the people of New South Wales. What have we got? We have got an absolute doughnut. It is amazing that the Leader of the Opposition can break a promise without actually doing anything. Therein lies the problem. The Leader of the Opposition is consistent in his inconsistency. The Leader of the Opposition used to support the member for Strathfield and what did he do to her?

Mr Paul Toole: Knifed her.

Mr MATT KEAN: Knifed her; that is right. The Leader of the Opposition used to be against unions, but he used the unions to knife the member for Strathfield. The Leader of the Opposition used to hand out toll roads like confetti across New South Wales when he was chief of staff to Carl Scully and now he is against them. Is there any one of the new positions he actually holds that he will not backflip on? That is the question. We on the Government side of the House are focused on creating jobs and growing our economy. Our record investment in the health and economic recovery of the State saw \$45 billion invested to ensure that we get through the worst pandemic we have ever seen, and it is working.

In October when the nation lost 460,000 jobs, New South Wales led the way with a growth of 22,000 jobs—thanks to the investment and economic decisions that this Government has made. In October New South Wales' participation rate increased eight percentage points to 62.2 per cent. That rise in participation

rate is significant because it means that people who dropped out during the lockdown are re-entering the workforce. This is another demonstration of this Government's economic policies that are focused on creating jobs, getting people back into the workforce and getting our economy growing. In the most recent payroll summary, New South Wales reported the largest gain in weekly payrolls of all the States, with a 3.5 per cent increase in the fortnight to 16 October—and we are not finished yet. We have got a \$2.8 billion economic stimulus plan that is about creating jobs, particularly focused on areas that have been hardest hit in our economy—the arts sector, the hospitality sector and the tourism sector in New South Wales. This Government is investing in those industries to create the jobs that will be necessary to ensure that we can bounce back better.

That is what the Coalition Government has been focused on—growing our economy, creating jobs, helping us out of the worst crisis that we have seen in generations and making sure that we get back on our feet. New South Wales continues to be the powerhouse of the Australian economy because of the good economic management of the Liberals and Nationals. While we have been focused on creating jobs, the Leader of the Opposition was focused on taking someone else's job. That is right. And that brings me to the member for Strathfield, who will deliver her valedictory speech after Question Time—and I hope I will see "one-eyed" Chris there. I think it is appropriate that we acknowledge the member for Strathfield and her contribution to this Parliament as a great local member and as a champion of multicultural communities, as well as a corruption fighter. I think we should acknowledge her work as the first-and-only popularly elected Leader of the Labor Party. And what did she get for that?

Mrs Shelley Hancock: A knife in the back.

Mr MATT KEAN: She got the phone slammed down on her by the Leader of the Opposition. She was undermined. She was manipulated. She was forced out of Parliament. That is exactly what happened. We on the Government side of the House are focused on creating jobs and growing the economy while the Leader of the Opposition was interested only in taking someone else's job. We wish the member for Strathfield all the best for her new adventure. She has made a fine contribution to this House and we wish her all the best going forward.

EMERALD CLASS FERRIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:42): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. When his Government bought the Emerald ferries from China, we were told they could withstand 4.5 metre swells. Last weekend they were knocked out of action by swells half that size and passengers were forced onto buses yet again. When will the Minister admit that his policy of buying substandard assets from overseas is not working?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:43): The Premier wants me to reject the premise of the question, which I routinely do. In relation to this matter, I confirm that there was a contract entered into in 2019 in relation to introducing a series of new ferries onto the Sydney network—10 River Class ferries and the three Emerald Class ferries. Indeed, the Emerald Class ferries were specifically designed by Australian designer Incat Crowther to operate in swells of 4.5 metres. That is the advice I have received. In fact, they commenced their sea trials by coming down through the open ocean from Newcastle into Sydney Harbour.

I am delighted to provide further information to the member about her specific question about the ongoing trials. I can confirm that the second generation Emerald class ferries—the three that will operate on the Manly route, of which two have already been introduced to that route—are purpose built to operate the F1 Manly service and are designed to operate in swells of up to 4.5 metres. They have also been specifically engineered with reinforced hulls to enable operation on the larger swells experienced when crossing the Sydney Heads.

Coming to the nub of the member's question, although the Fairlight and Balmoral vessels have been fully commissioned, they have been temporarily restricted to operate only in swells of up to 2.5 metres until the contractor completes further testing and risk assessments in larger seas. The issue is that since arriving in Sydney on 31 July, there has been no opportunity to carry out that testing because experiencing those swells in Sydney Heads is not always possible. In other words, we have not had the swell conditions that enable the ferries to be tested at that level because it is reasonably rare to have the bigger seas in which—

Ms Jo Haylen: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order. The member for Summer Hill has the call. What is your point of order?

Ms Jo Haylen: I thank the Minister for his detailed response. However, if it is the case that there has been no swell—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Jo Haylen: —why is it that for two weekends in a row passengers have been forced onto buses?

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Jo Haylen: Will the Minister admit that those ferries are not fit for purpose?

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

Mr ROB STOKES: To the point of order: I am genuinely confused because the member asked me another question in that point of order. Was that a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER: It was out of order. The Minister will continue. Have you completed your answer?

Mr ROB STOKES: No. I was genuinely asking for clarification.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will ignore the contribution of the member for Summer Hill.

Mr ROB STOKES: For the edification of the member, that does not mean the second generation Emerald class vessels are not able to handle larger swells. However, it is appropriate, and I hope Opposition members agree, that testing those new vessels in larger seas for the very first time should be carried out by experienced crews, without customers on board. The exciting news for the member for Summer Hill and any surfers in the Chamber—the member for Newcastle would be particularly excited about this—I am advised that swell conditions on 27 and 28 November may be conducive to the trial. Again, the full trial cannot be completed until swells of 4.5 metres are experienced.

COST OF LIVING

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service, and the Minister for Digital. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is easing the cost-of-living pressures on New South Wales families and if there are any other alternatives?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service, and Minister for Digital) (14:47): There are always alternatives. I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question. He is a fierce advocate for his community. Whatever the issue, he is always knocking on doors and pushing down doors to make sure that he delivers. Well done to the member for Wollondilly. He knows, as we all do, particularly on this side of the Chamber, that the cost of living is a real issue. We are living in challenging times and living with the pandemic has been particularly tough for lots of families across New South Wales. Through Service NSW we have provided an opportunity to access cost-of-living measures, and that is not done anywhere else in the country or the world, to my knowledge. What we are doing is seriously world-leading. More than 70 rebates and savings are being offered in one location. You can go online—

Ms Anna Watson: Not in Shellharbour. We haven't even got a Service NSW centre.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Sorry?

Ms Anna Watson: One of only two in the whole State; we haven't got one.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The beauty is there is over—

The SPEAKER: That is enough from the member for Shellharbour.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Come on.

Ms Anna Watson: It's true.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will come to the Opposition in a moment.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: There are over 110 service centres and you can do it online. You can go into the service centre or do it over the phone. The point is that since July 2018 over 2.5 million people—that is a lot of people in New South Wales—have accessed the cost-of-living savings online. There are identified savings of \$4.74 billion using online, phone and in-person services via a cost-of-living specialist. Over 75,000 appointments with specialist cost-of-living officers have been completed, with an average saving of \$599.05—call it \$600. That is a lot of money for people who are struggling in their day-to-day lives.

We know that people love the cost-of-living support that is on offer, particularly its ease of use. That is why it is no surprise that the satisfaction score is 97 per cent. When the Leader of the Opposition made one of his first forays into the marketplace in his capacity as leader, he visited the Italian community in Liverpool on

Saturday 5 June 2021 and said, "I am here to talk about the cost of living." He definitely put it on the radar in one of his first speeches, but when we look at his social media, there is nothing—crickets. He is not talking about it.

Last year I paid tribute to those opposite who have promoted the New South Wales Government's initiatives on their social media pages. They are the Labor ambassadors of the Liberal-Nationals Government. I call out the members for Cessnock, Maitland, Wollongong, Wallsend and Gosford, to name a few. They are the members on the other side who are promoting the great work of the Government when it comes to the cost of living. It is important that the Leader of the Opposition has a new training session on what we are doing about the cost of living. I will provide a copy of the training booklet, which is called the Labor friends of the Liberal-Nationals Government cost of living program. I will go through it. There are 70 different rebates and refunds. There is the Return and Earn program, which the Treasurer loves. The Deputy Premier is in love with the regional seniors travel card.

Mr Paul Toole: The regional seniors travel card, yes.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: He is always talking about it.

Mr Paul Toole: The Premier loves it too.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The Premier adores it. There are new members opposite who are also ambassadors of the Government, which is good. I will give a shout-out where it is necessary. The member for Port Stephens posted about the Active Kids program, which is the brainchild of the Premier. Everyone loves that program. Even those opposite who are doing their job are promoting it. When the member for Port Stephens posted about it, she received 31 likes. More impressively, the post received 33 shares. If you are following social media, that is a lot of shares. The member for Wyong also promoted sports registration because he knows that the \$100 voucher per child helps them get into sport. He included some love hearts in his post. Love hearts in politics. That is what you get when you promote the Government; you get a lot of love. [*Extension of time*]

Everyone loves a love heart, particularly Opposition members, who do not get much love. If you promote the Government's packages, you get a lot of love. People love the cost-of-living initiatives. I give the member for The Entrance a special shout-out because he has done a great job. He promoted the Active Kids voucher on social media and gave some commentary. I love this; he is thinking outside the box. He said, "Winter sports not your thing? The voucher can be used at any time of the year." That is creative. Well done to the member for The Entrance. He deserved more than two likes, but it was well done anyway. There are so many more, but I will stop with the member for Cessnock, who is a serial favourite of mine. He is doing great work. The member for Cessnock is really walking on the Deputy Premier's turf. He is talking up the seniors savings card. He loves it. Members have to start crediting the Government. Opposition members do not do this stuff, they never will do it and they cannot do it. Only the Liberal-Nationals Government can deliver initiatives like this one for the people of our great State.

ASSET RECYCLING

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (14:54): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that the Treasurer said that asset recycling is still part of his strategy, despite the former Premier promising there would be no more asset sales, which of the State assets does the Treasurer plan on selling next?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:54): I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for his question. I will not take a lecture from the Labor Party on selling out when the Leader of the Opposition has sold out on every single thing he has ever believed in. In his maiden speech, the Leader of the Opposition said he would stand up to the unions. What did he do? He embraced them and he used them to knife the previous Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps he believed in standing against tolls. When he was the chief of staff—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question is what is going to be flogged off next? What is the Treasurer going to sell next? That is the question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am talking about selling things, and I am talking about the Leader of the Opposition selling out on every single thing he has ever believed in. When he was chief of staff to Carl Scully, he was the architect of toll roads right across New South Wales. In fact, he was so enthusiastic about supporting toll roads, he used to funnel cars into the toll roads. They call him Chris "Tunnel Funnel" Minns. He loved tolls so much, he wanted everyone to participate in them. He used to create bus lanes so that cars had to go into the toll road.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: We are one minute and 20 seconds in. Even with you, Mr Speaker, giving him general leeway, as you do, I think you would agree this has nothing to do with the question.

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

Mr Ryan Park: It is under the Standing Order 129. It has nothing to do with privatisation and the question asked. We are now 1½ minutes into the question.

The SPEAKER: I will call members back to the question when the question is more specific and more neutral. The question was very politically charged, and the Treasurer is responding accordingly. The member for Keira will resume his seat. I will ask the Treasurer to come to privatisation at some stage, but I am giving him a higher degree of leniency, given the question that was asked. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: That is an excellent ruling, Mr Speaker. We will always manage the State's finances in a way that supports delivering services and infrastructure for the people of New South Wales. That is what this Government has done. We have grown the value of the State's balance sheet by billions and billions of dollars through asset recycling, which those opposite opposed. On the topic of selling things, let's talk about the Leader of the Opposition selling out again. He was talking about why we need to take action on climate change, and last week his ally the member for Bankstown was opposing renewable energy on plantation forests.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: The Treasurer is flouting your ruling, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No, he is not.

Mr Ryan Park: This is ridiculous. This has nothing to do with the question, and deep down you know it does not, Mr Speaker.

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

Mr Ryan Park: It is under Standing Order 129. This is not relevant. This has nothing to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr MATT KEAN: If you want to hand me the gimme, I am going to take it.

The SPEAKER: I am happy for the Treasurer to address generally the issue of privatisation, which he is doing.

Mr MATT KEAN: I said we will manage the State's finances in an economically responsible way, and asset recycling has been a key part of creating value for the people of the State. It is how we are delivering the roads, the rail, the hospitals and the schools that the community missed out on when the Opposition was in power. Labor hardly built anything at all. We missed out on the roads. We missed out on the schools. We missed out on the education facilities and the hospitals. That is the difference between us on the Government's side of the House and those opposite. They have no plan to build prosperity for this State. They have no plan to create jobs. They have no plan to create value for the people of New South Wales. They have no plan to create infrastructure. When they talk about selling things, all they mean is them selling out on the principles they hold dear.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: They cannot be consistent about anything.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira rises on a point of order. The Treasurer will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. We are four minutes into the answer. We waited another minute. The Treasurer's answer has nothing to do with privatisation.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member will resume his seat. Given the nature of the specific question that was asked, I have indicated that I am satisfied that the Treasurer can generally speak on the issue of privatisation, and he is doing so. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr Ryan Park: Yeah, right.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will be careful.

Mr MATT KEAN: The member for Keira forgets that the previous Labor Government, under which he was a staffer, sold off 18 assets—in how many years?

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Sixteen years.

Mr MATT KEAN: Sixteen years—18 assets in 16 years. In fact, talking of privatisations, who privatised the jails in New South Wales?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Labor!

Mr MATT KEAN: Who was the Minister responsible for privatising one of the prisons in New South Wales? It was Minister John Robertson. And who was chief of staff to Minister John Robertson? The Leader of the Opposition. There is no principle that the Leader of the Opposition will not sell out on, whether it be tolls or prisons or climate change or unions or the member for Strathfield—look how he sold her out. He will sell out anything. We all know it. Members of the Labor Party know it. The Leader of the Opposition stands for nothing. He will sell out on anyone. [*Extension of time*]

I will gladly take a two-minute extension. The member for Macquarie Fields should not freelance without instructions from head office; Ronnie did not give him the tip. We are very happy to talk about our economic record. It is an economic record that has seen this Government grow our economy, grow our finances and grow value for the people of New South Wales. Our asset recycling, including the WestConnex sale, has grown the value of this State by \$5 billion. Where will that \$5 billion be invested?

Mr Stuart Ayres: Western Sydney.

Mr MATT KEAN: One guess—western Sydney. I acknowledge that interjection from the great champion of western Sydney, the member for Penrith. We make decisions that are going to grow the economy. We make decisions that are going to create jobs. We make decisions that are going to build schools and hospitals and rail lines and roads. We have done it right across New South Wales. That is the infrastructure that Labor deprived New South Wales of for 16 long years. The Leader of the Opposition cannot say he was not involved in that operation, because he was a senior figure in that Labor Government—the most corrupt Labor Government, the most corrupt government that this State has ever seen.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Point of order: We have heard almost another minute and a half of the answer. The question was specifically this: What is the Treasurer going to sell next? I want to know what the Treasurer is going to sell next. That is the actual question.

The SPEAKER: I have addressed that point of order previously.

Mr MATT KEAN: I will take the next question from the member for Macquarie Fields as well. We are focused on creating value for the people of this State. We are focused on managing the State's finances in a responsible way so that we can deliver the roads, the hospitals, the rail and the schools that New South Wales missed out on for 16 long years of Labor governments, during which time the Leader of the Opposition was a key player in the most corrupt government this State has ever seen.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:02): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on transport services in my electorate of Drummoyne, with specific reference to the delivery of the new Rhodes ferry wharf as has been promised since 2011 and whether the much loved 439 bus service, which was removed last year, will be reinstated?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:02): I thank the member for Drummoyne for his question. I am delighted to update the House in relation to transport services in his electorate. I also thank the member for his indefatigable efforts to represent his community and champion their interests in getting improved transport connections and services. There is an extraordinary list of achievements that the member for Drummoyne has effectively advocated for over the past few years.

For example, I can nominate 175 extra ferry services on the F3 Parramatta River and 3,360 additional bus services in Region 6, including the delivery of 12 of 40 new electric buses introduced at the Leichhardt depot. I had the privilege of travelling on one of those buses just last week, and I note the work that is currently underway at Leichhardt to ensure that those buses can be recharged on site. An additional 431 weekly train services have been added to the T9 Northern Line, including a 33 per cent increase in services during the morning peak at Rhodes station and the doubling of services during the afternoon peak. Weekend services at Rhodes and Concord West have more than doubled since November 2017, and train stations at North Strathfield and Concord West have been upgraded. I note the Metro West is currently under construction, with stations at Five Dock, Burwood North and North Strathfield. I also point to the wharf upgrades in the member's electorate, including at Drummoyne, which was completed in 2014, Chiswick in July 2017, Cockatoo Island in August 2017, Abbotsford in June 2018 and Cabarita in December 2018.

In relation to the Rhodes ferry wharf, I confirm that Rhodes has been identified as an important strategic centre in the Eastern City District Plan, with significant opportunities to create a great new place to live, work and visit. I am advised that the original location for the proposed wharf was on the western side of Rhodes, adjacent to Mill Park. That location was objected to in initial stakeholder engagement by Rowing NSW based on a possible

conflict of ferries impacting with rowing vessels travelling between the new wharf and Meadowbank wharf. I recall that the member for Drummoyne was intricately involved in resolving those issues. The project was deferred until a new location could be found. The only other feasible location was on the eastern side of Rhodes, adjacent to 11 Leeds Street. I am pleased to advise the member that the project team recently reached an "in principle" agreement with a landowner to provide temporary access through their property to the preferred site for the new wharf. Transport for NSW is working to ensure that the wharf design supports the new Rhodes precinct plan and meets community needs and expectations. I understand that the project has completed concept design stage.

Not only is Transport for NSW working on that; it is working with the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment to ensure that we not only deliver on the new wharf but also that the development of Rhodes has an integrated transport system that can support the increase in population. As the member for Drummoyne would be aware, on 30 October the Rhodes precinct was rezoned following the finalisation of the Rhodes Place Strategy, which will guide the development of the Rhodes precinct over the next 20 years. That obviously includes the new ferry wharf at Leeds Street as a central element. In addition to the new ferry wharf, Leeds Street will be focused on Parramatta River and will include a new public park of about three quarters of a hectare, shops and cafes.

As the member for Drummoyne would be aware, the former route 439 from Mortlake to the city via Leichhardt was withdrawn but was replaced by additional services on existing routes, a modified route on an existing service and a new route. The 439 has been replaced with additional services on route 464 between Mortlake, Burwood and Ashfield, modified route 502 between Cabarita, Concord, Drummoyne and the city, new route 437 between Five Dock, Leichhardt and the city, and additional services on route 438X between Abbotsford, Five Dock and the city. I appreciate the connection that our customers often have to certain services, but I am advised that the former route 439 was a low-frequency service. Nevertheless, on the basis of Opal data, we will continue to keep a watching brief. In the same way that the member for Drummoyne has been an indefatigable fighter on other issues in his community, I have no doubt he will continue to lobby for improved transport services wherever he has the opportunity.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:07): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister please update the House on the New South Wales Government's commitment to supporting our councils to build and maintain resilient coastlines and estuaries now and into the future?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:07): I thank the member for East Hills for her question. I am always excited to tell the House about fantastic members and the work they do in their electorates. I do not think too many people know how passionate the member for East Hills is about her electorate. She never takes "no" for an answer; she never takes a step backwards. She is fearsome in her electorate, and I thank her very much. The member for East Hills will remember very clearly, because it only happened yesterday, that I was in her electorate along with the member for Holsworthy to announce some fantastic grants. I do not get the kind of money that the Premier, the Treasurer or the transport Minister has in my Coastal Management Program, but we do have record funding that was never delivered by members opposite at all in terms of our coastal councils. We had a great couple of hours yesterday in the electoral district of East Hills.

Canterbury-Bankstown council has a great project in Milperra, which will be a wonderful enhancement of that area. I know the member for East Hills is a great advocate for all the projects along the Georges River. All of the councils have combined to present projects to ask for funding along the Georges River. That is a really important part of the East Hills electorate, as it is in the Holsworthy electorate as well. The project will be a brilliant enhancement, receiving \$640,000. I know I do not get a great deal of money, but that is great money for the East Hills electorate. The project will not just address some of the erosion along the riverbanks but it will also have wonderful nature observation walks and fishing platforms. That is a wonderful project for the park that the member for East Hills, member for Holsworthy and I were at yesterday. I congratulate the member for East Hills on her advocacy. She never takes a step backwards in her electorate. I am pleased that she advocated for the Milperra project.

I am also pleased for Canterbury Bankstown council. It had to put a coastal zone management plan in for the projects. It did that successfully—those plans are not easy to get—and it has realised its ambitions. I congratulate Canterbury Bankstown council. I was also with the member for Holsworthy yesterday, and part of the \$240,000 in funding her electorate received was to replace a whole lot of stormwater pipes that disburse into the Georges River. That was the kind of project that was left to happen under members opposite. Nothing ever happened when Labor was in government to address degrading stormwater pipes that were polluting the Georges River. The Government is cleaning up mess every day in the State's coastal waterways, rivers, estuaries and lakes because members opposite did nothing. The Government came along with the Coastal Management Act

which set a strategic framework for the coastal waterways across the State. Over the past two years, I have been travelling up and down the coast looking at projects and announcing grants and congratulating every single council, which have been so proactive in achieving the grants. I congratulate the member for East Hills and the member for Holsworthy. They are two great female members of this Parliament.

It would be remiss of me if I did not remind the House that the pre-poll for local government elections has now started and is going well so far. A record 41.7 per cent of candidates standing this year are women. I give a serious warning to everybody at pre-poll. If they think they are going to get away with some of the shenanigans that have been going on with the distribution of leaflets and pamphlets degrading other candidates, it is not going to work because it is going to be investigated by the police. I refer specifically to the Northern Beaches Council and accusations, which may be false, against a sitting councillor in that area for sending out defamatory brochures. I have a picture of the candidate. I am not going to accuse her because she has denied it, but her name was on those defamatory brochures, and I have got a photo of her standing beside the Leader of the Opposition. They have some kind of relationship. I am not accusing anybody.

If there are female candidates, do not harass, defame or put false and misleading information out about them because people who do that will pay the price. I thank the member for East Hills. We had a great time yesterday. I congratulate Canterbury Bankstown council and Liverpool City Council. They have great projects funded by this Government, which is delivering \$83.6 million in record funding thanks to the Treasurer. That was never committed to by members opposite.

Documents

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 75A of the Gas Supply Act 1996, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Annual Compliance Report, Energy network operator compliance during 2020-21*, dated October 2021, received out of session on 22 November 2021, and authorised to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Reports

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Inland Rail project and regional NSW*, report 3/57, dated November 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Inquiry

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development has resolved to conduct an inquiry into technology and the agriculture and mining sectors, the full details of which are available on the Committee's home page.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Reports

Mr GREG PIPER: As Chair: I table the report of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Follow-up Review of the Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts*, report 7/57, dated 23 November 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Reports**

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 38/57*, dated 23 November 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 37/57*.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL**Reports**

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: As Chair: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General entitled *Report on the Fourteenth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, report 2/57, dated November 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit members to provide written Christmas felicitations of up to 800 words for inclusion in the *Hansard* record. Content rules for written community recognition statements under Sessional Order 108A will apply. Members may submit written felicitations electronically to Hansard@parliament.nsw.gov.au by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 25 November 2021 for inclusion in the *Hansard* record of Friday 26 November 2021.

Motion agreed to.*Members***VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:18): Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, "Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending." Today I end my time as a member of this Parliament. It is an ending that many believe has come too soon, yet often people stay too long and for the wrong reasons. For me, it is time. I leave for the right reasons, confident in my decision, proud of my achievements, and ready and excited about the next chapter in my life, whatever that may be.

My story in this place is a rather unusual one. I have represented two electorates: Newcastle between 2007 and 2011 and Strathfield between 2015 and 2021. I have been a Minister, a shadow Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. I was the first female member for Newcastle, the first democratically elected leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales, and the first since Jack Renshaw to have been born and raised in country New South Wales. My country upbringing and the experience of being both the member for Newcastle and the member for Strathfield have given me an invaluable and unique insight into the mood and aspirations of this State.

Losing office in 2011 never gave me the opportunity to reflect on my time as the member for Newcastle. Perhaps that was just as well because, in truth, my Newcastle journey did not reach its conclusion until September 2014 during the Operation Spicer investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It is fair to say that when I was elected in 2007, I was a different MP to those who had gone before me. I was a young woman shaping a positive agenda in a city shedding its industrial skin.

My journey in Newcastle was best articulated in 2006 by Labor stalwart and former member for Newcastle, the late Arthur Wade, when he said, "Nobody wants the girl." That election was brutal. I won by 787 votes. Within two years, I was a Minister and over that time I held seven portfolios. In 2011 Arthur Wade was once again manning the Carrington booth. We had settled our differences but the foe I now faced was sinister and all pervasive. The events of that time—and I will not go through them because they are well documented—and my evidence to ICAC were crucial in exposing illegal donations and rampant misconduct. At times it feels like another lifetime, but the gratitude I felt then and feel now remains.

I thank the people of Newcastle for giving me the opportunity to represent them. Much of my family still call Newcastle home, and I will always see myself as a girl of the Hunter region. I particularly acknowledge party

members John, Margaret and Chris McNaughton; Kay and David Simmons; Simon Adam and Liz McCoy; the late John Miner; the late Denis Nichols and his wife, Iris; Frank and Beryl Rigby; Glenn Beatty; Barbara Witcher; Bernie Bernard; Mary, Barbara and Ruth Calcott; Mike Bolton and Neil Pitt.

To be given the opportunity to represent one electorate is a huge privilege, but to have had the honour of representing two vastly different electorates is incredibly rare. You have to go back 70 years to find an MP who has represented two distinct electorates: Labor's Ray Maher represented North Sydney and Wyong in 1953 and before him, in 1930, Labor's Clarence Martin represented Young and Waverly—so I am, in fact, the first woman.

I was first elected as the member for Strathfield in 2015, just four years after what was a disaster in 2011. I have been fortunate to have represented that diverse, beautiful community for six years. It has given me so much joy and inspiration. In many ways Strathfield sums up the best of our diverse State: There is ambition and prosperity but there is also significant economic hardship in many suburbs. There are challenges, but along with that there are countless opportunities. There are echoes of old New South Wales, but overwhelmingly the feel is of a new New South Wales with close ties to Asia and the subcontinent. Those who know me well know I get that extroverted energy by engaging with individuals and groups—that is, listening to their stories and taking on their issues of concern. There are MPs on both sides of this House who immerse themselves in the different cultures and traditions of our citizens. As leader, I took on the portfolio of multiculturalism and made it one focus of my leadership. I have attended not just the large celebrations but also the small community events, where I have enjoyed long conversations and meeting people in what I believe is a more respectful and meaningful way.

I was, as all members know, the first woman to wear a sari into this Parliament. I thank my very good friend Aruna Chandrala for introducing me to the sari. I now have around 90 saris—though I will say the member for Granville is in competition with me—and I can tell the story of each and every one of them. Respectful gestures like this are important in building relationships between cultures and nations and, importantly, engaging with our citizens in a way that recognises what is important to them. I am a Christian, but I am equally as comfortable in a temple, mosque or gurdwara as I am in a church. To celebrate Ramadan, Diwali, Pongal, Annakut, Onam, Vietnamese New Year, Buddha's Birthday, Hanukkah, Greek and Indian independence days, Korean republic day, Holi, Lunar New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival and so much more are what I see as elemental experiences that I will have with me for the rest of my life. I thank the many groups and individuals who have welcomed me warmly. My heart is full when I think of you.

Unlike the Newcastle electorate, where there are issues and challenges that come with being the State's second city—and the member for Newcastle will back me up on that—Strathfield has been a less complex electorate to represent. For me, it has been about the people—always about the people. They have been my priority, and in my electorate office I know we have made a huge difference to the lives of so many. I thank Jacqui Thorburn, my electorate officer, who has been with me since the very beginning. Jacqui, you have given so much of yourself to those who have sought our help. No problem has been too difficult for you to solve. I will be forever indebted to you for the compassion you have shown every person who has walked through our door. I also thank Maryanne Duggan, Joanne Mai, Imogen Smith, Veronica Von Arnim, Riki Chiba, Blake Osmond, Pia Brunner, Sally Sitou, Alison Chen, Sachi Jhingran, Jonah Bechara and Judith Wagner, who have all worked in my electorate office at some point. I give a very special mention to Sravya Abbineni and Michael Ng. They have also been with me since the very beginning, and I am grateful for everything they have done for me. They are the future of our party and it is now time for me to support them.

I am also proud that I leave Strathfield with a stronger than ever membership that has engagement right across the community. My campaign in 2015, on a platform of integrity in politics, energised the membership and gave me lifelong friendships with people who believed in me, had my back and always supported me. I will be thanking our wonderful party members personally in coming weeks because it is too difficult to acknowledge everyone in this speech. However, I do acknowledge Kym Ralley. She has gone through so much, but her enthusiasm for our party and belief in the Labor cause has never tired. I also acknowledge our Labor councillors: John Faker, Karen Pensabene, Mark Drury, Lucielle McKenna and Andrew Ferguson. I am one of those people who believes we can achieve much more for our community when we work together. I thank my much-loved husband, Stephen, who has been with me on this journey—I cannot actually look at him in the gallery. I look forward to spending much more time at our farm mucking out the stables, resuming our trip to Scotland—which was our honeymoon, which we still have not had in 10 years—and starting the next chapter of our life, wherever that may take us.

Too often politics is about the exercising of power. However, it is actually in the day-to-day responsibilities of office where not only the substance but also the art and beauty of politics and being a parliamentarian lies. I never actively sought power. I was urged to run for the leadership of the Labor Party by my colleagues and members of our party, and I thank them for the overwhelming support I received as the first democratically elected leader of NSW Labor. I also thank my incredible deputy, Yasmin Catley, my colleague and my dear friend. I thank

the union movement, led by Mark Morey. We are a broad church—and there are squabbles at times—but we all strive towards that light on the hill. In my two years as leader I sought to rebuild trust in our party, to reconnect with western Sydney and our multicultural and multi-faith communities, and to be a party for the bush as well as the city. Importantly, I sought to once again focus Labor as a party supporting local manufacturing and jobs and responsible and accountable government.

I also drove internal reform. The Lavarch review into our head office has seen significant changes to our party governance. I thank Bob Nanva and Dom Ofner, who understand that for a political party to be electable it must be a party that people trust. I am pleased that in the Legislative Council we will now ensure that two positions are held by MPs from rural New South Wales. The governments of McKell, Wran and Carr shared a common trait of strong regional representation. When I entered Parliament we held seats like Monaro, Kiama and Bathurst. We should never, ever sell ourselves short in aspiring to represent these communities again. If we were expected to win the seat of Upper Hunter—a seat we have not represented in more than 100 years—then we should win seats we held 10 years ago.

Mr Speaker, I have played hard in this place, as you well know. I thank you for your steady hand in this Chamber. You might be interested to know that the motto of Clan Mackay from the northernmost reaches of Scotland is "Manu forti"—"With a strong hand". I have always tried to balance this strength with a sense of fair play. I also thank the Premier for his very kind and generous message when I announced I was resigning, which recognised my significant contribution to the Parliament. I live by the motto that fear is only destructive if it stops you doing something. In that vein, I acknowledge the efforts of previous female leaders Kerry Chikarovski, Kristina Keneally, Carmel Tebbutt, Linda Burney and Gladys Berejiklian. I acknowledge also Penny Sharpe. I wish the very best to Prue Car and Bronnie Taylor, who now take up the challenge of being female leaders in this Parliament. I was so proud of the fact that when I formed our shadow Cabinet we achieved equal representation of women and men—the first time this has occurred in New South Wales. We have incredible women in our party and I thank them for their friendship and support.

My inaugural speech in 2007 as the member for Newcastle—I have actually given two inaugural addresses—ended with a quote by the French revolutionary Georges Danton: "Boldness, and again boldness, and forever boldness!" Whilst I still share these sentiments, I also note that the famous revolutionary was arrested, tried and executed by a few of his fellow Jacobins. But as Danton also said, "I would rather be guillotined than a guillotiner." I leave my office with a few what-ifs but certainly no regrets. I leave with my head held high and with the treasured friendships of many fine people who have graced this Parliament. I entered Parliament at the age of 37—perhaps these days that is seen as middle aged in the world of New South Wales politics. But over the past 15 years I have learned much, and the boldness of Danton has been supplemented by the wisdom of other great leaders. Reflecting on my time, I realise that we all have our limitations, but it is what we can achieve within those parameters—the good we can achieve and the evil we can avoid—that matters. I reflect on the words of that great man, political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi, who once said:

Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny.

The sparsest of thoughts can lead to the most generous of visions; they can also lead to the path of despair and destruction. As politicians, we perform a highwire act where good and bad, inspiration and indifference abound. Power—the use and abuse of it—surrounds and confronts us each and every day. While we cannot always control the circumstances, we can control how we as parliamentarians react and respond. I hope that in my time I have done what is right, regardless of consequences. It may not always lead to success or acclaim, but it is the very measure by which we will all ultimately be judged.

Members of the House stood in their places and applauded.

The SPEAKER: The cross-party representation for the member for Strathfield's speech and the warmth of the farewell that she was extended reflects the enormous contribution she has made to the Parliament, and also the respect and appreciation that members feel for the role she has played.

Bills

LICENSING AND REGISTRATION (UNIFORM PROCEDURES) AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service, and Minister for Digital) (15:44): In reply: I am pleased to deliver a reply to the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Bill 2021. I thank members for their contribution to the debate. As members have heard, this bill will update and

modernise the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act [LRUPA] provisions to reflect current best practice and encourage the broader adoption of a consistent set of licensing procedures. The bill will also establish an overreaching legal framework to enable the issue and use of digital licences in New South Wales.

Customers increasingly expect to be able to interact and transact with government in a consistent manner, regardless of which agency they are dealing with. Furthermore, customers are no longer satisfied with filling out endless paper forms, and expect that government services should be available digitally wherever possible. The Government has made great strides in recent years to improve the way it issues and administers licences to meet these expectations. The release of a digital driver licence and the development of a new digital licensing platform, Licence.NSW, being just two recent examples. However, there are currently over 100 licensing Acts in New South Wales, all of which have different processes and use different terminology. It is unacceptable to have over 100 licensing Acts using different processes and different terminology. A man of your great wisdom, Mr Speaker, would understand the folly of this. It needs to be fixed. It was a Labor bill, and it definitely requires fixing, there is no doubt about that.

It is currently possible for a single regulatory body to administer multiple different licensing Acts, each with different application processes, renewal periods and notice requirements. That is inefficient and frustrating for both customers and regulators. It is time that the improvements we have made to customer experience and regulatory efficiency in individual licensing schemes are standardised across as many licensing schemes as humanly possible. The bill will update and modernise LRUPA to make it more appealing for regulators to get on-board and will help it fulfil its original purpose: to create consistency among licensing schemes. Most New South Wales residents hold at least one form, if not multiple forms, of a licence. As such, the efficiency of the New South Wales licensing system has a very significant and very direct impact on many customers. It also has significant benefits for Service NSW and other licensing frontline staff by enabling them to provide consistent information across a variety of licence types.

The bill also makes important amendments to facilitate the issue and use of digital licences in New South Wales, which will ensure that our licensing schemes can meet contemporary expectations. Digital licences are the way of the future. On that note, this morning I gave the keynote at the digital.nsw Showcase, which is an extravaganza that goes for two days that showcases what we have planned for the great people of our State. The licensing platform and its use are front and centre—there is no doubt about it—making it easier for people to use their service app and contain in that service app so many licences and credentials. It is so important. We started with a driver licence, but it goes on to include first aid certificates, education qualifications, and the like. What we have planned for the people of our great State will be world leading—there is no doubt in my mind about that—and we will deliver it very soon.

Digital licences are the way of the future. They are convenient, secure and easy to use. They are far more private and far more secure than a piece of paper that you can lose off the back of a truck. The bill lays the legislative foundations for all regulators, not just those using LRUPA to use digital licences. Equally as important, the bill will ensure that customers and regulators know how a digital licence can be used to satisfy any compliance and enforcement requirement. The amendments to LRUPA contained within the bill were developed in close consultation with regulators to reflect their needs as well as the expectations of the customers. The resulting reform will enable better regulatory outcomes for licence holders across New South Wales and represents another significant development in our digital transformation journey. I thank the staff in the agency who have worked so tirelessly for so long to bring the bill to life in its amended form. In particular I thank Emily Swain, Audrey Maag, Leona Fernandez and Amber Fletcher for their work. It is really appreciated. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 November 2021.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:51): I lead in this place for the Opposition on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. I acknowledge my colleague in the other place the Hon. Penny

Sharpe who consulted widely on this issue as Labor's shadow Minister for the environment. I will do my best to represent the views that stakeholders shared with her and the Labor Opposition's position on this bill as informed by those stakeholders, consistent with Labor's long history of environmental conservation. Our national parks are intergenerational assets. We in this place are the trustees of these assets and it is our duty to take it seriously. I congratulate the Minister on the recent announcement on the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, which is a valuable addition to the national parks estate. But that announcement is out of character for this 10-year-old government. I remember this quote from the *Sydney Morning Herald* not too long ago:

Former premier Kristina Keneally added more to the national parks system in an average week than Gladys Berejiklian added in her first two years.

Over the past 10 years of this conservative Government, our national parks have been under repeated attack at a time when they have never been so important. It is worth giving a short summary of this Government's attitude to national parks over the past 10 years. For the first time in Australia's history this Government considered degazetting a national park; it wanted to open it up for ecological thinning—otherwise known as logging in anyone else's language. That was the beautiful Murray Valley National Park, which I have had the opportunity to have a beautiful walk through on a number of occasions.

Then there was legislation, which passed in this place, to protect a feral species in our national parks and stop any reduction in their numbers. The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 is still in force, courtesy of this Liberal-Nationals Government. It places greater protections on feral horses than it places on the native animals being trampled to extinction. It has left the feral horse population to explode in numbers that are causing irreparable harm to the very beginning of waterways that sustain our State. When action on feral horses eventually happens it will mean thousands and thousands more feral horses will have to be culled, courtesy of this Liberal-Nationals Government and its attitude towards national parks. Then there was the weakening of land clearing laws in New South Wales, which left our national parks as botanical islands of refuge for our native species. This weakling of environmental protections increased stress on protected ecosystems as bulldozers crushed surrounding trees on their borders. We all know what happened in the bushfires. It is little wonder we lost so many native animals when they were concentrated into pockets of precious habitat.

Then there were the job cuts. This Government inherited the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service with 1,877 full-time equivalent staff, but by July 2018 it had eroded that workforce to 1,367—one-third of its workforce. Over 500 staff were sacked by this Liberal-National Government, and out the door with them went decades of experience, science and institutional knowledge about these precious habitats, how they operate and how they were used by local communities. Under this Government the number of area managers has been cut in half, making staff responsible for twice as much area as they were before. Within those total job cuts, when this Government was elected the number of firefighters employed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service elected dropped from 1,349 to 1,044 in 2019. That is 300 fewer staff to do hazard reduction burns or to fight fires once they start. Those staff figures, tabled in budget estimates, show how eroded our national parks firefighting service was in the lead-up to the Black Summer bushfires.

Perhaps one of the most galling comments made by a member of this Government was after the Black Summer bushfires when the former Deputy Premier suggested they were caused by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Putting aside the fact that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service was actually the responsibility of his own Government, those comments were designed to fuel an attitude against the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for lack of management of its own land, which was caused by this Government's underfunding, understaffing and sacking of staff. The sheer hypocrisy of this Government is astounding. In saying that, I do not doubt the sincerity of the Minister's interest in national parks, but he clearly does not have the support of his caucus or the support of the bulldozer-loving, koala-hating National Party members of this Coalition. The Nationals in New South Wales have become an environmental joke—the first battalion of the koala wars, the feral horsemen of the environment and the protectors of plastic bags. Well it would be a joke, if it was not so serious.

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021 is an omnibus bill that makes a series of changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. There are many uncontroversial aspects of the bill, which Labor would be willing to support. However, they have been combined with changes that have been poorly consulted, erode environmental protections and undermine the long-term protections of our national parks estate. Unfortunately, negotiation to date has not resolved those matters, so my colleagues in the upper House will be seeking to move amendments to excise the problematic aspects and improve the bill. I hope Labor's amendments will be supported. I note that the Minister is vigorously nodding his head. That gives me confidence that there will be a place where we can all land comfortably on this bill. To be clear, the damaging aspects of this bill cannot be supported so Labor members will be opposing the bill in this Chamber. But I am hopeful, especially with the

indications given by the Minister, that amendments to resolve these issues will be supported so that the positive aspects of the bill can continue.

The many supportable aspects of this bill include increasing protections for assets of intergenerational significance, including a method to extend protection to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, enabling the location of these assets to be kept confidential, where necessary, to ensure their conservation; and providing penalties for offences against sites declared an asset of intergenerational significance. The bill sets a framework to enable the Minister or an Aboriginal land council for certain land to create, acquire, hold, sell or otherwise deal with carbon sequestration rights in land that is created or protected under the Act. Again, that is an entirely supportable part of this bill. Other clauses of the bill bring the law up to speed with new technology, by enabling the use of digital images and data for compliance and enforcement actions relating to vehicles entering or using a national park in a similar way to shopping centre car parks that can scan licence plates. While this aspect can be supported, there are unresolved issues as to how it will apply to previous concession holders who are not the registered owners of a vehicle.

I am sure everyone in this place would want to ensure that pensioners, people with disability, veterans and other concession holders have equitable access to national parks. This issue could be resolved through measures such as the application of a temporary pass connected to a licence plate or another similar workaround, and I trust that the Minister will pursue those options. Providing a power to make regulations about monitoring and reporting on the ecological health of parks is another important aspect of this bill. Whilst that is welcome, it is worth noting that there used to be a *State of the Parks* report released about the health of national parks. The last *State of the Parks* report was released in 2007. Prior to that it was released every four years—2001, 2004. Another edition was due to be published when the Liberals and Nationals came to power in 2011 but that never eventuated. It has gone missing ever since. Clearly that was a sign of things to come under this Government. It has only taken a decade to get back to where we were but, hopefully, we will once again get our *State of the Parks* reports in another form under this bill.

Perhaps the most significant supportable aspect of the bill is the establishment, as I mentioned previously, of the Gardens of Stone conservation area. This declaration sees the culmination of a long-running campaign by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Lithgow Environment Group, Nature Conservation Council and many others. I recognise those groups for their passion, perseverance and tenacity to see the long-term protection of this special place. If the bill had ended there, it would most likely have received unanimous support in this Chamber—although perhaps not from The Nationals. Regrettably, the bill contains a number of provisions that undermine our national parks and cannot be supported by the Labor Opposition. Among the most significant is the inclusion of a power for the Minister to create biodiversity credits for management actions carried out on land that is protected under this Act. There is a multitude of concerns about this approach.

Currently an inquiry is looking into the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme as it applies to conservation activities on private land. While not opposing the broad concept of biodiversity offsets, the scheme in New South Wales is not delivering the results that are needed to protect our environment. The current scheme has encountered an undersupply of certain credits, volatile pricing of other credits, poor follow-up to confirm that conservation activities have occurred, allegations of corruption in the management of permits and a net loss of biodiversity across New South Wales under this scheme. Until that inquiry is completed, there should be no expansion of the scheme in general. In particular, there should be no expansion of the scheme into our precious national parks. The goal of biodiversity offsets is to fund additional conservation works in order to replace habitat that is lost as part of necessary development. What cannot be supported is the justification of conservation works that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service should be undertaking on its land in any event, regardless of whether any development is occurring elsewhere or on similar land.

Surely, with the land clearing that this Government has legalised across New South Wales, the ledger is already well into the red and our national parks are needed more than ever to protect the remaining bushland. The creation of this scheme could easily be used as a convenient excuse to further cut the national parks budget and shift responsibility onto the agency to raise money through the sale of private biodiversity credits. None of the stakeholders—the hardworking ambassadors of our environment—are supportive of this aspect of the bill. Their sentiments are expressed well by the National Parks Association of NSW:

The entire biodiversity offset system in NSW is currently subject to a parliamentary inquiry and investigation by ICAC. It is a broken system that invites corruption, and even when operated according to the rules results in a net loss of the state's biodiversity values. Adding opportunities to purchase offsets in protected areas won't improve the system, but rather create new opportunities for corruption.

On similar grounds, we cannot support the establishment of a new foundation to raise funds. Firstly, there is already a Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife and it has a member of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife

Service on its board. The unnecessary duplication of this charitable venture only dilutes the funds already being raised. Furthermore, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is a New South Wales Government agency. We do not expect Family & Community Services [FACS] or the police to raise donations to fund their services and we should not expect it of our national parks staff either. At its core, this measure in particular raises the question: Is environmental conservation a core business of government or does the Government want to treat it as an activity that can be left to volunteers to plant trees funded from the proceeds of a car boot sale? Fundamentally we do not trust the Government when it comes to protecting our environment. The reason behind creating another entity that can donations has caused significant concern amongst stakeholders. On that aspect of the bill the Blue Mountains Conservation Society said:

This is also a revenue raising initiative which will potentially allow governments to reduce public funding of national parks. There is already a National Parks Foundation. Management of national parks estate lands should be funded by public funds.

The final objectionable part of the bill is about the plans of management. Those important documents lay out the framework for how an area of a national park is managed, what activities are allowable, what facilities will be provided and, by extension, what activities or facilities are not allowable within a conservation area. The bill seeks to reduce the exhibition period of any changes or new plans by more than half—from 90 days to 28 days. Those of us familiar with regulatory time frames know that 28 days is how long someone gets to comment on your neighbour's development application [DA] for a renovation. This amendment would give the management of a national park, with the complex and overlapping demands of conservation and recreation, the same feedback time as your neighbour's DA. In contrast, certain council strategic plans have a minimum exhibition period of 45 days. Those strategic plans will be abandoned after a few years, but our national parks will be there for generations to come.

Not only are the consultation periods being shortened; the Minister is being given the power to override the plans of management on a whim and with very few safeguards to prevent excessive intrusion into our national parks. That power is too broad and it is too open to abuse and cannot be supported. It is not supported by stakeholders and the Labor Opposition similarly will not be supporting it. I genuinely encourage the Minister to consult with stakeholders before introducing significant changes to the way we care for our national parks estate. Many people care deeply about them but because they were not consulted about those significant changes, they have taken a position against substantial elements of the bill. The Labor Opposition takes a similar view. I encourage the Minister to listen to Labor's shadow Minister for the Environment and the amendments she will be moving in the upper House so a workable bill can be supported. In its current form, Labor members will not support the bill.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Minister for Regional New South Wales) (16:07): I am pleased to speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Act Amendment Bill. I thank the Minister for his work on the bill that has been introduced in this House today. The bill makes sensible and much-needed amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. As the member for Bathurst I have taken a great deal of interest in the bill, which will deliver future opportunities for Lithgow, surrounding communities and the central west more broadly. For many reasons, and for many community and environmental groups, this is an historic agreement. I will focus on a specific aspect of the bill, which is the transformation of the 32,000 hectares of unproductive State forests and Crown land, and their reservation into a new eco-tourism and adventure destination on the edge of the Blue Mountains near Lithgow. That will form part of the national parks estate.

The creation of a Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area and additions to the neighbouring Gardens of Stone and Wollemi national parks will further contribute to this Government's expansion of protected areas. In addition to the conservation outcomes expected, the Gardens of Stone reserves will bring significant economic benefits to the Lithgow region. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will invest almost \$50 million in visitor infrastructure to create iconic visitor experiences. It represents one of the State's largest investments that we have seen in regional ecotourism. It will include 10 new multi-day walks, over 30 campground upgrades and over 750 kilometres of new and upgraded walking tracks, plus new mountain bike trails and a suite of new and upgraded lookouts. It also includes the stunning new initiatives announced recently for the Gardens of Stone reserves such as zip-lines, a via ferrata, elevated canyon walkways and much more.

It is estimated the Gardens of Stone reserves will attract around 200,000 additional visitors to the region annually and it will support an additional 190 jobs in the Lithgow area. It also about protecting some of our natural gems. It is about creating new iconic experiences so more people can enjoy our natural wonders. Under the bill parts of Ben Bullen, Wolgan and Newnes State forests will be revoked, along with a small area of neighbouring Crown land, and will be reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to create the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area. To ensure that existing interests for underground mining remain undisturbed, the State conservation area will be restricted to a depth of 50 metres.

Parts of Newnes State Forest will be revoked and added to Wollemi National Park. A small area of neighbouring Crown land will also be reserved as part of Gardens of Stone National Park. Collectively, those additions will be known as the Gardens of Stone reserves. This area of exceptional conservation value has been a longstanding priority for addition to the national park estate. I express the Government's appreciation to those passionate community members who have advocated for this protection for many years. The area to be reserved includes over 80 threatened plant and animal species and 16 rare and endangered ecological communities. The new reserves will extend protections for the rare and spectacular geo-diversity of the sandstone pagodas for which this area is known.

The Gardens of Stone reserves will be crucial to protect threatened upland swamp communities on the Newnes Plateau through landscape scale management. The establishment of the Gardens of Stone reserves will support the implementation of an offset strategy for the Springvale Mine Extension Project, once agreed with the Commonwealth Government and consistent with the relevant conditions of approval under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The offset strategy will enable and provide security for the substantial investment needed in land management to protect and restore threatened upland swamp communities on the Newnes Plateau and other environmental assets. This is an exciting addition to the national park estate which, coupled with investment in conservation and infrastructure, will deliver multiple benefits.

I am pleased to recognise that the bill will deliver important outcomes for conservation, the local economy and employment opportunities in the Lithgow region in addition to sensational new visitor experiences for the people of New South Wales to enjoy. When the Government announced the investment of \$50 million into the Gardens of Stone, the response from the community to my local office was overwhelming. The Gardens of Stone will not be locked up; it will be enjoyed by the people of New South Wales. Our national parks will be recognised for providing a visitor experience in the area. This \$50 million investment will bring 200,000 visitors to the area each year will certainly drive the local economy, as well as the 190 jobs that will be created. Eco-tourism and infrastructure will go with that particular investment such as zip-lines going from one canyon to the next and the via ferrata, which is the first of its kind of rock climbing in Australia, so we are creating a real experience for families, and people of all ages to enjoy what is on offer in New South Wales.

It is nice to have that in my backyard but what is important is it is right on Sydney's doorstep. This investment is one of a kind. I thank the Minister for the work he has done behind the scenes to ensure that this is an exciting announcement. This bill is about ensuring we support the community of Lithgow as we go forward. Most importantly, we are providing the people of this State and this country, as well as our visitors as they start to come back again, with the opportunity to see how beautiful the Gardens of Stone are. When people go there they will see the Temple of Doom and the Lost City. There are plenty of experiences there that people will be able to enjoy. I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:14): In 2016 I spoke about a National Parks and Wildlife bill in this House. There are many things that need to be changed and many things that need to be restated on the record, but this is how I began my contribution:

It gives me great pleasure to stand in this place and speak about New South Wales national parks because our national parks are a standing legacy of the environmental record of Labor in New South Wales. New South Wales would be unrecognisable today without the huge estate of national parks gifted to the people of this State by former Labor governments and former Minister for the Environment Bob Debus.

It is really important to acknowledge that Bob Debus has continued his work in this space. It is important to acknowledge him as a former member for Blue Mountains and a former Minister for everything in this place. But his work as Minister for the Environment is his most lasting and enduring legacy. Bob Carr and Bob Debus spent a great deal of the late 1900s and early 2000s ensuring large areas of bushland and wilderness throughout our State were invested in, protected, and made accessible to the people of New South Wales. Over 350 new national parks were declared by Bob Carr and Bob Debus in that time, and between 1995 and 2011 Labor added more than three million hectares to the National Parks estate. As mentioned before by the former member for Marrickville, when Bob Debus was the Minister for the Environment he gazetted more national parks in one day than the former Coalition Government gazetted in its entire term of office.

Mr Matt Kean: We are trying to fix that.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: I note that the current Minister for Energy and Environment is trying to fix that. No other political party has created more national parks than has the Labor Party. We created the largest collection of national parks in the country and we will protect them. No other political party's representative in this place can make that claim. The Liberals resent our achievements in environmental conservation and The Greens look on from the crossbench. That is why it is so important to elect Labor governments, and that needs to be said in this place because only Labor can use the mechanisms of Executive government to protect the environment.

Labor's record on the environment is lasting and enduring. Labor knows that a government must balance the strength of the economy with protections for our environment and Labor members know that, as politicians, we must bring the people along with us on these issues.

I also said about the 2016 bill—and I will say it again about today's bill—that what is disconcerting about it is the powers it will vest in the Minister. Each time we see a new bill or amendment, we need to remember that the people expect us to improve our national parks instead of eroding them or degrading them through commercialisation, restricted access, recreational hunting or whatever other proposal the Government has in the pipeline. Feedback from some of those who work in conservation and who have worked hard with many different governments over many decades is worth mentioning. One stakeholder said, "We actually thought there was a reasonable job done by the Minister and there have been a number of deals worked over with a number of different members. We thought what was happening was going to be confined to the Gardens of Stone, but no. We say no to zip lines. We say no to two-storey cafes nestled into the pagodas. We say no to glamour camping."

It is worth noting that quite a number of stakeholders, although they hold the Minister in high regard, are very disappointed with the lack of consultation. I am told that the State advisory committee was not consulted; nor were others. They were just told, "This is the bill you are getting." I turn now to another comment I made in 2016 in a private member's statement because it goes to the heart of what we are able to do by way of protection in our national parks, which is to look after the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the staff in that service. In 2016 I said:

I address the impact on my electorate of cuts to National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers and field officers. The Blue Mountains electorate is predominantly a World Heritage listed national park, with a small sliver of built-up areas running through the middle. The national park plays a crucial role in the local economy and the day-to-day lives of my constituents.

I was very alarmed back in those days to learn from staff about the significant staffing cuts that had absolutely gutted the organisation. They gutted the National Parks and Wildlife Service of its expertise and its capacity to actually do its job. At that stage I had been contacted—and I have been ever since—by National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, who all wish to remain anonymous, of course, but who detailed to me with horror the extent of the ramifications of the cuts. I refer people to my private member's statement in 2016, in which I outlined the concern of staff that park infrastructure would be degraded without supervision during the weekends and that park rangers' time would be spent repairing that damage during the week. I also mentioned that there was a huge push by this Government to diminish the status, expertise and qualifications required to attain the position of ranger and to dumb down that profession by removing the need for higher education qualifications for those highly specialised roles. One very senior National Parks officer said to me that he felt gutted to think that the Government was doing that at a time of climate change and environmental degradation of the planet, which was just deplorable.

I turn now to briefly comment on a couple of the aspects of the bill that Labor supports, which already have been outlined in this place by my colleague. We support protecting assets of intergenerational significance, including providing the method to extend that protection to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, which is important; and we support the establishment of the Gardens of Stone as a State conservation area. Let us not forget that Labor started this some years ago by protecting Mount Airlie. The Minister is aware that the Opposition opposes the bill in its current form. It is fantastic to see the conservation area of the Gardens of Stone looked after but, as one of the stakeholders pointed out, we cannot commercialise to the point where it is no longer national park, wilderness and quiet, which is what people seek. I must note that people are a little alarmed by the provision of the power for the Minister to approve a project that is inconsistent with the plan of management for visitor infrastructure and conservation actions of a class prescribed in the regulations. My colleague the member for Port Stephens outlined that.

Other concerns that have been raised with me include the establishment of an open-ended charitable entity, which will enable tax-deductible donations to be made to national parks. In part that is modelled on the United States foundation. As one of my stakeholders and a conservationist who is well loved and cherished in that space said, "Why do we need a parallel charity as a slush fund and one that has no transparency?" The Blue Mountains Conservation Society says that opening up national parks to donations is a revenue-raising initiative and it will allow governments, potentially, to reduce public funding. That is their biggest worry. I note the concerns raised by Stuart Little of the Public Service Association when he pointed out that additional national parks and conservation areas have been declared in western New South Wales and not one additional staff member has been appointed to manage them. [*Extension of time*]

Is it any wonder that those who work in a service that we cherish and who we thank every time we are in this place are worried about what some of those changes could mean? I look forward to the Minister addressing that in his reply speech. He is well aware that there is a range of other concerns about the possible damage to national parks that they wish to work with him on. Perhaps the best feedback I received—and it is feedback that

is laced with love—was that I was asked to stand up and say, "Please, do not drag your credentials into the dirt. Work with us and consult with us."

I cannot finish without thanking some of the stakeholders that have worked with me, especially when I was a casual adviser to Bob Debus and then to the Hon. Phil Koperberg, and all of the years in between. I note the concerns of my constituency, particularly the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, about the proposal to inundate 65 kilometres of the world heritage protected Blue Mountains National Park as part of the proposed project to raise the Warragamba Dam wall, without solving the problems of flooding in western Sydney. We are going to risk the world heritage status of the Blue Mountains National Park, which has the highest level of protection given to precious natural areas. That proposal is equivalent to dredging the corals of the Great Barrier Reef. If we are going to risk that and then support a government that congratulates itself for providing a conservation area, then we need to ask serious questions.

I will finish by acknowledging some fantastic people and groups that the Minister would also know. I acknowledge the Gardens of Stone Alliance, which has prepared many fantastic proposals and its members were pleased to see their hard work and conversations with the Minister acknowledged through the Gardens of Stone. They are a little concerned about elements of that. I acknowledge the Nature Conservation Council and also my fabulous Blue Mountains Conservation Society, of which I am a member. I particularly acknowledge the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Keith Muir. I will remind the Minister that he owes Keith a phone call to explain the next steps and how he is going to peel back the concerns the foundation has outlined.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:27): I am pleased to speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill. I acknowledge that the Minister who introduced the bill is in the Chamber. He has done an outstanding job. Even with the unwarranted criticism of the bill, the respect that the various conservation and wildlife groups have Minister Kean is evident. As we have heard from my colleagues, the bill makes a number of sensible and much-needed amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 that will improve the conservation outcomes of the Act, streamline park management planning and approvals, harness philanthropic donations and create the new Gardens of Stone reserves.

I will focus on a specific aspect of the bill, which is how the bill will improve conservation outcomes in the national parks estate. The Royal National Park was the first to be declared a national park in Australia in 1879. It is second only to Yellowstone National Park, which is the oldest national park in the world. It was not until 1967 that the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] was created. Today the service manages more than 9.6 per cent of the land area of New South Wales and more than 48 per cent of the coastline of New South Wales, with over 880 national parks and reserves covering over seven million hectares of land. I acknowledge that some 500,000 hectares have been added by the Minister and this Government since August 2019, which is an outstanding effort and contribution.

It is not enough to simply reserve a park to protect it. Biodiversity is continuing to decline in New South Wales and many places around the world, with the available evidence indicating the loss of biodiversity is even occurring in national parks. We must do more to strengthen the conservation outcomes for our national parks for current and future generations. This bill will do just that. It will support the world-leading ecological health monitoring framework and further strengthen the protections provided by recent amendments to the Act to allow for the declaration of Assets of Intergenerational Significance.

The bill supports another world-leading initiative from the National Parks and Wildlife Service—the Ecological Health Performance Scorecards. The amendments will allow the National Parks and Wildlife Service, under delegation, to develop and implement a program to monitor the ecological health of the parks it manages. The National Parks and Wildlife Regulation will outline the details of the ecological health monitoring program, allowing for a practical and adaptable approach. It will identify the measures to be monitored, where the monitoring will take place and how the results will be reported. The regulation will be developed in 2022. It will be informed by the NPWS pilot of the scorecards program across eight sites, which represent a diverse range of ecosystems.

The eco-health scorecards pilot program will provide regular publicly available reports on the health of our national parks, including science-based metrics related to measuring the populations of key threatened species such as koalas, brush-tailed rock-wallabies and Wollemi pines; determining the extent of threats such as the density of feral pigs and goats; and whether fire regimes are impacting on the health of our parks. Members of the public will be able to check on the health of their favourite national park or their local koala population. Performance scorecards for each site will report selected key indicator species, communities and ecological processes, and selected key indicator threatening processes and level of affect such as the status of feral animal control. That level of transparency is to be commended. It will give members of the public who enjoy our national parks confidence of the highest order that they will understand and see what is being done to protect those parks now and in the future.

The ecological health monitoring program will help the National Parks and Wildlife Service to detect and understand changes in the condition of species, populations and ecological processes over time. It will provide an evidence base, allowing park managers to adapt management strategies to drive conservation outcomes. Importantly, it will also ensure transparent reporting on the effectiveness of feral animal control and other park management activities, as well as an early warning system for changes that may come about as a result of climate change and other forces that impact our environment.

In 2020 the Act was amended to provide for the declaration of land within the parks estate as an Asset of Intergenerational Significance, which can be any area of land that has exceptional environmental and cultural values that warrant special protection, including dedicated management measures. So far 222 Assets of Intergenerational Significance have been declared. An example is Caley's grevillea, which is a critically endangered shrub with toothbrush-like red flowers. It grows up to four metres high by four metres wide and has a highly restricted distribution north of Sydney. It grows in small sections of Ku-ring-gai Chase and Garigal national parks and has been impacted by fire, habitat loss and disturbance, and weeds. Caley's grevillea is one of the first suites of species to have a Conservation Action Plan prepared and placed on public exhibition.

A recent example is the Wollumbin pouched frog. The New South Wales Government moved swiftly to protect a new frog species that was recently discovered in the Wollumbin National Park in northern New South Wales. At only 16 millimetres, this tiny frog is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The frog, and its habitat, was immediately declared an Asset of Intergenerational Significance under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and a conservation action plan will be developed to ensure its survival. From this, we can see that particular policy in practice and the importance of the policy. The proposed amendments will provide additional support for the protection of these important environmental and cultural values. The bill will require that the values of each declared Asset of Intergenerational Significance are identified in the declaration. Some of the species listed within the declared land are so vulnerable that their location must not be disclosed.

The proposed amendments will allow the Minister to choose not to disclose information that may reveal the location of a sensitive site when declaring land as an Asset of Intergenerational Significance. The amendments will also set appropriate penalties for damaging the values that are protected by an Asset of Intergenerational Significance declaration. The settings for penalties are commensurate with the high level of protection intended by an Asset of Intergenerational Significance declaration. Sensible defences to those penalties have been provided to ensure that necessary conservation work can take place. I am pleased to recognise that the bill will deliver important outcomes for improving the security of species and populations on the national parks estate. For those reasons and other reasons articulated by members of both the Government and the Opposition, I am very pleased to commend the bill to the House.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:35): I make a contribution to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. I acknowledge the Hon. Penny Sharpe, Labor's shadow Minister for the environment, and her representative and Labor's shadow Minister in this place, the member for Port Stephens. I acknowledge the Minister, who was sitting in the Chamber earlier. I also acknowledge some correspondence that I have been sending the Minister over the past few years about a number of issues, particularly relating to the Wolli Creek Regional Park. This is a 25-year project, which started back in 1988 under then Coalition Minister for the Environment Tim Moore, that is about ensuring the Wolli Creek area becomes a national park.

We still have a number of parcels of land, including one that is owned by Sydney Water. There is a controversial issue locally involving a number of my colleagues and the odour control unit. There have been endless meetings with Sydney Water and local representatives from the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, Cooks River Valley Association and many other volunteer organisations. I put on record my sincere thanks and gratitude to our local bushcare volunteers. With COVID and the difficulties that we all experienced during the lockdown, people discovered their local national parks and trails, went for bushwalks and rediscovered the beauty of our many, many national parks.

The Labor Party has a distinct record—and a very important record—and legacy in relation to national parks. As a member of the Labor Party, I am very proud that it was the McKell Labor Government that created the Kosciuszko National Park in 1944. Between 1984 and 1987, it was the Wran Labor Government that saved the northern rainforests, massively extended the Blue Mountains National Park and banned sand mining in coastal national parks. In 1997 it was the Carr Labor Government that saved coastal forests in north-east and south-east New South Wales, established marine parks, created over two million hectares of new national parks estate and brought in the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 to protect native plants and animals. In 2010 the Rees Labor Government protected over 100,000 hectares of river red gum forests and wetlands, and provided funding assistance for affected workers and regional communities.

In comparison, in 10 years the Coalition has created 11—only 11—new national parks. In 10 years the Coalition has increased the New South Wales national parks and reserves estate by around 300,000 hectares in

total; in the 16 years from 1995 to 2011, Labor increased the national parks and reserves estate by 75 per cent. When the Coalition came to power in 2011, it cut and axed the National Parks and Wildlife Service. We were debating the wages cap, but the Coalition Government went in and axed the staff. Now many field officers are on contract and there are many other contractors. I urge the Minister in his reply to respond to that issue and to provide job security for those field workers and contractors. Fifty-one per cent of National Parks and Wildlife Service staff are female. We want to see more flexible working arrangements, but we also want to see job security, promotional security and more women in some of the top positions.

When the Government came to office in 2011, it went on and on about transparency and accountability. But what did it do? By the time it got to its second and third budgets, the Government had cut \$120 million from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It cut staff, cut wages, imposed a wages cap and removed the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission. Over the past 10 years we have seen destruction. It does not matter how lovely the Minister is; that is the hard reality. When we compare the Labor Party's legacy with the Coalition's legacy, we see a massive difference. The Minister has a lot to catch up on. With respect to National Parks and Wildlife Service workers, the Government's second and third budgets removed costings and the budget line item relating to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Where is the transparency? Where is the accountability? Labor's shadow Minister has foreshadowed that amendments to the bill will be moved in the upper House. The Opposition cannot support the following parts of the bill:

- Enabling the Minister to create biodiversity credits for management actions carried out on land reserved or acquired under the Act.
 - There are significant questions over the integrity of the current Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS) that are being examined by a parliamentary inquiry, internal investigations and ICAC.
 - ...
 - Opening the scheme to National Parks risks both a further collapse of credit markets under the scheme, and easier pathways to clear irreplaceable habitat.
 - Until the integrity of the scheme is guaranteed, and the addition of National Parks to the scheme closely examined by experts and stakeholders, the Opposition cannot support this measure.
- Reducing the minimum exhibition period for draft plans of management from 90 to 28 days and reducing the steps involved in considering and making a plan.
 - Plans of Management (POM) for National Parks are a strategic and regulatory plan which dictates what can and can't be done in National Parks (similar to LEPs).

I feel very strongly about this because of what I have seen this Government do in relation to overdevelopment, particularly in my electorate of Canterbury. I understand that the Government is reducing the minimum exhibition period from 90 to 28 days to deal with bureaucracy and red tape, but there is no follow through and no appropriate consultation. I have seen it; anybody who drives along Canterbury Road can attest to it. I have heard Government members say it is disgusting on Canterbury Road. We are trying to get more infrastructure—and we have been calling on the Government to provide it—but we need more support, particularly in my area where there is very little green space. That is why it is so important that, after 25 years, the Wolli Creek Regional Park is declared a national park once and for all. I do not agree with the 28 days. It is not long enough for local communities to organise and put in their submission—particularly my community, which has a lot of essential workers who do not sit behind a computer. Many multicultural communities want to be engaged, and a process is needed. That is why a 90-day consultation period is vital.

The bill provides the Minister with the power to approve a project that is inconsistent with a plan of management for visitor infrastructure and conservation actions of a class prescribed in the regulations. Given the importance of the plans of management and the New South Wales Government's history of wanting to run roughshod over those plans to enable unacceptable development in national parks, giving more power to a Minister to enable them to knock off the advice they have been provided is absolutely disgraceful. That is a power grab. Obviously lobbyists are moving around the corridors of power on levels 8 and 9 of Parliament House and infiltrating members' offices. They are on the side saying, with a wink and a nudge, "Come on, you will make a buck. Commercialise and turn this little kiosk into commercial. Somebody will get rent." We do not support that. I foreshadow that the Opposition will move amendments to the bill in the upper House.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:46): I support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. As my colleagues have said, the bill makes sensible and much-needed amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. It will improve the conservation outcomes of the Act by mandating the monitoring of ecological health in parks and further increasing protections for our most precious environmental and cultural assets. I will focus on the specific aspect of the bill to position the Minister or relevant Aboriginal land council to participate in the emerging environmental market of carbon sequestration rights. Recognition of how the world's two most critical environmental challenges, biodiversity loss and climate change, are interconnected is increasing.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] already plays a critical role in the conservation of biodiversity.

Over 85 per cent of threatened species live in national parks, and parks protect some of the largest and most intact examples of many threatened ecosystems. The Government is leading the world in committing to zero extinctions, monitoring ecological health and strengthening protections for the State's most priceless assets. National parks are the centrepiece of efforts to reverse biodiversity loss in New South Wales and will be a stronghold for threatened species and ecological communities into the future. National parks also represent a major carbon sink. About 900 megatons of carbon is stored in our national parks, which is over 40 per cent of the forest carbon in New South Wales. Providing secure, long-term protection for those carbon stores will make a vital contribution to reducing the effects of climate change.

The New South Wales Government has already committed to a goal of net zero emissions by 2050. The *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030* highlighted the role of national parks in achieving that goal and identified a need to update legislation. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to dramatically reducing its operational carbon emissions to go beyond net zero and become carbon positive by 2028. However, there is an opportunity to go further. With the right management actions and investment decisions, we can improve the functioning of ecosystems and habitat suitability to restore and increase biodiversity; we can increase the amount of carbon sequestered in our national parks; and, best of all, by tapping into emerging environmental markets, we can do all of those things while still providing world-class destinations and experiences for visitors and managing bushfire risk to life and property.

The bill positions the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to be a world leader in developing premium environmental markets, assisting in developing market tools and delivering premium products that deliver positive carbon, biodiversity and broader ecological outcomes. The *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030* committed to updating the National Parks and Wildlife Act to enable full participation in the carbon markets of the future. The bill will enable the Minister to create, deal and trade in carbon sequestration rights, which are actions not currently provided for in the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The bill recognises a broad range of management activities that may generate a carbon benefit to national parks. Regulation-making powers will provide the flexibility necessary to adapt to new carbon sequestration opportunities. Carbon sequestration activities must be consistent with the objects of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The activities must therefore be in alignment with the goals of conserving nature and protecting cultural heritage.

That is also central to the NPWS carbon positive strategy, which aims to deliver carbon benefits that also improve biodiversity and other ecological functions. The proposed amendments in the bill acknowledge that a broad range of activities occurring in national parks may generate carbon benefits. Those include revegetation, vegetation management, improvements in soil carbon, management of feral animals, fire management, carbon sequestered through land use changes or rehabilitation, and human-induced regeneration. The important amendments will ensure that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is future ready and poised to play an active role in emerging carbon markets and to contribute to net zero targets.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has already been piloting carbon-generating activities in parks under the NSW Climate Change Fund. Environmental planting trials are underway involving the planting of native trees for the purpose of sequestering carbon. All projects are registered with the Commonwealth Government's Emissions Reduction Fund. A trial of human-induced regeneration is also underway to achieve forest cover on the newly acquired Koonaburra property. The trial will involve goat exclusion. The increased vegetation that results from feral goat control will store additional carbon. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is gaining knowledge from those trials and is well positioned to take that knowledge and apply it to further building carbon stores in national parks. By leveraging environmental markets, we are well positioned to achieve our ambitious carbon positive parks targets.

Some national parks and reserves are owned by Aboriginal people and managed in cooperation with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The bill also presents an opportunity for the Aboriginal owners and managers of that land. Should they choose to participate, carbon sequestration rights may also be created for Aboriginal-owned parks. Funds generated by trading in carbon sequestration rights will be returned to the park to support management actions that deliver biodiversity benefits or otherwise applied to that land. The boards of management for Aboriginal-owned parks must agree to any dealings in carbon markets. They will also be responsible for agreeing to any activities in relation to carbon sequestration rights.

Aboriginal people have tens of thousands of years of experience in sustainable land management and caring for their country. The amendments give Aboriginal communities the opportunity to harness additional economic benefits in Aboriginal-owned parks from their land management activities. Importantly, the amendments recognise the rights of Aboriginal owners to determine whether they participate in carbon and biodiversity markets, to identify the particular land management actions their country needs and to see the projects delivered

on their lands. They can invest in and control the projects their country needs to become healthier while seeing the benefits to the community through increased investment in park management. I am pleased to recognise that the bill will deliver important outcomes for improving biodiversity and reducing the impacts of climate change, as well as presenting an opportunity for Aboriginal owners and managers of parks and reserves. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:54): I make a contribution to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. I reiterate that the Opposition will not support the bill in the lower House. However, with some amendments, that position may change in the Legislative Council. One concern Labor has with the bill is around consultation with Aboriginal people. It is important to let members know what a "board of management" is under part 4A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Aboriginal ownership and leaseback arrangements are established by part 4A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. Those Acts set up a process by which parks and reserves listed in schedule 14 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act and some land claims can be returned to a local Aboriginal land council to hold on behalf of Aboriginal owners.

Why is that significant? When I contacted the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, which represents Aboriginal land councils in New South Wales, and asked what its view of the bill was, it informed me that it had not been consulted on part 4A regarding Aboriginal joint boards of management or the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. That is quite disturbing given that through its OCHRE plan—which is the Aboriginal policy for New South Wales—the Government pushes self-determination, yet it proposes a bill that will have a significant impact on land that is managed by Aboriginal joint boards of management without consulting those boards at all. Those boards have concerns about some parts of the bill but support others. I note that the Minister may be talking to them, which is encouraging. Hopefully in the other place there will be agreement on amendments to the bill.

The issues with the bill that the joint boards of management have raised with me include that there will only be a verbal commitment to not commence provisions related to part 4A parks until such consultations have occurred. The boards want more than just a verbal commitment; they want something included in the Act to make sure that there must be consultation. They have also said that there are insufficient safeguards to protect Aboriginal self-determination, with the bill proposing new ministerial powers to overrule part 4A boards of management and Aboriginal land councils. For example, declaring areas of intergenerational significance will not require consent with part 4A boards of management or with local Aboriginal land councils.

These are significant issues. If a government talks about giving Aboriginal people in the State self-determination and then passes legislation that overrides that, its intent becomes words only and sadly lacks in actions. I hope the Minister is listening to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and its councils and will address this issue in the other place to make sure that their genuine concerns are included in amendments. Another concern that the boards have about the bill is it proposes new penalties for harming or disturbing land declared intergenerationally significant without specific exemptions for carrying out Aboriginal cultural activities. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service says that on these lands:

Aboriginal owners (and Aboriginal people with the consent of the board) may hunt, gather and fish on the land for domestic, cultural and ceremonial purposes, subject to the requirements of the NPW Act, a park's plan of management, the approval of the board of management and in accordance with traditions.

However, the penalties proposed in the bill do not make those exemptions. That is something I hope the Minister will address.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

STATE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:59): I move:

That this House acknowledges that the Government continues to build a better future for our State with the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport infrastructure for the people of New South Wales.

We probably know how this will go. There will be three arguments made by those opposite in this public interest debate. They will bash up the ferries, because that is how I get to work; they will bash up the light rail, admitting that is something the Opposition never would have built; and there may be a sprinkling of the politics of division, because that is the narrative that the Opposition has tried to push over the past couple of sitting days. However, there will also be three things missing. There will be no more slandering of WestConnex because, lo and behold, it is working well and those opposite drive on it and love it; there will be no acknowledgement or support of the immediate economic recovery that this Government has delivered; and, worryingly, there will be no alternative

ideas. After 10 years in opposition, Labor is bereft of a single decent idea to take this State forward. So, in its response, it will be ripping down, ripping down and ripping down.

Members on this side recognise proudly, as do the public, that the Coalition's economic record is one of strong fiscal management, which has allowed the Government to be prepared for a rainy day—and we have had a lot of rainy days recently, particularly in the past few months thanks to COVID. Thanks to the Government's strong economic management, we have been ready to make the tough but necessary decisions for COVID-19. The Coalition's approach to economic management has always been about getting the budget to support the economy, not getting the economy to support the budget. Following the Delta lockdown, the new Premier and the Treasurer were determined to see New South Wales get back on its feet and, in the Premier's words, "bounce back better". A core part of that was the New South Wales Government's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy, which set out a range of measures that would set the State on the path to recovery and a bigger, bolder and brighter future.

The plan ensures that the New South Wales economy can continue to reopen in line with the Reopening NSW road map, that businesses can open their doors once again with confidence, and that families can have the confidence to get out to work and to spend again. Thanks to the Coalition New South Wales has, and will continue to have, a better future. Time and time again those opposite have failed to show their plan for our State's future. They have laid out zero policies to help families, workers and businesses. They are content with playing the games of political spin, and we see that consistently through the "tale of two cities" narrative that they push. It is purely the politics of division. Opposition members provide no solutions to the challenges facing the people of New South Wales.

The Government's economic recovery package has three objectives, including securing a strong rebound with temporary and targeted measures aimed at encouraging economic activity, building confidence and supporting the restoration and creating of jobs. It has provided targeted and timely support to ensure that the sectors, localities and communities that were hit hardest by COVID get back on their feet, back to growth and back to building a stronger future. A number of sectors and cohorts that have been disproportionately impacted by restrictions on activity have also been supported, including the hospitality, arts and recreation, and small business sectors, as well as young workers, western Sydney and the Sydney CBD.

The economic package provided \$130 million for mental health recovery to provide immediate access to help for anyone whose mental health has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; \$495 million for education support to address learning gaps for children in need and to help schools adapt to future possible learning disruptions; \$739.3 million for household and social support, including housing support for vulnerable Aboriginal communities; the expansion of solar rebates; support measures for victims of domestic and family violence; and vouchers for parents who have facilitated home learning for their children. The package also includes support for business sectors that are still under pressure, including the Event Saver Fund to support event organisers over the summer months and an expansion of the small business rebate for fees and charges to include road tolls.

The third element of the package is "Coming back stronger", which aims to begin the process of applying the lessons learned over the past 18 months to build a better future for our entire State, overcome the economic challenges of the pandemic and pursue new economic opportunities that have come to light. These measures have included supporting the further development of existing industries, such as theatre and the film sector; building capabilities in new opportunities, such as the production of RNA research and the manufacturing industry; reducing red tape to make it easier to run a business in New South Wales while customers are protected; improving our State's liveability with investment in new open spaces and outdoor recreation; and boosting workforce participation by identifying barriers to women's economic participation and reform opportunities. This is not just a plan, but something that is being implemented. Michael Rodrigues, who I had the benefit of meeting last night, is the New South Wales 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. He has been appointed the Recovery Commissioner to oversee the implementation of the measures outlined in this strategy and ensure seamless coordination from the Government as we drive our economic recovery.

The Government can point to a stellar record. In motorways and roads, we built WestConnex and a widened M4, new M5 East tunnels, the M8 tunnels, NorthConnex and the Pacific Highway upgrade. In the pipeline is the Rozelle interchange, the WestConnex M4-M5 Link tunnels and the Western Harbour Tunnel. The Warringah Freeway upgrade, which will connect to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, will streamline the way the road operates, reduce merging and provide a continuous dedicated bus lane onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It will be a welcome infrastructure project. Expected to open in 2026 is the new M12 motorway, the Sydney Gateway—and on and on it goes. I also cite the Great Western Highway duplication, the M1 Pacific Motorway extension, the Pacific Highway Coffs Harbour bypass and so on. I turn to public transport initiatives. We have delivered the Sydney Metro Northwest, the CBD and South East Light Rail, and the Newcastle Light Rail. As part of the Transport Access Program we have delivered more than 20 station upgrades. The New South Wales Government's More Trains, More Services program has delivered 41 new air-conditioned, eight-car suburban

trains since September 2019. There is no doubt that we have built and will continue to build a better future for New South Wales.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:06): I thank the member for Manly, a diligent and loyal servant of the Coalition, for bringing this debate to the House today. It allows us to truly examine the current situation—to properly consider how the Government is really going when it comes to "building a better future for New South Wales". In particular, members should take a proper look at how building vital public transport infrastructure is going, such as building ferries, trains and trams here for the people of New South Wales. Let us start with ferries, shall we? The member for Manly has a vested interest in the ferries that service his electorate. He may wax lyrical about the Coalition's record, but the ferries his Government bought to service his own community cannot even get across the heads if there is a bit of a swell. Last Sunday the member for Manly's constituents were forced onto replacement buses because his Government's overseas-built Emerald-class ferries were not up to the job of making it across the harbour. They could not even make it between Manly and Circular Quay.

His Government stated that these ferries would be better—that people would be able to access them and they would be more comfortable. However, at low tide a person cannot even get on and off them! It has stated that the ferries are certified for up to 4.5 metres of swell, but they cannot cope with two metres of swell. Out of the three overseas-built ferries, only one is operational—the *Fairlight*—but the Government has no idea whatsoever when the other two will actually be in operation. The member might want to wax lyrical about the Government's record, but it has cut his Manly ferry service in half. This is the Government that took the *Narrabeen* and the *Queenscliff* off the water and replaced them with duds that are causing cancellations and delays for his own constituents, the passengers of Sydney and the tourists we hope will come back to our city. They are being failed. When it comes to building a better future, let us have a look at the ferries.

Members should also consider the building of trams. It has been nearly a month since every single overseas-built tram on the Inner West Light Rail fleet was taken off the tracks and out of operation because they are completely cracked. Thousands of light rail passengers have been forced onto replacement buses for a year and a half. There is no end in sight. The Government still does not have an engineering solution. It called in some help from the manufacturer in Spain, which sent out some engineers. That was over 10 days ago and they still do not have a fix. Not only did the Government export hundreds of jobs when it built these things in Spain but it sent the jobs to fix them overseas as well. The member for Manly should come and chat to my constituents. They are feeling about the same way as his constituents are feeling. His Government has exported the manufacturing of vital public transport infrastructure—and passengers are paying the price.

I have mentioned ferries and trams, but let us look at trains. The member for Manly might want to talk about the Coalition's record when it comes to rail infrastructure, but its signature rail project—the New Intercity Fleet [NIF]—was announced back in 2016. It is now 18 months late. Some \$2.88 billion in taxpayer's money later these trains do not fit the tracks, and have serious safety issues and multiple defects. They still have not carried a single passenger and half the fleet is still in a warehouse in Korea. This is the Government's signature rail project. I do not have much more time left for my contribution, but I note there are other ferries members could talk about, such as the River-class ferries. They came riddled with asbestos, had multiple electrical and steering defects, and were unable to make an emergency stop. The best bit is that they cannot operate at night! The wheelhouse has to be completely removed and put back on again. We have no idea when these ferries will be operational.

It is very clear that this is not about building a better future for New South Wales. This Government has exported our jobs. Some 600 direct manufacturing jobs went overseas when it decided to build the NIF in Korea. It sent 279 direct jobs overseas when it built the River-class ferries in Indonesia. It sent 559 jobs to China because of the Waratah B sets being built there, and 343 direct jobs were sent overseas when it decided to build the CBD Light Rail trams in Spain and France—and members know how well that has gone. The Government has imported transport duds and exported New South Wales jobs.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:11): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the matter brought before the House by the member for Manly, and I thank him very much for doing so. I enjoy being in the Chamber during this debate because it allows me to give a rural voice to such an important topic. Those of us across rural and regional New South Wales have experienced multiple challenges over the past few years and we have taken them all in our stride. We have taken all that has been thrown at us. Thanks to renewed and increased investment by the New South Wales Government, particularly through the economic recovery plan, we have before us a stable path of assurance for our residents, our communities, our business owners and our tourists. We look forward to welcoming more and more tourists into our areas over the coming months and years ahead.

There really is so much to discover in rural and regional New South Wales. It does not matter which direction you head in—there is so much to see and do. Our businesses and communities will really welcome people. We have experienced some difficulties through COVID and, as most members will know, the challenges of bushfires, floods and other events over that time. To that end, as a Government we continue to implement

support measures for those sectors that have been hit by restrictions in recent years, particularly small businesses, hospitality, arts and recreation. These measures are aimed at encouraging economic activity, building confidence and supporting the restoration of jobs. Every job means a lot to our local communities in the bush. It means that our families are strong. They can build a future for their children in our local schools. It makes our community much more buoyant.

We received \$500 million to go towards the Dine & Discover voucher program, which has been a game changer for rural and regional New South Wales. In every town, large and small, many small business operators and not-for-profit organisations have taken advantage of and benefited from that program. The Government has made a \$212 million boost to the economy by investing in the performing arts sector through the Alfresco Restart Package. A lot of coverage on that package has been directed towards the city, but even tiny communities like Weethalle in my electorate in rural New South Wales can take advantage of that really important package.

The member for Manly spoke of the Government's \$130 million investment in the Mental Health Recovery package. Small communities have done it tough and for individuals who have been presented with challenges that they have not experienced before, it is a fantastic package that they can and are accessing to help them get back on their feet. We want everyone to bounce back stronger and better than before, whether it is our people, our communities or our schools. Every part of our community must emerge from the pandemic in a strong way. It does not matter what political party we are from, local members want their communities to develop and become stronger as the years go on.

The Government continues to invest heavily in roads. Rural New South Wales has received incredible investment. It is important to our people that we continue to invest in their safety as they move around. Over \$500 million has been provided for those programs alone. I know that the \$42 million going to the Cootamundra electorate through the Fixing Local Roads Program is really welcome. So much is going on across rural and regional New South Wales. I am very pleased to support the motion before the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:16): I contribute to the public interest debate on building a better future for New South Wales. They say past performance predicts future performance; this Government has failed dismally in its past performance. No matter which area we look at—whether it is health, education, TAFE, tolls, transport, COVID or speed cameras—the people of New South Wales wake up and ask themselves, "What has this Government done for me?" Let us look at the dismal failure in hospitals. Before COVID there was a plan to shut down the emergency department at Mount Druitt Hospital and part of the COVID plan was to transfer patients to Blacktown Hospital because—sorry, member for Blacktown—it was brand new. The Government thought it would combine the two hospitals, save money and move the hospital to Blacktown Hospital. So the Government started taking patients to Blacktown Hospital. But the Blacktown emergency department became so overcrowded that a sign was put up in the emergency department stating, "If you are from Mount Druitt, please contact your GP," because the staff could not handle it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt has the call.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: When I raised the issue with the health Minister, the sign quickly came down and patients were transferred back to Mount Druitt Hospital.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt does not require any assistance.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: New South Wales has the worst waiting times for emergency departments in the nation. The Blacktown Hospital waiting times for critical emergencies such as heart attacks and strokes have tripled in one year. People think that they have a choice to have elective surgery; if they need it, they can get it. In 2011 when the Government was elected, 66,000 people were waiting to have elective surgery. Today there are 85,000 people. The number has gone from 66,000 to 85,000.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt does not require any assistance.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Government members can no longer hide behind a mask and the COVID pandemic because the people of New South Wales are waking up to them.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mount Druitt will be heard in silence.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Every day they ask themselves, "Are we happy that our schools are overcrowded? Are we happy that our schools have teacher shortages?" Today there are 1,800 teacher shortages.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Are we happy that more than 100,000 students are being taught by teachers who are teaching subjects outside their area of expertise? Let us turn to TAFE because I note the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE is in the Chamber. Are the people of New South Wales happy with the performance of TAFE? Are the people of New South Wales happy with the increased fees? Are the people of New South Wales happy that the Government is selling their campuses? Are they happy that the Government got rid of many teachers and that most of them have gone to the private sector? We are losing our skill base. The Government has ensured that New South Wales no longer has a skill base. Now let us look at tolls. Not only is New South Wales the highest tolled city in Australia, it is the highest tolled city in the world. And we got into that position because of the dismal failure of this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. Does the member for Kiama want an early mark? Well, he will not get one because I know he wants to go home early.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:22): I contribute to the public interest debate on building a better future for New South Wales. The member for Cootamundra said that we are all united in wanting our communities to develop. I will move away from the Monty Pythonesque efforts of the member for Mount Druitt. I am not sure what the Romans have done for us, or whether we have turned the debate into a reverse-JFK moment where we are saying, "Each day the people of our great State need to wake up and ask, 'What's in it for me?'" It is really important that I bring the attention of the House back to the contributions of the member for Summer Hill and the member for Cootamundra. The member for Summer Hill touched on manufacturing, which is a really important to focus on. The member for Cootamundra spoke about the rural voice. It is worth looking at the Regional Job Creation Fund, which I will come to in a moment, because that is an important example of how we are building the future.

I remind the member for Summer Hill that this situation is similar to Teddy Roosevelt. The member is sitting in the bleachers and criticising, while she has nothing to show for herself. On this side of the House we are focused on capital infrastructure, yet those opposite skip that point. When we talk about building a better future, we are not just talking about bricks and mortar; we are talking about building community—building a better future. We are talking about our people and living well. It is about having a vision. We have a whole-of-government vision—for example, in education we look at the kindergarten to year 2 curriculum reforms. I include the member for Kiama in this. He well knows some of the important things that have been done, such as The Albury Project. He is a great ambassador for that project, which implements a Community of Schools and Services approach to help those who need assistance. It reaches out to younger people and gives them the wraparound support that they deserve and need.

I refer again to the Regional Job Creation Fund, which provided \$130 million to not only recover jobs but also to increase them. The focus is the whole gamut and diversity of manufacturing going into this State. For me, whether it be shed builders, coopers or manufacturing Australian tools and implements, the beautiful thing is the personal level. When I visited AgBoss in my electorate I spoke to a young woman who is a screen-printer. She is partway through a TAFE course to build her skills and increase her opportunities for a better future. I could continue to explore the Regional Job Creation Fund, which is part of the \$5.3 billion allocated to regional projects in the last budget, but I want to return to my comments about vision. When Dominic Perrottet became Premier he said his focus was on how we can make life better for working families. Living the values of opportunity, aspiration and hard work. The State's motto is "Orta recens quam pura nites". That was adopted over a century ago; it is still apt today. It speaks to our values of progress and development as a community. Together through values of opportunity, aspiration and hard work we will build a better future, we will continue to shine and we will achieve much in doing so.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:27): I admire the Corso Kid for his courage. In old rugby league parlance, it is like being sold the dump. The member does it with such aplomb—and a straight face. He should appear on *Australia's Got Talent* as a stand-up comedian. Basil Fawlty has nothing on him. He referred to the New South Wales Government building a better future, but just focusing on public transport is enough to make one cry. Over the past couple of weeks the transport Minister has talked about train replacements—\$2.3 billion spent on 512 double-decker trains built in Korea that do not fit in the tunnels. That is hard to believe. The Government accepted that tender and knocked back the Swiss manufacturer Stadler Rail. They would have built the trains in Wollongong and provided 600 manufacturing jobs. Do not worry about that. What did the transport Minister do? He looked like Benny Hill as he scurried back and forward in this Chamber. He tried to tell us that the tunnels are 100 years old and that the trains do not fit. How about making them fit—there are 10 tunnels.

Then we had the absolute debacle of the Spanish-built light rail. The Government bought lemons for the inner west line and then spent another \$2 billion to place the same lemons on the Parramatta line. You would not want this Government to buy submarines for Australia: The Chinese would sink them by knocking on the hatch. The south-eastern light rail, a genius of a project, was entered into with a Spanish company that sued the State

over contractual issues. That cost \$536 million in damages. They sent the member for Manly to lead this public interest debate. The Freshwater class of ferries has been decommissioned and the new overseas built untested ferries have been cancelled. How about testing them before you stick passengers on them? That would be a smart thing to do. The ferries cannot handle the size of the seas. It reminds me of the *Benny Hill Show* and *Fawlty Towers*. The Government is attempting to defend the indefensible. That is just extraordinary.

What about the new Sydney ferries that will not be able to pass under bridges on the Parramatta River? They cannot be used at night and they do not go into reverse. I say again, "Please do not buy the submarines." But the biggest and most dangerous farce relates to the dangerous flammable cladding on buildings and the need to protect people in this State. Following the Grenfell Tower disaster and the loss of 72 lives in the United Kingdom, Project Remediate was announced two years ago. It identified 274 high-risk buildings. The Victorian Government paid compensation because its buildings were built in accordance with State specifications. On 26 October the Minister, together with members of his department and a media operative, went to a building in Darlinghurst where cladding was removed to show that Project Remediate was about to be undertaken. However, after the media had left, they put the dangerous cladding back on the building. That is bizarre. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Leaving out "Government continues" with a view to inserting instead "Government's feeble attempt".
- (2) Add the following words, "and building a better future means taking serious action to remove dangerous flammable cladding from apartment buildings without any delay."

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:32): It is a pleasure to participate in this aptly named public interest debate. Whilst it may be public, I am not sure if there is much interest. It is lovely to be part of this debate this afternoon. The member for Heffron is always a difficult act to follow. He referred to the member for Manly as the "Corso Kid". I find it interesting that on the day that the member for Strathfield gave her valedictory speech the member for Heffron is speaking about boats. At least when the member for Manly's passengers fall overboard they have a life raft. That was not offered to the member for Strathfield today as she was chucked overboard from the Labor Party boat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Are you offering her a job?

Mr GARETH WARD: I do not remember offering her any job. I do not think that the Labor Party will be doing that anytime soon either. In this public interest debate I will take the opportunity to raise a couple of issues on behalf of my electorate. When we talk about rebuilding, it is important when you are drinking from the well that you honour those who dug it. The reason we have been able to rebuild is the people on the front line of the Public Service of New South Wales, our nurses, our doctors, our teachers, our police—the people who have been there throughout this pandemic and have been able to ensure that we get back to this point where we can seek to rebuild.

From the point of view of my electorate, it is very important that we look to the projects that will continue to redevelop regional New South Wales. We heard earlier from the excellent member for Cootamundra who talked about some of the projects that are important. I take this opportunity to call on the Government to investigate the work that needs to be done around the Nowra bypass. We have seen a hell of a lot of construction work happening in my electorate in relation to roads, and I am very proud of the Gerringong upgrade, the Albion Park Rail bypass and the Berry bypass, but what we are seeing when we get to Nowra is more traffic congestion, and it is absolutely critical that we see that work and planning work start now. This cannot be something where you wait to do the property acquisition, to do the design, to do the geotechnical work.

If we want to continue to rebuild this State, making sure that we invest in infrastructure—which is something that I know all sides of the House are committed to—is absolutely critical, so I encourage the Government to focus on that, and to focus on schools and education. I am sure all members of the House would agree that, if you are talking about rebuilding a state, at its heart must be the very fundamental building blocks. They include the education of young people. I was really pleased to secure in the budget \$2 million for my old high school, Bomaderry High School, but that is a school that is more than 50 years old. It is the only public high school north of the Shoalhaven River between Moss Vale and Kiama, and with the growth projected in the northern Shoalhaven, that is a school with its aged years that is not going to be able to provide the quality classrooms, the educational equipment, the sort of environment that engenders growth in students that is required for that school. I say to the Government, whilst I acknowledge that \$2 million has been allocated, I hope that is planning money to make sure that we expand that school and provide the new design and redevelopment that that school will require to build into the future.

What concerns me about any Government that occupies the Treasury benches is that, when we are talking about rebuilding from where we have been, sometimes it is the most vulnerable that are forgotten. In particular, I am talking about people with disabilities. Whilst I am very pleased that all sides are on a unity ticket when it

comes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, there are some Government targets for disabilities that it is not meeting. I point out in particular the Government's target for the employment of people with disabilities in the public service. A commitment from this Government was to employ 5.6 per cent of people in the Public Service with disabilities and what I ask the Government to do today is to provide a monthly dashboard that has an indicator on how each of the public services is tracking with respect to that target because if you want to lift people out of poverty, if you want to lift people up and give them an opportunity, if you want to say to people, "We will not raise the floor, we will remove the roof" and encourage people to achieve their full potential, the best way you can do that is with a job. If you look at unemployment statistics across all of the different spectrums, people with disabilities have some of the highest rates of unemployment. That is often because they are not given a chance. The public sector is a great place to start.

One of the things I say to the Government is that, whilst it is important to focus on the economy, whilst it is important to focus on infrastructure, whilst it is important to focus on all of the things that everyone has said in this debate, I hope we do not forget the most vulnerable because there is no point being successful if you leave people behind. Government should be a safety net and not a hammock—there is no doubt about that—but it is important that we do not forget the most vulnerable in these debates. I thank the member for Manly for bringing this opportunity to discuss these important issues. I commend the Government for its work in getting us through one of the greatest challenges of our time. I thank all members for their contribution in the House this evening.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:38): In reply: What a rollicking ride that was through rebuilding. I thank all members who made a contribution: the member for Summer Hill, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Albury, the member for Heffron and the member for Kiama. It was wonderful to hear again the member for Kiama in full flight. I thank him for his contribution. As I outlined at the beginning, we were going to hear three things. One was demonising of the ferries—tick, we did that. The second was light rail—tick, we did that. The third is what I think frustrates people the most about politics these days, which is the lack of nuance in debate and flimsy facts. I will pick up on some comments made by the member for Summer Hill. She said that the Manly ferry services were being cut in half. That is wrong.

Ms Jo Haylen: It happened on the weekend.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, you said they had been cut in half and what is true is that since 2017—do not worry about COVID figures—

Ms Jo Haylen: No, on the weekend.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Patronage on the Freshwater ferry has been declining year on year. Less people have been catching the Freshwater ferry Monday through Friday and they have been voting with their feet. They have been using the Manly Fast Ferry service. What we are trying to do is to strike a balance by providing commuters of Manly with a more frequent service as well as a faster one. As the Minister outlined today in his answer in question time, the Emerald will undergo testing and will be on the water soon.

The member for Cootamundra provided, as she does so well, a wonderful voice for the bush and outlined the benefits of the \$500 million Dine and Discover program for areas in the bush. The member for Mount Druitt, in his 155th contribution to this Parliament, took us on a journey through health and, as the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, I can say that the investment in health infrastructure across the New South Wales has been prolific. I am glad that he has witnessed the benefits of that. The member for Albury helped us to understand the State motto and its application as much today as when it started over a century ago.

Unfortunately, to the member for Heffron, I have to say that it is a big no to the amendment. I just cannot support it, but it was a good go. I want to pick up where the member for Kiama left off. I had a call this afternoon with the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, which does outstanding work to help women fleeing domestic violence. The shelter is so excited about our announcement to build 75 new refuges for women and children fleeing domestic violence. That is what rebuilding this State is about. It is not just about infrastructure, it is about the people who live in this State who need our support and help the most. I commend this motion to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Manly has moved a motion to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

[In division]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the House that a number of members are on several calls to order. The member for Keira is on one call to order, the member for Blacktown is on two calls to order, the

member for Summer Hill is on three calls to order, the member for Shellharbour is on two calls to order and the member for Kiama is on two calls to order.

Mr Gareth Ward: Shame.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Kiama to order for the third time.

Ayes11

Noes16

Majority.....5

AYES

Atalla, E
Car, P
Cotsis, S
Daley, M

Hoenig, R
Lynch, P
McGirr, J
Mehan, D (teller)

Mihailuk, T
Smith, T
Watson, A (teller)

NOES

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

Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Piper, G

Provest, G
Sidoti, J
Smith, N
Speakman, M
Ward, G

PAIRS

Aitchison, J
Bali, S
Barr, C
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Crakanthorp, T
Dib, J
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
McDermott, H
McKay, J
Minns, C
O'Neill, M
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Zangari, G

Barilaro, J
Perrottet, D
Tuckerman, W
Marshall, A
Constance, A
Toole, P
Ayres, S
Kean, M
Hazzard, B
Stokes, R
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Pavey, M
Roberts, A
Hancock, S
Anderson, K
Lee, G
Berejiklian, G
Clancy, J
Sidgreaves, P
Lindsay, W
Wilson, F
Henskens, A
Singh, G
Saunders, D

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT BILL 2021****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:52): I continue my earlier contribution to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council also raised the issue that there are technical issues to work through with roles and functions of part 4A boards of management and Aboriginal land councils to ensure that the legislation has no unintended consequences. I now know the Minister or the Minister's office is undertaking some of that consultation. I hope it takes note of the concerns of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. But it is not all bad news. The land council indicated to me that it supports the concept of carbon sequestration rights in land and is willing to explore that issue with the Minister. I reiterate that an important part of self-determination is meaningful consultation. Unfortunately, with this bill that has been sadly lacking, particularly when it comes to the part 4A Aboriginal joint boards of management.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is about returning control of their land to Aboriginal people. It is essential that when legislation is brought to this place there is proper and meaningful consultation with Aboriginal people on issues that will affect that land. There cannot be an assumption that they will agree. That is not what self-determination is about. I often hear examples from Aboriginal people who tell me there can be a tick-a-box consultation process rather than a meaningful negotiation. I think all of us need to understand that, in terms of giving back self-determination to Aboriginal people, particularly over their lands, it cannot be a tick-a-box exercise. It has to be sitting down and gaining agreement that what is being proposed is seen by them as being in their best interests, not what we think are their best interests.

I got together a group of people who are having a look at a treaty process, not just for what might happen in New South Wales but looking at what is happening in other parts of Australia, as well as in Canada and New Zealand. One of the most important parts of that is the fact that we have to move away from the position where governments make decisions on behalf of Indigenous people. That has not worked for 240 years in Australia at least. We have to start sitting down and having meaningful discussion and meaningful negotiations on these issues. We do not have to have a treaty in place to do that. We can do it in a respectful way.

As I said, OCHRE, which is the Aboriginal policy organisation in New South Wales, talks about having that self-determination and decision-making on behalf of Aboriginal people. These documents cannot just be words on a page. Everything we do in every part of government must have meaning and intent behind the words in terms of actions. I would say to the Minister that, while many parts of this bill may be well meaning and may be heading in the right direction, the fact that they did not sit down with Aboriginal people, particularly the part 4A Aboriginal joint boards, and negotiate with them prior to bringing the bill to the House shows a serious lack of understanding of what self-determination really means.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:57): I am pleased to speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. As we have heard from my colleagues, the bill proposes to make sensible and much-needed amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. We are very fortunate to have our National Park Estate because they offer an abundance of activities. I am particularly fortunate to have an area of the Sydney Harbour National Park surrounding my electorate and encapsulating it along much of the harbour. In the North Shore, we are very fortunate to have access to the beautiful Sydney Harbour National Park throughout Middle Head, Georges Head and around to Chowder Bay. In particular, being able to access those lands during lockdown has been succour for our souls.

But most importantly it is our desire to make sure it is more accessible for more people across the community. I acknowledge investments already in place for the national park up at Middle Head in particular where there is a range of investments that the Government has put into place to build new walking tracks, increase public amenity, create new lookout areas and strengthen, restore and refurbish many of the historical military fortifications that are located there. We have military heritage at Middle Head that dates back from the Crimean War onwards, including, for instance, training in tiger cages that were used to harden prisoners of war before going out to battle in World War II. So this site is incredibly important and rich, and this Government is investing heavily in that.

But one of the areas that this legislation will also affect is the park management planning and approvals approach, which could have a beneficial impact on one of the funding decisions that the New South Wales Government has made, which is for the Environmental Education Centre to be instituted at Middle Head. As I have said, Middle Head is a unique place. We have the natural environment, Indigenous heritage and military heritage converging, which happens in quite a few parts of our national park, particularly around Sydney Harbour.

But the Environmental Education Centre for Middle Head will be a new home of environmental learning for students across New South Wales. It is a model that has worked successfully in other locations, but there is a particularly unique opportunity here where we see the convergence of those unique elements at Middle Head.

It has been a journey that many members of my community have advocated for alongside me. I really want to thank and recognise two specific advocates for the Environmental Education Centre at Middle Head—the vice-president and former president of the Headland Preservation Group, Julie Goodsir, and the current president, Jill L'Estrange. They have worked on this project in great detail. They have worked with National Parks. They have worked with Education and the assets management unit that are working on delivering the centre. They are working in detail on things like curriculum and the vision for the Environmental Education Centre. Their goal is to ensure that it opens up more broadly, not just for the local community, but for students and people across New South Wales and, potentially, across the country. It is a vision of which I am very proud and I am equally proud of the work they have put in place.

I also acknowledge that with this legislation, albeit further away from home for me, is the proposal for the creation of the new Gardens of Stone reserves. We know that this is an incredibly profound decision. It is an iconic area of our natural environment in New South Wales and it has been sought after for a long time. This has been welcomed quite strongly from my own community as well as across New South Wales. I am very proud of the announcement that we will be including more than 30,000 hectares of State forests in the Gardens of Stone inclusion in the new ecotourism and adventure destination in the upper Blue Mountains. It is a remarkable decision. I know that these reserves and the significant conservation value they have will make a big difference to recognition of our native environment in these areas and will also feature one of the world's great long distance walks, which will link Wollemi in the Blue Mountains and the Gardens of Stone National Park.

I will speak a little bit more about one specific aspect of the bill, which may seem to be dry to some people but is meaningful in delivering outcomes I have referred to about ensuring that we can increase access to national parks and increase amenity in our national parks. I am referring to streamlining the management, planning and approvals for activities in the parks with things like recreational facilities or even for conservation actions. We know that our plans of management are actually the key to planning documents for national parks and other reserves that are managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This bill provides significant improvements in the time frame for the creation and adoption of statutory plans. These reduced time frames will be achieved by reducing duplication and increasing efficiencies in the process of engaging with statutory advisory bodies. Importantly, the bill will ensure that the highly valued expert and local knowledge contributed by the statutory regional advisory committees will still happen.

The amendment will provide that the exhibition requirements of plans of management for national parks aligned with those for similar purposes in other legislation, such as local environment plans under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, and will reduce the public exhibition period for a plan of management to a minimum of 28 days. Currently the National Parks and Wildlife Service uses a range of communication methods to make sure that it gets the word out across communities so that they can comment on the draft plans of management. Given the widespread access now through the internet, particularly as we have to ensure that we have the adoption through QR codes this past year, we know that if the time frame changes it is unlikely to limit people's ability to participate in consultation on the plans of management. The principle of this is to ensure that our communities can comment and provide their views. The National Parks and Wildlife Service's continuing improvement of processes and technology will ensure it is quick and easy for the public.

The National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, which is a statutory body advising the National Parks and Wildlife Service on policy and planning matters for national parks, will no longer advise on plans of management. However, the Minister may seek the council's advice on specific plans of management. This will free up the council to focus on more strategic statewide matters. The requirement for regional advisory committees to provide advice 28 days after the exhibition period closes will ensure the Minister gets timely advice and can progress a new plan or amendment to a plan soon after a plan is exhibited. It will not diminish the quality of advice. Regional advisory committees will need to meet to discuss the draft plan and public submissions on the plan, and their advice will be provided promptly to the Minister. The Minister then has the option of extending the period for the committees providing advice.

The bill will provide the Minister with the ability to approve priority conservation actions and establish and maintain infrastructure projects that are not provided for in plans of management or are not consistent with current plans of management. It will be an important alternative to amending the plan of management in many circumstances. Those powers will give the Minister the ability to respond swiftly to urgent, emerging or unforeseen situations that may otherwise impact on protected plants or animals. It will also enable the Minister to ensure important visitor infrastructure projects proceed without delay, provided the critical safeguards are

observed. There are many safeguards around those approval provisions. Proposed actions or projects must be consistent with the objects of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

The proposal must fall within a class of actions to be defined in the regulation. Those provisions cannot be exercised until a regulation is made for that purpose. The regulation will be developed in 2022. Projects will still be subject to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and any leasing and licensing requirements under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The bill also stipulates that before the Minister may approve an action or project, the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment must seek public comment on the proposed approval. The only exception to that is if the Minister considers that action essential for emergency management or restoration of infrastructure, or to prevent imminent risk to the conservation of park values. That may occur, for example, when there is an extreme weather event, wildfire or an illegal activity.

The proposed amendment to provide a ministerial power to approve priority conservation actions and visitor infrastructure projects is a balanced, sensible and well-considered provision that will benefit all visitors to national parks and ensure that priority conservation actions are taken to protect the State's unique biodiversity and precious cultural heritage. I am pleased to recognise that the bill will deliver important outcomes for streamlining management planning and approvals for actions and projects in parks. As I said earlier, on the ground that will have an effect for real people and communities. We will ensure that we increase access and amenities within our national parks—including in my own national park—and, in particular, look at ways to deliver commitments and beneficial projects with our community, like the Environmental Education Centre at Middle Head, because our community always needs to be involved in the decisions about the way we use that space. We need more and more community members to come and enjoy it.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:06): I speak in opposition to the National Parks and Wildlife Service Bill 2021 in its current form, which seeks to make a series of changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Service Act 1974. I highlight the importance of protecting our national parks, which is a legacy that Labor has proudly built and will continue to defend against the Government with its appalling record on the environment and national parks. If passed, the bill will make substantial and far-reaching changes to the way national parks are managed, resulting in a reduction in consultation and an increase in ministerial powers.

There has not been adequate consultation with all stakeholders when preparing the bill, including a lack of consultation with local communities, traditional owners and environmental groups. I note that the member for Wyong raised that in his contribution earlier this evening. Considering the immense changes the bill would make, that lack of consultation is unacceptable and cannot be supported. Although a number of positive initiatives are being proposed by the bill that would aid in protecting the biodiversity of New South Wales, there is also a number of changes that cannot be supported. Various provisions must be tightened to ensure adequate consultation occurs with those stakeholders, in particular guaranteeing that the First Nations Financial Management Board will be consulted and its approval required to implement some changes.

The proposal to reduce the minimum exhibition period for draft plans of management from 90 to 28 days, while simultaneously reducing the steps involved in considering and making a plan of management, is unacceptable. That does not allow adequate time for any stakeholder to engage in consultation about changes to those important plans, and will result in changes being made that are not in the best interests of local communities and the public as a whole. The National Parks Association of NSW has raised significant concerns over that proposed change, stating, "The bill could be interpreted as an attempt to stifle public engagement in shaping the future of our national parks and reserves." That is totally unacceptable. Similarly, it will provide added powers for the Minister to approve a project that is inconsistent with a plan of management for visitor infrastructure and conservation actions. That will only provide an opportunity for the Government to plough through those plans, enabling unacceptable development in those national parks.

The bill also proposes to establish an open-ended charitable entity to enable tax-deductible donations to national parks, though the New South Wales Government has cut over \$100 million from the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] over the past decade. In fact, we are unable to determine exactly how much has been cut from NPWS because the Government stopped providing standalone budget figures for the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2018-19. If the Government wants more funds allocated to the maintenance of protection of national parks, it should provide them itself. Why consistently cut funding and rely on donations for the function of one of the core public services and features of this State? There is also a number of negative implications in establishing a trust without appropriate limitations in place for what the funds can be used for. That would all place further pressure on national parks to find the funding itself for its operation, rather than being adequately supported by the Government.

The bill has been dropped into Parliament and onto stakeholders with no consultation and no real justification for many of the changes it proposes. The bill cannot be supported in its current form and must undergo changes to make it appropriate for stakeholders and the wider public that the national parks were created to serve.

The long and proud legacy of national parks must not be trampled on by the Government and turned into development grounds, which is exactly what many of those changes will lead to. We know its form and we know how it treats those pieces of grass. The New South Wales Government's own record on national parks speaks for itself, and should be seen as a precursor for what the bill will lead to if not allowed proper consultation and input by stakeholders.

The lack of attention that this Government gives to our beautiful national parks is clear in the inclusions in the bill and in the fact that it failed to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2017; that it has proposed the F6 motorway should run through Australia's first declared national park, Sydney's Royal National Park; and that it has failed to pursue World Heritage listing for that park, despite being promised by O'Farrell in 2012. I remember that very well. I grew up near the national park and I remember the Government talking about putting the F6 right through the middle of it. You can go back and see that on the public record; I do not make this stuff up.

The Government's lack of attention is also clear in that it has more proposals to develop even further within a number of our national parks, upending and disregarding the plans of management that govern those parks. I have experienced that in my electorate. In October 2019 the member for Kiama, Gareth Ward, announced that the Berejiklian Government had awarded a \$6.5 million grant to the manager of NSW Crown Holiday Parks, which trades as Reflections Holiday Parks, to upgrade facilities at Killalea Reserve. Gareth Ward was the poster boy for Reflections. I want the House to keep that in mind.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: He still is.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I acknowledge the interjection. The grant that was awarded under the Regional Growth - Environment and Tourism Fund is intended to fund the construction of 15 eco-friendly cabins, a multipurpose function centre, 53 fully serviced campsites, a new playground and walking trails at Killalea Reserve. Further direct funding of \$4,430,000 from Reflections will increase the investment in Killalea Reserve to almost \$11 million. That project has been met with strong community concern and opposition. I am one of those people. Killalea Reserve is a much-loved part of our local identity in Shellharbour. The significance of that beautiful area on a local and a national level was reinforced when it was officially declared a National Surfing Reserve on 6 June 2009 by a Labor government, and given special protection. My community and I feel strongly about its preservation.

I reiterate that the proposal put forward by Reflections Holiday Parks is not supported by the community. The overwhelming consensus is that Reflections Holiday Parks should be removed as managers of Killalea Reserve as a matter of priority. I have been actively lobbying those opposite for that for some time now. Time and time again, I have stood on the floor of this very Chamber calling for plans to develop Killalea Reserve to be scrapped. I have been given assurances that the management of Killalea Reserve will be transferred from Crown Lands to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, but those assurances have not been backed up with any real action.

It is time that the Government finally does what is right and what is long overdue, and that is to transfer the management of Killalea Reserve to the National Parks and Wildlife Service as a matter of priority, with a community committee that oversees it. Developing this area to make it profitable is not what our community wants. People want to see Killalea left alone. Not every blade of grass has to be developed, which those opposite cannot seem to understand. Make no mistake: This Government is not here to protect our national parks. It is here to ram through planning and development without any consideration for the huge environmental, historical and cultural impacts it will have. That is evident by proposing to slash the minimum exhibition period of draft plans of management, increasing ministerial powers without proper consultation, and shifting of the reliance of funds from government to charitable organisations and donations.

While I support some uncontroversial aspects of the bill, it cannot be supported in its entirety until adequate amendments are made. They should have a clear focus on sufficient active consultation with key stakeholders and consideration for how funds donated for the explicit purpose of maintaining and protecting our beautiful national parks will be handled so that these great State assets will be protected for future generations to enjoy. I will finish by saying that people travel from all over the world to enjoy our national parks, particularly those in New South Wales and especially the Royal National Park, which is located in the Sutherland Shire. If the Government thinks that the Opposition will stand by and watch it destroy, rape and pillage those parks then it is sadly mistaken.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:16): I am pleased to speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. I am following the contribution of the member for Shellharbour and whilst I have a lot of time and respect for her, I am completely outraged by her contribution. There is not one member in this place who has a stronger connection to the Royal National Park than me, given that I grew up in Bundeena, which is the only suburb, other than Maianbar, completely enclosed in the Royal National Park. I spent 30 years being

part of that community. I know and love the national park and, to this day, go walking there. Every weekend I hike through the various tracks. Until the member for Shellharbour can have a true appreciation for what this Government is doing and the way that our communities truly interact with it, I do not think she is in any place to put on record falsehoods relating to this Government's relationship with the Royal National Park and the M6 motorway. Under the last Premier, this Government categorically ruled out that it would encroach into the Royal National Park for an M6 extension. It is very important that we reaffirm that commitment to the Royal National Park and our communities and residents of the Sutherland Shire.

The bill makes sensible and much-needed amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 that will improve the conservation outcomes of the Act, streamline park management planning and approvals, harness philanthropic donations, position the Minister responsible for national parks to trade in carbon sequestration rights and biodiversity credits, and create the new Gardens of Stone reserves. As raised by the member for Bathurst, one of the more significant aspects of the bill is the establishment of the 31,545-hectare Gardens of Stone reserves outside Lithgow in the Upper Blue Mountains. The Gardens of Stone reserves is a place of great natural beauty, home to ancient sandstone pagodas, rich eucalypt forests and an array of threatened species and ecological communities.

In addition to providing greater protection to the culturally and ecologically significant Gardens of Stone reserve, the bill will enable a \$49.5 million investment into visitor infrastructure to create a truly incredible tourism destination for people across New South Wales, Australia and the world. Visitors will be able to enjoy a spectacular new attraction, the Lost City Adventure Experience, which will be home to Australia's longest zip-line, as well as an iconic new multi-day walk from Wollemi to the Gardens of Stone, new and upgraded lookouts, camping areas, walking tracks, mountain bike trails and more. Apart from the establishment of the Gardens of Stone reserves, the bill will provide for regulations to support a world-leading ecological health-monitoring framework, which will benchmark the health of national parks in terms of feral animal control, fire management, weed control and threatened species recovery, which is of particular importance to residents of the Sutherland Shire who show great interest and take great pride in our Royal National Park.

The bill also enables the National Parks and Wildlife Service to participate in carbon credit markets and also biodiversity credit markets and reinvest those funds into national park management. In both cases, credits can only be obtained by the National Parks and Wildlife Service for actions that are additional to business as usual. It will streamline management and planning approvals by reducing the minimum period for exhibition of draft plans of management from 90 days to 28 days and reducing the steps involved in considering and making a plan. The bill also modernises the key advisory committees under the National Parks and Wildlife Act by providing that those committees comprise experts appointed by the Minister, rather than requiring the Minister to appoint individuals nominated by stakeholder groups. But today I will focus on the establishment of a charitable entity, which will mobilise philanthropic, tax deductible investment in national parks.

The establishment of a charitable entity will enable the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to harness philanthropic funds to improve conservation outcomes for national parks. There is significant opportunity to benefit from environmental philanthropy over and above—not replacing—core government funding. It is wonderful to see the creation of such a mechanism created by the bill. It will establish the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust, a not-for-profit body corporate, to maintain a public fund to receive tax deductible donations. The donations can be applied to the protection and enhancement of national parks. It will also provide for a board appointed by the Minister, with operating matters and other arrangements set out in the regulations. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to engage with philanthropic partners, such as the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife and other conservation charities.

The Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have a long and successful history, and that relationship will continue. The foundation has made a significant contribution to national park conservation in New South Wales. However, it is a national organisation that has a range of priorities. There is a need for a charitable organisation that is tightly integrated with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and focused on New South Wales national parks. The National Parks and Wildlife Service philanthropic activities would occur through the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust. There is clear evidence that the establishment of a not-for-profit entity connected to the strong National Parks and Wildlife Service brand will, over time, mobilise significant funds. Public and corporate generosity in this regard was particularly evident following the 2019-20 bushfire season.

Increasing interest in environmental philanthropy presents a high potential for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to attract significant and ongoing income from donations—that is, to top up core government funding if such a mechanism is established. Importantly, the bill follows the model of other foundations or funds designed to attract philanthropic investment in national parks or conservation activities. One impressive example is the United States' National Park Foundation, which receives funds from private philanthropy to supplement the

funding which the US National Park Service receives from Congress. It is understood the United States' National Park Foundation has raised hundreds of millions for United States national parks since 1967 to spend on their unparalleled parks. In New South Wales, the Taronga Foundation has raised around \$50 million over 2015 to 2020 for species conservation programs run by Taronga and Western Plains zoos. The bill provides for secure governance of donations. The trust is overseen by a board, whose members will be appointed by the Minister. The trust and its public fund will also have to comply with the eligibility requirements for entry onto the register of environmental organisations and endorsement as a deductible gift recipient under the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the very hardworking Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment, for his work relating to this very important legislation. I also acknowledge this Government's extensive commitment to our national parks, in particular the Royal National Park, which is nearest and dearest to my local community. I am pleased to recognise that the bill will deliver outcomes to fund the important work of protecting the State's national parks. I think national parks' enormous impact on, and necessity to, the community has been highlighted during COVID, with everyone getting out and about and enjoying the natural assets we all have in our backyards. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:24): As my Labor colleagues have done, I raise concerns about the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. The omnibus bill proposes the establishment of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area and a number of other positive initiatives to better protect biodiversity in New South Wales. However, the bill also makes substantial and far-reaching changes to the management of national parks that Labor cannot support. Of particular concern are the proposed changes that will reduce consultation and give more power to the Minister. Before putting forward such a significant change, there should and must be much more consultation involving the traditional owners, unions, environmental groups and the local community. In its current form, the Opposition simply cannot support the bill. Labor will seek to improve the bill in the Legislative Council by tightening some of the provisions, such as guaranteeing that First Nations boards of management will be consulted and will have to give approval to some of the changes.

Labor has a proud legacy of protecting the State's national parks. In my electorate of Swansea, the Wallarah National Park was established in 2003 under the then Carr Labor Government. I acknowledge that the Minister for Energy and Environment is very passionate about protecting our environment. It is a shame his colleagues do not share his passion. On this occasion though, the Minister has just got it wrong. That is not to say that Labor supports nothing in the bill. The bill will protect Assets of Intergenerational Significance by providing a method to extend that protection to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. That will enable the land that those assets are on to be kept secret where necessary to ensure their conservation. Penalties for offences against land declared as an Asset of Intergenerational Significance will also be established. The bill will also make amendments that will enable an Aboriginal land council to create, acquire, hold, sell or otherwise deal with carbon sequestration rights for land that is created or protected under the Act.

Other proposed changes include enabling the use of digital images and data for compliance and enforcement actions relating to vehicles entering or using a park. I flag that while such a change seems positive on the surface, we must be careful that it does not impact the equitable access to parks by pensioners, people with a disability, veterans and other concession holders. I have already been contacted by constituents who have been adversely impacted by the shift to tie a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service pass with a specific vehicle registration. That has not accounted for those with a disability who do not always travel in the same vehicle. The bill will also provide the power to make regulations about monitoring and reporting on the ecological health of parks, along with establishing the Gardens of Stone as a State conservation area. Those are all positive changes that Labor supports.

On Saturday morning while I was driving back to the electorate of Swansea, I heard the Minister describing the beauty and wonderful advancements in the Gardens of Stone on ABC Radio with Simon Marnie. I admire the passion of the Minister in that regard. But Labor cannot support amendments that will enable the Minister to create biodiversity credits for management actions carried out on land reserved or acquired under the Act. That change would raise significant questions over the integrity of the current Biodiversity Offset Scheme. The bill will also seek to reduce the minimum exhibition period for draft plans of management from 90 days to 28 days, which is simply not long enough to properly consult with the community. That is only made more concerning by a move by the Minister to enable the approval of a project that is inconsistent with a plan of management.

Given the history of the Government attempting to run roughshod over plans of management to enable development in national parks, the community simply cannot trust it with that power. Over the past decade the Liberal Government has cut \$100 million from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and now it wants to establish it as an open-ended charitable entity, which will enable tax-deductible donations to national parks. Forgive my cynicism, but that appears to be a very sly way to further cut the budget of the NSW National Parks

and Wildlife Service. Until the Government address that issues, Labor simply cannot support the bill. Labor is not the only party concerned about the proposed amendments. Both the National Parks Association of NSW and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have raised significant concerns not just about the change but also about the complete lack of community and stakeholder consultation that went into the bill.

Like Labor, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society is concerned about the proposed power for the Minister to approve projects outside the plan of management. It has raised concerns that the bill appears to give the Minister powers, for instance, to approve infrastructure projects in areas where they are currently not allowed under a reserve's plan of management as long as it meets the test of being for "visitor management", which is a term not defined in the bill, and with a public consultation period of as little as 14 days. The National Parks Association of NSW has also raised concerns about the Government's plans to open up national parks to donations, stating:

Protecting nature and managing national parks is a core public service, which should be funded out of the state's revenue base. It is inappropriate for a Government agency to act as a pseudo charity in competition with the NGO sector. Apart from this basic philosophical stance it invites NSW Treasury reducing their budget to offset any additional income.

I could not agree more. Unlike the Coalition, the Labor Party has a proud history of protecting the State's national parks. In 1944 the McKell Labor Government created the Kosciuszko National Park. The Wran Labor Government built on that legacy and saved the northern rainforests, massively expanded the Blue Mountains National Park and banned sand mining in coastal national parks. Labor under Bob Carr continued to fight to protect and expand our national parks, saving coastal forests in the north-east and south-east of New South Wales, establishing marine parks and expanding the State's national parks by over two million hectares. The Carr Government did not stop there because it also passed the Threatened Species Act 1995 to protect native plants and animals.

What has this Government delivered after 10 years in power? It has a pretty embarrassing record. While Labor was in government it created 3.05 million hectares of new national park, the Coalition Government has delivered just 300,000 hectares. That is not even 10 per cent of what Labor delivered. The Government's embarrassing record does not stop there. As mentioned before, this Government has cut more than \$100 million from the budget of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was so embarrassed by its record on funding the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service that it has given up providing standalone budget figures. Among this Government's shocking record on national parks is its proposal that the F6 motorway could run through the first national park ever declared in Australia, Sydney's Royal National Park.

In 2016 the Government unveiled a plan to add 75,000 hectares of State forest to the national parks estate only to slash that to 23,000 hectares after the Government caved to some classic Nationals grandstanding. Let us not forget that this Government is still proposing the inundation of 65 kilometres of the World Heritage protected Blue Mountains National Park as part of the proposed project to raise the Warragamba Dam wall while not solving the problem of flooding in western Sydney. With a record like that, how can the House possibly give the Minister the power to overrule plans of management or reduce time lines for public consultation? The community simply cannot trust this Government to protect the State's national parks. I acknowledge the work of my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe, shadow Minister for the Environment, who is holding this Government to account over its poor treatment of the State's national parks. Until the Government rips the nonsense it is attempting to perpetrate on the people of this State out of the bill, the Opposition simply cannot support it.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:34): I make a contribution to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. The people of the Coogee electorate are an incredibly socially inclusive and environmentally engaged community. However, nothing is raised more with me than the state of our natural environment and the terrible track record that this Liberal Government has had on it. Among other things, this broad bill proposes a number of positive initiatives to better protect biodiversity in New South Wales. However, the bill also makes substantial and far-reaching changes that will cause irreparable damage to the management of national parks in this State. Such changes cannot be supported. Those changes will centralise the decision-making power with the Minister, which is now standard procedure with this Government and that will disenfranchise academic and local experts. Given the extent of this change, there should have been a far greater consultation process involving all stakeholders, including the local community, traditional owners, unions and environment groups. That has not occurred.

I stand with my Opposition colleagues in opposing the bill in its current form. We will seek to remove the unacceptable elements of the bill in the Legislative Council and tighten some of the provisions, including the guarantee that First Nations boards of management will be consulted and given an approval role in some of the changes. The creation and protection of national parks is core Labor business and is part of our proud Labor tradition of environmental conservation. I stand in this Chamber today to help to continue that legacy and join my colleagues in protecting our precious parks and national parks from this Government and its appalling record on

the environment and national parks. The bill is a key opportunity to talk about the precious national parks in New South Wales and the importance of protecting those areas in the future.

I note that Labor supports some elements of the bill such as protecting an Asset of Intergenerational Significance, including providing a method to extend this protection to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites; enabling the land where those assets are to be kept secret where necessary to ensure its conservation; providing penalties for offences against land declared an Asset Of Intergenerational Significance; and enabling the Minister or, for certain land, an Aboriginal land council to create, acquire, hold, sell or otherwise deal with carbon sequestration rights in land that is created or protected under the Act; as well as enabling the Gardens of Stone as a State conservation area.

As I foreshadowed at the start of my contribution, the bill will make substantial and far-reaching changes to the management of our national parks. Quite frankly, they are dangerous changes that mean the bill cannot be supported. The bill would enable the Minister to create biodiversity credits for management actions carried out on land reserved or acquired under the Act. There are significant questions around the integrity of the current Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, which I note has been the subject of parliamentary inquiries, internal investigations and an ICAC investigation. Currently the scheme facilitates a net loss of biodiversity in New South Wales and it beggars belief that the bill allows the Minister to unilaterally create biodiversity credits within a framework that has already facilitated the loss of biodiversity and will undoubtedly lead to worse environmental outcomes.

The bill seeks to reduce the minimum exhibition period for draft plans of management from 90 to 28 days as well as reduce the steps involved in considering and making a plan. Plans of management for national parks are strategic and regulatory plans that dictate what can and cannot be done in national parks. Twenty-eight days is not long enough for local communities, councils, stakeholder groups and First Nations organisations to have adequate consultations on changes in those important plans. The bill also seeks to provide a power for the Minister to approve a project that is inconsistent with a plan of management for visitor infrastructure and conservation actions of a class prescribed in the regulations. Given the importance of the plans of management and the history of the New South Wales Government in this space, that inclusion will undoubtedly lead to unacceptable developments in national parks. The provision is designed to avoid public scrutiny and in too many cases would allow the bypass of a plan of management with the stroke of a pen by the Minister. Put plainly, this provision cannot be supported unless it is limited to emergency works.

The bill has been dropped on stakeholders and into this Parliament with no consultation or justification for the outlandish monopoly powers it proposes. While the bill contains some worthy provisions, it cannot be supported in its current form. Labor has done work in this space for generations and understands what is needed to protect our national parks and our precious environment. The creation and support of national parks are core Labor businesses that are a long part of our proud legacy. That is why we cannot support the bill in its current form.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:40): The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021 is an omnibus bill that proposes the establishment of the Gardens of Stone State conservation area and a number of other positive initiatives to better protect biodiversity in New South Wales. However, the bill also makes substantial and far-reaching changes to the management of national parks that cannot be supported. Given that the proposed changes will reduce consultation and give more power to the Minister, there should have been a consultation process involving all stakeholders: the local community, traditional owners, unions and environment groups. That has not occurred. The Opposition opposes the bill in its current form. We will seek to take out the unacceptable parts of the bill in the Legislative Council and tighten some provisions, including a guarantee that First Nations boards of management will be consulted to give approval to some of the changes. The creation and protection of national parks are core Labor businesses that form a long and proud Labor legacy that its members will defend. Unfortunately, the Government has an appalling record on the environment and national parks.

The bill contains supportable parts such as protecting Assets of Intergenerational Significance, including providing a method to extend this protection to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites; enabling the land where these assets are to be kept secret where necessary to ensure its conservation; providing penalties for offences against land declared an Asset Of Intergenerational Significance; enabling the Minister or, for certain land, an Aboriginal land council to create, acquire, hold, sell or otherwise deal with carbon sequestration rights in land that is created or protected under the Act; as well as enabling the use of digital images and data for compliance and enforcement actions related to vehicles entering or using a park. The bill will also provide the power to make regulations on the monitoring and reporting of the ecological health of parks and will establish the Gardens of Stone as a State conservation area.

Protecting Indigenous cultural heritage on the sites is very important. Only last week I met with an employee who was assessing a vandalised site on Sydney Harbour. It was very depressing and distressing to hear

that there had been this vandalism, that it was common and that the authority is very understaffed and finds it difficult to get to all the sites. The Government needs to have a good look at that as well. Parts of the bill that Labor cannot support include enabling the Minister to create biodiversity credits for management actions carried out on land preserved or acquired under the Act; reducing the minimum exhibition period for draft plans of management from 90 to 28 days and reducing the steps involved in considering and making a plan; providing a power for the Minister to approve a project that is inconsistent with a plan of management for visitor infrastructure and conservation actions of a class prescribed in the regulations; and establishing an open-ended charitable entity, which will enable tax-deductible donations to national parks modelled, in part, on the United States' National Park Foundation. That is not a path we should be going down. Stakeholders of the bill had quite a lot to say. The National Parks Association of NSW is not impressed by the reduction of the exhibition period from 90 to 28 days:

POMs [plans of management] are detailed, complex and extremely important strategic plans. They collectively set the management framework for nearly 10% of the state of NSW. They are not development applications, and the adoption of the DA standard of 28 days public exhibition is manifestly insufficient to enable the community to consider and respond to the proposals embedded in each POM.

On the power for a Minister to approve projects outside the plan of management, the National Parks Association NSW said:

This provision appears designed to avoid public scrutiny of development proposals affecting national parks and reserves.

That is not something we want either. On biodiversity offsets, the National Parks Association NSW said:

The entire biodiversity offset system in NSW is currently subject to a parliamentary inquiry and investigation by ICAC. It is a broken system that invites corruption, and even when operated accordingly to the rules results in a net loss of the state's biodiversity values.

That is not something we want to adopt. On opening up National Parks to donations, the association said:

Protecting nature and managing national parks is a core public service, which should be funded out of the state's revenue base.

I could not agree more. Labor has a magnificent record and legacy on national parks. In 1944 the McKell Labor Government created Kosciuszko National Park. From 1984 to 1987 the Wran Labor Government saved the northern rainforests, massively expanded the Blue Mountains National Park and banned sand mining in coastal national parks. In 1997 the Carr Labor Government saved coastal forests in north-east and south-east New South Wales, established marine parks, created over two million hectares of new national parks estate and introduced the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 to protect native plants and animals. In 2010 the Rees Labor Government protected over 100,000 hectares of river red gum forests and wetlands, and provided funding assistance for affected workers and regional communities.

In light of our great record and the Government's terrible cuts to National Parks and Wildlife Services [NPWS], I suggest that this Government does not have a great attitude to national parks and seems to have an ideological problem with expanding and providing for them adequately. We have seen nearly \$120 million cut from NPWS over two years in 2016-17 and 2017-18, and it previously suffered a \$24 million budget cut in 2014-15. The Government should be looking to Labor's legacy and what we have to say on national parks. If the Government is fair dinkum it would adopt our amendments to give real authenticity to its desire to do something for our national parks.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:47): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. Some parts of the legislation are good and some parts are appalling. We cannot support the bill in its current form without serious amendments. We are seeing a theme of parks and national parks having to pay for themselves, which I find ludicrous when we consider what taxpayer dollars should do for us in this State. The absolute overwhelming majority of citizens care about the environment, want to spend time in nature and love our national parks, so it strikes me as strange that those trees and that biodiversity are expected to pay for themselves. I do not understand it but we are seeing it more and more. The Greens acknowledge the parts of the legislation that will strengthen protections for biodiversity and our great national parks, but I make clear that we do not accept quite a few of the provisions.

The bill (1) changes the statutory process for preparing plans of management for national parks and reserves; (2) enables the Minister to approve actions that are not consistent with existing plans of management; (3) enables the Minister to create and trade carbon sequestration rights over national parks and reserves; (4) enables the Minister to create and trade biodiversity credits for works carried out in national parks and reserves; (5) establishes a trust to accept tax deductible donations on behalf of the National Parks and Wildlife Service; (6) provides administrative powers in relation to areas declared as Assets of Intergenerational Significance; (7) provides administrative powers to monitor and report on the ecological health of parks; (8) provides administrative powers to use digital capture of motor vehicle details—which is welcome in my area; and (9) transfers and reserves land to create the Gardens of Stone State conservation area, which we also welcome.

The bill amends and interacts with several pieces of complex legislation, including the National Parks and Wildlife Act and the Biodiversity Conservation Act. The legal mechanisms it proposes warrant careful analysis and I commend The Greens environment spokesperson, Cate Faehrmann, for her analysis and discussions with the Liberal-Nationals, the Opposition and crossbench members to strengthen the bill to support better conservation. National parks conserve the most intact natural places in the country and the world. They harbour endangered plants, animals and unique ecosystems. They also help assure human wellbeing by protecting watersheds that provide drinking water, and store carbon, which naturally reduces climate change. Recent 2018 data tells us that there are approximately 60 million visits to national parks each year in Australia, generating nearly \$18 billion in annual economic output and, as stated by the Minister in his second reading speech, providing 74,000 jobs. To me, that is the parks already supporting themselves.

We have no immediate concerns regarding items numbered (6) to (9) above. Indeed, we commend the New South Wales Government for the reservation of the Gardens of Stone State conservation area, the improved protections for Assets of Intergenerational Significance and the proposals for systematic monitoring of the ecological health of the protected area network. I welcome that and would like to see it extended beyond national parks to river catchments across the State. However, we have significant concerns about items (1) to (5). Our view is that whilst we understand that some tightening is required, substantial modification of item (1)—changes to the plans of management process—is needed to avoid unacceptable impact on the opportunity for meaningful engagement with community and stakeholders about the future conservation and management of individual parks. More and more people are expected to engage in a short window, sometimes at the end of the year. With such important issues and biodiversity at stake, that must be carefully looked at.

Items (2) to (5)—the introduction of a ministerial power to override plans of management outside the current emergency powers and amendment processes—are extreme and cannot be justified. We find the introduction of carbon and biodiversity credit schemes reprehensible. The idea that we would have the words "national park", "biodiversity offsets" and "biodiversity credit schemes" in the same breath says it all. It says to me that the Minister has had to sit down with the far right and the National Party to make a deal. Having good practices in the bill that support conservation and then talking about biodiversity offsets, which are licences to kill biodiversity, is ludicrous, absurd and frightening, and should be wholly excised from the bill. We will be making that case in the other place. The establishment of a tax-deductible trust also has no place in the bill.

We are seeing all over the world that temperatures in national parks are increasing at rates never seen before and that precipitation is decreasing. In the past decade, fires have taken a massive toll on the biodiversity of Australia's national parks and on all the species that are part of their magnificent ecosystems. I will not belabour that point, which has been made by all members on this side. Those ecosystems need a lot of protection. More than 500 national parks in Australia cover 28 million hectares, or close to 4 per cent of the country. The commitment by the environment Minister and now Treasurer to expand the national parks trust is very welcome. But there is no point in expanding the trust, the area of national parkland, if what one is doing in there is crazy. Offsetting, underfunding and trying to make the parks pay for themselves is crazy.

We have sadly seen funding slashed for national parks in this country and in our State, which has put us historically in doubt regarding our ability to meet the targets we agreed to as a nation in the international Convention on Biological Diversity. We committed to protect 17 per cent of terrestrial environments by 2020, and we are nowhere near that. It was not that long ago we saw a push to de-gazette a national park in this State, the Murray Valley National Park. Funding cuts have a major spill-on effect, limiting the ability to expand national parks to include critical endangered habitats. The loss of staff expertise has been outlined in this debate. In my electorate, National Parks and Wildlife Service staff lament that they do not have the time to do their conservation work as there is so much pressure on them to manage the tourism impacts to parks and reserves. I have seen the impact of those staffing cuts in the past six years. It hurts the environment because they do not have time to do the important work at which they are experts. It is also counterintuitive.

A recent World Wildlife Fund study found that 82 per cent of Australians are worried about future generations growing up with less access to nature and wildlife, and 70 per cent would like more national parks and nature reserves. I am pleased that our current environment Minister has sought to increase that. I particularly acknowledge the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation and their tireless efforts in creating the Arakwal National Park in the Ballina electorate. I give a huge shout-out to all the conservation groups in New South Wales that advocate continuously on behalf of nature. There are too many to name, but I particularly recognise the Nature Conservation Council and the North East Forest Alliance in my area. I give a huge shout-out to all the amazing National Parks and Wildlife Service staff in my electorate for all of the work they do to conserve nature.

I sincerely hope that in 100 years, and in 500 years, someone in this House will be reading out these national parks and many more in the Ballina electorate: Arakwal National Park, Lennox Head Aboriginal Area, Bundjalung National Park, Cape Byron State Conservation Area, Nightcap National Park, Broken Head Nature

Reserve, Tyagarah Nature Reserve, Mount Jerusalem National Park, Ballina Nature Reserve, Richmond River Nature Reserve, National Parks and Wildlife Discovery Program - Northern Rivers, Broadwater National Park, Captain Cook Park, Goonengerry National Park, Victoria Park Nature Reserve and Boatharbour Nature Reserve. The Greens do not support the bill in its current form.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:57): It will come as no surprise to the environment Minister that I speak on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021. I ask that the Minister address the concerns I raise in his reply speech. I have raised many issues with the Minister regarding national parks and State forests since being elected to this place, including National Parks and Wildlife Service staff conducting aerial culling of goats in parts of my electorate where the mustering of goats for the meat market forms a key part of the local economy. National parks have been dubbed a really bad neighbour in Barwon, not paying their portion of shared fencing costs, allowing feral animals to overrun parks and flow into neighbouring farms, allowing the proliferation of weeds to spread well outside park boundaries—the list goes on.

The latest purchase of farmland in the Far West for new national parks has people in all camps asking questions, from the pro-parks camp to the pro-conservation-alongside-farming camp. They are all asking the same question: How can the National Parks and Wildlife Service possibly manage this additional land without additional staffing resources? It is already struggling. The Community and Public Sector Union is asking the same question—500,000 hectares of additional national parkland and no additional staff members to manage it. The recent feathers in the cap of the environment Minister's national parks buy-up—Avenel and Mount Westwood stations, 150 kilometres north of Broken Hill; and Koonaburra Station, 140 kilometres south-west of Cobar—are both within the Barwon electorate. Those purchases fall within the Liberal-Nationals Government's plan to expand the national parks landholdings by 400,000 hectares—double what the Government initially set out to acquire.

The Government has now acquired 520,000 hectares of land since August 2019. The majority of those acquisitions have been agricultural land in the Far West. As taxpayers, we rightfully deserve to be able to ask questions about those acquisitions, namely: How much did the Government pay for it? A few numbers have been kicking about, none confirmed by National Parks or the Minister, but most people settle on around \$30 million for the last tranche of properties. Through his department, the Minister has not answered questions asked about the cost by my colleague in the other place. It is a huge amount of money, and I do not begrudge any landholder who willingly sells their property getting a good price. But having a government player in the property sales market has priced young pastoralists out of the market. In previous sales to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Government has significantly exceeded offers that young farmers have put on the table and priced them out of the market.

"Now, Roy," I hear some say, "in an open market the highest bidder has the right to win on the day." My response to that is: At what price to the local community? On average, those pastoral properties put back half a million dollars annually into the local community, as a base. In good times that can rise significantly. There are jobs on the property and in the local community for contractors and supply businesses. Overnight, those jobs and customers have disappeared. The Minister has said that economic activity will be replaced through ecotourism and four-wheel drive tracks. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers [SFF] Party strongly supports access to State forests and national parks for recreation. I know the Minister enjoyed mountain biking with the member for Orange. However, history and experience from elsewhere in New South Wales shows us that the money brought in from tourism does not even come close to making a dent in the economic loss for communities in Barwon.

I am not saying that those important ecosystems do not deserve to be protected. They do, but National Parks and Wildlife Service staff are not the only ones capable of such work. Graziers and farmers are great caretakers of our land. Members who are sceptical should look up the Enterprise Based Conservation Program. It was started initially as a pilot program to see whether a payment-based conservation scheme could work on private properties, and it did. Landholders managed designated conservation areas on their properties. Contracts stipulated the conservation outcomes and management techniques, and landholders were paid a small fee for meeting the requirements. Weed management, pest and feral animal control, and soil erosion were all part of the deal—things that we know from experience, having national parks as neighbours, they are not great at keeping on top of.

The Government holds the data and case studies from those programs, and it is a proven model. It is a win-win for conservation and farmers. Farmers are able to diversify their income, building resilience for dry times and ensuring valuable environmental assets are conserved for future generations. Yet instead of paying small annual fees to farmers, setting up conservation agreements and allowing farms to remain productive, the Government is spending millions of tax dollars to acquire properties with many questions unanswered. On one level, it is poor economic management; on another, it shows the arrogance of the environment department boffins in Sydney. There absolutely is a proven better way, and it is not the buy-up.

In another part of my vast electorate sits Baradine, which was once a bustling timber worker village. The timber workers of Baradine earned a living cutting cypress pine. It is pretty good stuff—resistant to termites,

making it ideal for building houses. Bob Carr ended Baradine's fortunes with the stroke of a pen. He declared 350,000 hectares of the Pilliga iconic. It took a major employer out of the town, but it also killed off some of the biodiversity. Some areas of the Pilliga are now so locked up that species that should be found there are no longer there. Reports from the Government prove that statement. We must again question why the National Parks and Wildlife Service staff think they are the only ones who can manage land for environmental purposes. I ask that the Minister consider the Baradine experience when making environmentally focused decisions. He does not want a reputation like Bob Carr has in Baradine.

It would be remiss of me, as a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, not to talk about the benefits of volunteer conservation hunting on suitable public land. It might shock members to know that volunteer conservation hunters perform beneficial environmental work and save the taxpayer money. They also spend money in local economies, helping business to continue and providing more employment—shocking, that, for a group of people some parties in this place like to demonise. It costs the taxpayer over \$3,000 per hour for aerial shooting to occur. In one example that the SFF has uncovered, government-employed aerial shooters spent 40 minutes hunting down just one deer. I urge the Minister to work with the SFF on a plan and process that would give access to volunteer conservation hunters to assist in pest management and control in suitable national parks across New South Wales. Such a plan would be a massive win for the Government bottom line—something that I know will prick up the Minister's ears as Treasurer—and for Government plans to eradicate pests in parks.

I take this opportunity to talk about the establishment of an Aboriginal ranger program in western New South Wales, which the Minister went close to talking about in his second reading speech. The program, which I have lobbied for and will continue to lobby for, must be well resourced and well funded with recurrent funding, rather than by way of another grant process. The Minister should look to the Federal Government's Working on Country program, which predominately operates in northern Australia and currently supports over 118 ranger groups and funds over 831 full-time equivalent jobs. Aside from the many environmental benefits of Aboriginal rangers, the ranger jobs have many social and economic benefits.

A report commissioned by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet found that Aboriginal land and sea management delivers up to \$3 worth of environmental, social and economic value for every \$1 spent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have reported flow-on benefits, including increased role models, better mental and physical health, strengthening of culture, women's empowerment and more. With over 16 per cent of people living in the Barwon electorate identifying as Aboriginal, an Aboriginal ranger program would have enormous benefits to my communities. I again encourage the Minister to establish such a program in New South Wales.

Given that the substantial purchases of new parks are in regional New South Wales and will take money away from local economies, the benefits of biodiversity offsets need in some way to be directed to regional New South Wales developments. If biodiversity offsets are part of this bill, it needs to be made clear that developments that are of public good in regional New South Wales are able to access these offsets to facilitate the developments going ahead. This change could make the difference between regional developments with a clear benefit to a community going ahead or not. Minister Kean is a nice bloke, and I get along with him well. He is the type of bloke that if he and his neighbour shared a fence that was falling down, he would chip in half. Fair is fair, after all. I make a simple request of him today: Get the National Parks and Wildlife Service to be a good neighbour. Get it to pay half of the shared fence costs, both materials and installation. Address the outrageous situation we have now where the National Parks and Wildlife Service pays less than half the cost of the fencing materials.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment) (19:06): In reply: I thank the member for Port Stephens and acknowledge her longstanding commitment to the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the environment more broadly. Her points were well made. I will work with the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who is leading for the Opposition in the other place, to address a number of those concerns via amendment. I thank the members representing the electorates of Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Manly, Canterbury, Camden, Wyong, North Shore, Shellharbour, Miranda, Swansea, Barwon, Coogee, Newcastle and Ballina. I acknowledge the member for Barwon, given he is in the Chamber, for his contribution. I will address some of the points he raised shortly, and I will absolutely take up the issue of shared responsibility for fencing.

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2021 makes important amendments to create the Gardens of Stone Reserves and, in doing so, delivers on the aspiration of a generation of conservationists. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of Keith Muir. There are few people more dedicated to our environment and to ensuring that we protect our most threatened and endangered species. He has devoted his life to this cause, and future generations will thank him for it. I recognise the concerns that he has raised. He has texted me personally, and I take his concerns and opinions very seriously. Again, we are working through those issues with the Opposition. I am confident that we will land this bill in a place where everyone is happy that the

appropriate protections and governance are around our national parks. They are such important assets and need to be above politics.

I will touch on a couple of matters that have been raised. Whilst working through this bill, there were a number of changes within the Government. I took on the role of Treasurer. Whilst I had some engagement with this legislation, the level of engagement was not what it might have been. That said, I have spoken to a number of trusted environmental groups. I acknowledge the NSW Nature Conservation Council [NCC], under the outstanding leadership of Chris Gambian. In my time as environment Minister, he was my most trusted adviser on matters of the environment. He is honest and has integrity. If he can do something, he tells me; if he cannot, he lets me know. He has raised a number of these issues, and I will work through them with him to make sure that we land this bill.

The idea that the Government was somehow seeking to deviate from the plans of management is false. I make that very clear. There is a need to make sure that the plans of management are working to support our national parks, not the other way around. For minor and non-commercial activities, such as ensuring the National Parks and Wildlife Service replaces a walking track that is unsafe or builds kids' play equipment, it is appropriate to have a faster process to deal with that, so that our parks are a drawcard to all people, including families with young children. That is how we will encourage more people to care about the environment.

I am such a committed environmentalist and I am committed to national parks. My family would holiday in national parks. I did not come from a family with great means. What means my parents had, they pumped into our education, which meant that holidays were spent in our national parks camping, kayaking and picnicking. They were places for family events. I go there today and I see new families experiencing the joy of our national parks, attracted by the visitor infrastructure and kids' playgrounds. I am hoping that will be the gateway to creating a whole new generation of environmentalists and people who will love our national parks. If they ever get an opportunity like I had—and hopefully like the member for Port Stephens may one day have—they too will be great advocates and champions for our national parks and our environment.

The bill makes several changes to modernise the National Parks and Wildlife Act to ensure that the National Parks and Wildlife Service can continue to do its job to protect our precious natural environment and ensure that the parks estate is available to all. National parks are not just the domain of conservationists and environmentalists, although they play an important role. We need to make sure that national parks are there for everyone, which is what I am trying to achieve with this bill. I note the comments relating to this Government's record on conservation, which I want to address. It was a Coalition government in New South Wales that established the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Coalition governments have a strong record in conservation and protecting our environment, and I hope that is a record that I have revived in my time as the environment Minister.

I correct the record and outline exactly what this Government has delivered for national parks, particularly in the face of differing information from my political opponents today. The National Parks and Wildlife Service currently has the largest budget in its history. I am proud to have fought for that and delivered it. It also has more staff and firefighters than it has ever had. Since 2019 the Government has added nearly 400 staff. We have made two of the largest acquisitions in the history of national parks. When they are gazetted, we will have added over 500,000 hectares to the national park estate during the time that I have been the Minister. That is a significant addition. My deputy chief of staff will correct me if I am wrong, but we have increased the national park estate by over 5 per cent in the time that I have been the Minister.

The Government has made significant additions to the national park estate, and the purchases have been targeted towards areas of high conservation value. The member for Barwon knows that the Narriearra Caryapundy Swamp National Park protects wetlands that we think will qualify for Ramsar listing. It is a key bird-breeding ground, and it is something that will greatly enhance our national park network. It is not just about conserving the area—and I understand the concerns about locking up and leaving—but also building visitor infrastructure to attract tourists to help diversify the economy of Tibooburra. We want to see more people travelling to the regions and seeing the spectacular sights of our State, with its beautiful, natural environment.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is the first agency in the world to commit to zero extinctions on the national park estate. Again, that is something I am proud to have spearheaded. We are delivering the largest investment in visitor infrastructure in national park history. We are spending about \$150 million to upgrade walking trails, bike tracks and campgrounds—the visitor experience—which will encourage people to visit our national parks and visit the regions. It will help them fall in love with these important environmental assets so that they too can be champions of and advocates for our environment. We have launched a world-class ecological health monitoring framework. We are delivering the largest feral animal control program ever undertaken in our national parks. We have returned six species to our national parks, including the bilby and the numbat, which has been missing for around a century. This is important conservation work and I am very proud that we have delivered it.

The member for Port Stephens referred to the proposed establishment of a charitable trust. It is not uncommon for protected-area agencies to have dedicated charitable foundations, which are designed to raise additional funds and not to replace core funding. There are a number of philanthropists who care about national parks and want to do their bit to support the Government's important work in conserving nature and protecting national parks. One example is the United States National Park Service, one of the world's most eminent protected-area agencies. We are basing our model on what they do in the US. We can learn a lot from other jurisdictions that protect land such as Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite National Park.

Using private donors to support government investment enhances those national parks. It does not diminish them, and it does not take away from the need for government to spend significant money protecting those national parks. The National Parks and Wildlife Service currently works with a range of philanthropic organisations, including the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, the WWF, The Nature Conservancy and others. These organisations and others have made valuable contributions to national parks and these partnerships will continue. However, the bill aims to deliver a dedicated charity for the National Parks and Wildlife Service—a body that can raise philanthropic funds for our parks to add to government funding, allowing us to do even more.

A number of members referred to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. The bill aims to provide for a gold-standard biodiversity credit that is created by important restoration work on our national parks and on land that can be added to our national parks. The credit provisions would help achieve this outcome. However, I understand many stakeholders wish to consider this further, and I am happy for that dialogue to occur through a separate process. We will work through these issues in the upper House. Those issues may be sent to a committee for consideration while we pass the substance of the bill, particularly the creation of the Gardens of Stone National Park.

The issue of the digital parks pass was also raised, and I note the concerns about equitable access. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will convene a working group in early 2022 to review the operation of the digital parks pass with a view to removing any impediments to the uptake of concession benefits. This will include pensioner and disability groups. I note that the member for Port Stephens raised the issue. My office has been inundated with those concerns and we will work through that to make sure we get it right. Again, we want to ensure that everyone can access our national parks, including our seniors and those living with a disability. I just have been handed a note and can inform the House that I have been under-promising and over-delivering on how much new national park estate I have created. On my watch, since 2019 the Government has realised a 7.8 per cent increase to the national parks estate when all the acquisitions are gazetted; that is a small caveat for *Hansard*.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Would the Minister repeat the number?

Mr MATT KEAN: It has been a 7.8 per cent increase to the national parks estate. I am a great admirer of Bob Carr and Bob Debus for the work they did for our national parks. However, unlike the Carr administration, we have not forcibly acquired State forests or anything like that. We have actually gone out on the private market and purchased areas of national park. We have prioritised purchasing key conservation assets and there is a big difference in our approach to getting the job done.

In relation to our joint management with Aboriginal owners under part 4A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, I have been proud to hand back land to Aboriginal owners at both Mount Grenfell and Nuntherungie. The proposed bill has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits to Aboriginal owners through carbon and biodiversity credits, and philanthropic partnerships. We have included specific provisions so relevant provisions do not commence until further consultation occurs. However, we are happy to look at amendments which further address the relationship with part 4A land.

I thank the member for Barwon for his remarks. I assure him that new national parks in western New South Wales will deliver economic benefits for regional communities. They provide a great opportunity to diversify those economies. However, I understand the concerns in relation to taking productive land away. We have got to get the balance right. My plan to invest in significant infrastructure to draw tourist dollars into the regions is part of meeting that objective. We have almost finished a very exciting new campground at Narriearra. Perhaps I can find some time to get up there and take the member for Barwon to see the spectacular landscape. The member for Port Stephens would be very welcome to join us. We probably need to go up in autumn, after the rains have come through—

Ms Kate Washington: Mr Temporary Speaker, you are allowed to come too.

Mr MATT KEAN: Everyone is allowed to come. We can throw a party up in Narriearra Caryapundy Swamp, but we want to go after the rains have come as the landscape just comes alive. It is incredible. I had the opportunity to see it just after the rains when we purchased it. You are driving through desert and then this whole

landscape just explodes with life. It is absolutely incredible. We will be investing in campgrounds, walking trails and other infrastructure at our other additions to the estate, as well as obviously providing extra staff. I am determined that new parks in western New South Wales will mean even more jobs and economic benefits to those communities, and I am very happy to work with the member for Barwon to achieve that aim. I appreciate that there are particular issues in the west of the State and will continue to support the member and his community to ensure they get the maximum benefits out of this investment in our environment.

I note the concerns that have been raised, particularly in relation to biodiversity offsets, priority approvals, the application of Assets of Intergenerational Significance on part 4A land, and the administrative processes pertaining to plans of management. I understand amendments will be moved in the other place arising from ongoing discussions with members and stakeholders. I very much welcome the constructive way in which those members, particularly the shadow Minister, has worked with me and my office and I look forward to working constructively on those amendments.

I will finish where I started by stating that our national parks need to be above politics. They need to be there for everyone in the State to enjoy, regardless of ability, age or background. We need to encourage people to get out and enjoy these spectacular assets. They are absolutely incredible. If we want to ensure that future generations will stand up for our environment, then there is no better way than getting them to appreciate our national parks. That is what I was trying to do with this bill. I understand there are some things that need to be worked through, and we will do that constructively in the upper House with the Labor Party, The Greens and the crossbench. But I think what all members want to see here is a great outcome, with national parks that protect our environment, protect our threatened and endangered species, provide a wonderful experience for everyone in this State and become a tourist drawcard in New South Wales.

I look forward to achieving those objectives, with the moving of appropriate amendments. However, the opportunity to create the Gardens of Stone National Park, which for nearly 80 years the conservation movement has fought for, is one too big to pass up. I urge Legislative Council members to get this bill through that House and back to this House to pass it. We can park anything that is causing concern to stakeholders and members in this place and refer it to the committee process or take it off the table. However, let us focus on the things that we can all agree on—namely, the Gardens of Stone and ensuring that the governance framework around our national parks is fit for purpose. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MATT KEAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 November 2021.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:25): As Labor's shadow Minister for Family and Community Services and shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion, I lead for the Opposition on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill 2021. I note from the outset that Labor will support the bill. I also note that the Minister has sought Labor's support for its passage to be given urgency in the upper House to ensure that it passes the Parliament this year and so that the powers of the Children's Guardian do not expire early in the new year. I trust that the Minister will use the extension of time to finalise the consolidation of the regulatory powers to permanently grant those powers to the Children's Guardian. The extension of those transitional powers is the only urgent component of the legislation. However, the bill creates a number of other regulatory changes of note, which I will cover briefly.

The bill addresses two key issues: the powers and responsibilities of the Office of the Children's Guardian and, separately, the regulation of residential care workers. I will speak about each aspect of the bill in turn. For members of the public, one of the most common interactions with the Office of the Children's Guardian is when completing a Working With Children Check. The checks are an important safeguard for the protection of children, which provide employers and organisations with an avenue to ensure their staff do not have previous convictions that could put children at risk. Many employers require a Working With Children Check, or people may need one

as part of their volunteer work with a school's P&C or while coaching a local soccer team. Those checks are important tools in keeping our children safe.

Most parents could guess the types of offences that would trigger concern when applying for a Working With Children Check. When a police check is conducted, a previous speeding ticket would not be a disqualifying conviction; however, an assault conviction can be. The bill before the House ensures that serious animal cruelty offences are now part of the Children's Guardian's considerations when assessing a Working With Children Check. In recent years, as society has become more open in its discussions on domestic violence and its impact on families, particularly on women, there has been an increased recognition of the links between harming animals and escalating behaviours that threaten and harm people. Under the bill, the Children's Guardian can integrate those additional checks into its systems so that, for example, if somebody is involved in significant animal cruelty and they are prosecuted on that basis, those prosecutions and those people will now become known to the Children's Guardian in its process of determining and assessing Working With Children Checks. That is a welcome and important change.

I note that, as the Government has continued to add additional responsibilities to the Children's Guardian—two significant responsibilities will go to the Children's Guardian through two different pieces of legislation that were recently introduced to this place—the agency has not received a commensurate increase in its resourcing. I encourage the Minister, who is in the Chamber, to ensure that the agency tasked with reducing the risks posed to children in New South Wales has the adequate resources for the additional work that is placed on it through this and other recent legislation. That is particularly the case for the next section of the bill, which creates a new obligation on the Children's Guardian with respect to conducting an investigation. I am advised that, currently, if the Children's Guardian while conducting an investigation becomes aware that the police is also investigating or prosecuting the same matter, the Children's Guardian will generally suspend its investigation to not prejudice or duplicate the criminal matter.

The bill provides an avenue for concurrent investigations so long as the Children's Guardian or the head of a relevant agency deems it appropriate and so long as it fulfils its obligation to ensure that its investigation does not prejudice the police or court proceedings. The remaining provisions of the bill impact residential care workers, who play a very important role in the care of young people as well as many people with disabilities. I have considered those changes with regard to both of my shadow portfolios. In considering the bill, we are examining the role of residential care workers who might work a shift caring for a child in alternate care accommodation, supported independent living or in specialist accommodation. The bill examines the overlap between the care that those workers provide and the care that is provided by formal foster carers.

Importantly, the bill recognises the different nature of that care and makes a number of relevant changes. The bill removes certain unintended obligations on residential care workers who do not provide care in their own homes, like foster carers, or outside their ordinary hours of work. The current Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act places a responsibility on all residential care workers to fulfil the same personal life reporting obligations as foster carers, who provide care 24/7 in their own homes. For instance, both types of carers must report if and when a personal visitor is staying at their home for more than three weeks. In the case of a residential care worker, that obligation is clearly unnecessary and an unwarranted intrusion into their private life by an employer.

The bill also seeks to remove certain unintended rights that technically apply to both residential care workers and foster carers, including the right to apply for guardianship orders for a child in their care. That is another example of where the nature of care provided by a foster carer could reasonably lead to a guardianship or adoption in some circumstances; however, it would be inappropriate for a residential care worker to expect to apply for those same rights given that their care is of a professional nature. Additionally, the bill clarifies that residential care workers should be indemnified by their employers. Currently the Minister indemnifies foster carers; however, a residential care worker's employment relationship is the most appropriate avenue for that indemnity. I have spoken to representatives of those workers, particularly the Australian Services Union. They have reviewed the bill and they are satisfied with those changes.

The final aspect of the bill covers certain legal matters that come before the courts. There is a longstanding practice of allowing a court to appoint a guardian ad litem; that is, a person who assists a person in a court where they have been assessed as being incapable of giving legal instructions. A court has been able to make a direction to appoint a guardian ad litem without the need to specify the particulars of the person at the time the direction was made. A recent appeals court decision overturned that practice, which now forces proceedings to adjourn until such time as the Guardian ad Litem Panel can appoint a specific guardian. That causes unnecessary delay and additional costs in court proceedings, which is the last thing young people need when they are in the criminal justice system. The bill reaffirms the appropriateness of the previous practice, both retrospectively and going forward.

Reducing the time that children, and other people who need guardians, are before a court is an important goal. The provision will go some way to reducing the time involved in those matters as well as the court time and the delay that is involved in the current process following the decision of the Court of Appeal. The important decision for a judge is the need to appoint a guardian ad litem; the decision on who will fulfil that role can be made separately from the court.

The bill also makes minor amendments clarifying current practice relating to bail and parole revocation orders, including codifying the current practice that all magistrates are able to consider bail hearings for juveniles, not just Children's Court magistrates. That is the current practice and, particularly for regional members of Parliament such as myself who are aware of the strain on the court system, there is no need to place further burdens as to which magistrates can make the decision on bail for children. Delaying a decision on bail for a young person while a different type of magistrate is found is clearly not in the interests of any child. I thank residential care workers, foster carers, staff on the front line, staff at the Office of the Children's Guardian and other people who work to ensure the protection of children and young people in our communities. This work has undoubtedly ramped-up during COVID, particularly during the lockdown.

The closure of schools and fewer mandatory reporting eyeballs on the students have obviously been of deep concern to those working in the sector. I take this opportunity to thank all the frontline workers who have not stopped throughout the lockdown and are continuing to work, and since restrictions have lifted and since supports have dropped away from government both federal and State. I know that these workers will again see a significant rise in their work as more and more hardship and struggle are placed on families through various means. We saw it last year and we will no doubt see it again. On behalf of the Labor Opposition and no doubt everyone in the House, I thank all the workers who continue every day to try to do all that they can in an overstretched system with fewer resources than they need to try to protect children at risk from harm. On that note I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:36): I speak in support of the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill 2021. It is good to have the Minister in the House with us this evening. The bill will amend the Adoption Act 2000, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, with a consequential amendment to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2013 to provide that a court or tribunal appointing a guardian ad litem does not need to name the particular person appointed. Instead, under the amendments, courts and tribunals that have ordered the appointment of a guardian ad litem may subsequently request the administrator of the Guardian ad Litem Panel to nominate a particular person to fill that role under the amended Acts. The guardian ad litem will be taken to have been appointed when the court or tribunal receives written notice from the panel naming the person selected to be the guardian ad litem. This amendment is both prospective and retrospective.

The bill also validates the process followed by courts and tribunals for many years before the well-known Choi decision, both prospectively and retrospectively. The amendment is necessary to address the risk of delay arising from the Choi decision. In matters where a guardian ad litem is appointed from the panel, the decision in Choi requires that the relevant court or tribunal would adjourn proceedings to enable the court or tribunal to ask the panel to identify a suitable person to act as the guardian ad litem; upon being advised by the panel of the identity of a person available to be appointed, relist the matter to make the order appointing the particular guardian ad litem; and, give the person for whom a guardian ad litem is being appointed the opportunity to be heard in relation to the identity of the appointed person. Further substantive steps could not be taken in proceedings until a specific guardian ad litem was appointed because one of the parties is at that point considered to be under an incapacity.

The decision in Choi could also create an additional potential ground of appeal in proceedings in which guardians ad litem are appointed because the decision about the identity of the appointed guardian ad litem would be appellable in addition to the decision to have a guardian ad litem appointed, and that could generate further delays. The risk of delay is particularly concerning insofar as it relates to matters involving the safety, rights and living arrangements of children. Any delay in care and protection proceedings is detrimental to children and young people as it delays finalising their permanency plan. The process for appointing guardians ad litem, which is reinstated by the bill, contains sufficient safeguards for a party's rights without introducing unnecessary delays.

In particular, parties have the opportunity to be heard on a court or tribunal's finding of incapacity and decision to appoint a guardian ad litem, and may appeal that decision; the Guardian Ad Litem Code of Conduct requires guardians ad litem appointed from the panel to report any actual or potential conflict of interest; and, parties may raise concerns about a guardian at any point in the course of proceedings. The bill does not prevent a court or tribunal from naming a particular person as guardian ad litem. A court or tribunal may elect to appoint a particular person as guardian ad litem in certain cases. For example, where an appropriate friend or family member is available to act as guardian ad litem, that person could be appointed.

Finally, as courts and tribunals have no particular expertise or experience in vetting guardians ad litem, the two-step process does, noting additional measures to ensure that an appropriate guardian ad litem is actually appointed. While the two-step process would take longer and cost more, it would not produce any corresponding benefits. The retrospective application of this amendment is also necessary to address the risk that past guardian ad litem appointments and orders made following such appointments could be found to be invalid for not being in accordance with the process mentioned in Choi. Without retrospective amendment there is a risk that past orders could be challenged on the basis that the appointment of the guardian was invalid. For example, where a guardian ad litem was appointed in care proceedings, the validity of a subsequent order establishing care arrangements might be called into question, creating instability for the child in care. The same could occur in adoption proceedings in which a guardian ad litem was appointed.

Challenges of this nature could be highly disruptive to children who are the subject of such proceedings and in circumstances where the orders may otherwise not be open to challenge. In addition, retrospective application will provide certainty for parties to legal proceedings about the effect of orders in those proceedings. That is also consistent with the public interest in there being finality in legal proceedings. Finally, the retrospective application of these amendments will provide certainty to persons appointed as guardians ad litem about their personal liability for actions taken when acting as guardian while invalidly appointed. Each of the Acts the bill amends provides guardians ad litem appointed from the panel with a statutory protection from liability for action taken while acting as guardian ad litem. The retrospective application of the amendments preserves this exclusion of personal liability.

The bill clarifies that court and tribunal orders appointing guardians ad litem do not need to name the person appointed. That will prevent the significant delays that would otherwise occur—and are occurring since Choi—in matters where a guardian ad litem is appointed from the Guardian ad Litem Panel. Avoiding such delays helps to ensure that matters concerning the safety and the rights of children and vulnerable people are dealt with expeditiously. The retrospective application of this change is necessary to ensure that the validity of past appointments of guardians ad litem and orders made in proceedings in which a guardian ad litem was appointed are not called into question, which confirms the finality of those proceedings and ensures the continuity of liability protection afforded to those appointed as guardians ad litem. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:43): I speak to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill 2021 as a member of the New South Wales Parliament's Committee on Children and Young People. In my work with this committee I have seen how the Government approaches policy making in regard to children and young people. The responsibilities of the committee include overseeing the Working With Children Check functions of the Office of the Children's Guardian. I acknowledge the work of the New South Wales Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer, and her team for their extraordinary work. I note the impact that the bill will have on that office. It will extend the regulation-making powers of the Children's Guardian, which are currently due to expire in March of next year, until September 2022. I understand that the Government expects to have completed consolidating the relevant regulations which will permanently grant those powers to the Children's Guardian by that time.

The bill creates a new obligation on the Children's Guardian with respect to conducting investigations. At the moment the Children's Guardian will generally suspend an investigation that they are conducting if it is occurring alongside a police investigation or prosecution into the same matter. The bill seeks to allow concurrent investigations as long as the Children's Guardian or the head of a relevant agency deems it appropriate and as long as they carry the obligation to ensure that their investigation does not prejudice the police or court proceedings. I note that a couple of other key goals of the bill are to specify that serious animal cruelty offences are disqualifying offences under the Working with Children Checks, and I will talk further about that; and also to address certain rights and obligations for residential care workers, which have often come into place as an unintentional result of legislation.

Children and young people do not have the same capacity to have their say in the way our State is run as we adults do. That is not to say that children and young people do not have views—they certainly do, and we have seen that in recent years on matters as wide-ranging as climate action and racial justice. Children and young people certainly have ways of making their views known. However, without a vote, they often do not have the leverage to force political action. That is why one of our most important duties as elected representatives is to stand up for the young members of our community and, when we do, we must do so with an eye to a longer term future beyond the next election.

I welcome the efforts of the Government to tighten the Working with Children Check regime, which is an important element of the efforts to protect children from harm in New South Wales. Currently prosecutions for serious animal cruelty offences are not considered by the Children's Guardian when undertaking Working with Children Checks. I acknowledge that adding those offences to the list of those which must be considered during

a Working with Children Check will require additional resources and skills, but this change is reasonable and necessary, and I welcome its introduction.

I want to share some research done by Women's Safety NSW in February last year in a paper called *Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse—Brief Summary of Survey Responses for Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse Roundtable*. Women's Safety NSW referred to a woman by the name of Beverly, although that was a pseudonym. She was a domestic violence victim-survivor aged between 50 and 59 years and she was from an outer metropolitan area. She gave an example of animal abuse in relation to domestic violence that she experienced. She said:

My neighbours visited with their little dog, and as it approached me, tail wagging, to say hello, he—
that is, the perpetrator—

slammed its back so that it was crushed to the floor. It urinated in panic. The neighbour was speechless. He claimed it was done to protect me. The dog was injured and hobbled behind my neighbour, who quickly made her excuses and left. He stood over me, as I cleaned the floor, and told me that's what happens when anyone disrespects his position as pack leader. He made it clear that included me. Later, after separation, my daughter reported that he would lure birds with food, grab them by the beak and throw them hard into the floor. Of all the abuse she reported, I think this is what troubles her the most years later.

When Beverly was asked what more needs to be done to increase safety for women and children with pets or livestock who are impacted by domestic and family violence, she said:

It needs to be clear that this doesn't stop after separation, and that children are harmed by being exposed to animal abuse just as they are by exposure to domestic violence. On contact visits, my ex took to abusing wildlife in front of my daughter, and she is still traumatised whenever she sees the types of animals he hurt, four or five years later.

Domestic violence workers often report this kind of animal abuse. It is frequently a symptom or precursor of domestic and family violence and so it is certainly appropriate that Working with Children Checks are used as a way of protecting children from people who are likely to offend in this way. As currently worded, certain elements of legislation which are to be amended by the bill have created unnecessary or burdensome obligations for residential care workers. The differences between a professional residential care worker and a foster carer are clear, and the legislation should reflect this.

I appreciate efforts have been made so that the bill removes any uncertainty in the bail and parole regime that relates to children and young people. I understand that it is current practice for magistrates who are not sitting in the Children's Court to consider bail hearings for children and young people. That is because the Children's Court does not consider bail hearings every day, and there are access issues in the regions. The bill will address any uncertainty about this practice by ensuring that all magistrates, not just children's magistrates, may make bail decisions related to children and young people breaching parole. The bill further aims to prevent significant delay in court and tribunal proceedings by specifying that at the time a court or tribunal appoints a guardian ad litem it is not required to identify the specific individual appointed to that role. A guardian ad litem is named to assist parties to legal proceedings who have been determined to be unable to give legal instruction and this applies to many children and young people, so that provision of the bill is certainly welcomed.

My electorate office is next door to the Charlestown office of the Department of Communities and Justice. The staff at that office, and indeed at Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] offices around the State, are extremely hardworking, but they are under-resourced and overburdened. The NSW Ombudsman's 2018-19 report makes for harrowing reading. Almost one in four of the 989 infants and children who died in New South Wales in the two-year period were from families with a child protection history. The Ombudsman pointed out the cases for children reported at risk of serious harm without a caseworker making face-to-face contact with the family.

It was a Premier's priority of this Government to decrease the proportion of children and young people re-reported at risk of significant harm by 20 per cent by 2023. In 2018-19 the rate was at 36 per cent. In 2019-20 it was at nearly 37 per cent. At budget estimates hearings recently it was revealed that the rate was over 40 per cent. At the budget estimates hearing, the Minister said, "We have the highest number of caseworkers that we have ever had," and he did not think it was a resourcing issue. The figures do not reflect on the caseworkers. I know how hard those professionals work and I know how difficult the job can be. As child protection caseworker Reza told online publication *MamaMia* in October:

It's not a job for everyone ...

If you can do it, then do it ... because it's very rewarding. But it's also very taxing.

The Minister talks about the number of caseworkers, but how many of those will still be working in this field next year or the year after? Without adequate support, burnout is inevitable. The Government has to recognise this burnout of DCJ caseworkers and fix it. Having a record number of caseworkers simply does not fix the problem. The children of New South Wales, particularly the vulnerable ones, deserve much better than that. I join my

colleagues in not opposing the bill but at the same time I urge the Government to step-up its efforts to take the protection of at-risk children and young people seriously.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:53): I am pleased to speak in debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill 2021. I actually took this bill through Cabinet when I was Minister and I am pleased that my successor has introduced the bill to the House. The bill makes a series of amendments to a number of Acts, including the Adoption Act 2000, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 and the Children's Guardian Act 2019, as well as the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 and the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2013.

I single out the Hon. Emma Hurst, MLC, because one of the major changes in this bill is the recognition of serious connection between animal cruelty and child protection. During my time as Minister, the Hon. Emma Hurst brought this matter to my attention and I wished to ensure that this linkage was better reflected in the presentation to the Cabinet and the Government. Although the research is fairly new, several studies have documented a strong link between animal abuse, domestic violence and child abuse. For instance, in 1980 a study in England found that in 23 families known to have committed abuse against animals, 83 per cent also had been identified by social services as having children at risk of abuse. In a more recent study in the United States involving women's shelters in 48 states of the United States women were questioned about their experience with domestic violence, child abuse and animal abuse. When asked, "Do women who come into your shelter talk about incidents of pet abuse?" 85.4 per cent of those answered, "Yes." Moreover, when asked, "Do children who come into your shelter talk about incidents of pet abuse?" 63 per cent out of 46 of the shelters answered, "Yes."

Believe it or not, there is also documented evidence of abusers giving a pet as a gift to a victim with the express intention of covertly or otherwise controlling that victim. A good example of this evidence came to light in a New Jersey public child protection agency that found that of families receiving services for child abuse, 88 per cent had also abused their pets. Out of this 88 per cent, two-thirds of the abusers admitted to abusing the animal to control a child. In one of the most disgusting case studies, a judge told a story of a teenage girl who testified that her father threatened to kill her dog if she did not have sex with him. The connection between abuse involving both animal and child welfare is real. This bill expands the existing framework.

I should be clear: This bill is not the first time that animal cruelty offences have been recognised as being connected to child welfare. For instance, aggravated cruelty offences under section 6 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and serious animal cruelty offences under section 530 of the Crimes Act 1900 are both already assessment triggers under schedule 1 to the Act. These amendments will expand the relevance of animal cruelty offences when assessing working with children clearances and resolve unintended loopholes that exist in the law. The introduction of new section 33A will allow agencies such as the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League to disclose to the Children's Guardian information about anyone who is found guilty of, or against whom proceedings have been commenced for commission of, two kinds of animal cruelty offences. These offences are cruelty to animals under section 55 (1) or (2) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, aggravated cruelty to animals under section 6 of the same Act, bestiality under section 79 of the Crimes Act 1900 and serious animal cruelty under section 105 of the Crimes Act.

As a result of the advocacy of the Hon. Emma Hurst, this provision will allow animal welfare groups to provide early warning to the Children's Guardian if an applicant for a Working with Children Check has been charged with any of these very serious offences. I now turn to schedules 1, 3, 6 and 7, which contain important amendments to validate the procedure by which courts and tribunals appoint guardians ad litem for certain parties to proceedings. I thank former Children's Court President Peter Johnstone. His honour raised this matter with me following several cases that provided for a much wider interpretation of existing clauses than had been intended. In essence, these amendments confirm the validity of the longstanding practice of courts and other tribunals, which has been in use for several years in which guardians ad litem are appointed to assist parties to proceedings who are considered incapable of giving legal instructions. They have typically been appointed for parents in care proceedings with intellectual disability, situations such as mental illness or other circumstances that affect their capacity to provide proper legal instruction without assistance.

However, the New South Wales Court of Appeal recently determined that section 45 of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 required the tribunal to appoint a specific person for the appointment to be a valid appointment. This was never the intention. The decision of *Choi v NSW Ombudsman* invalidated the standard practice that had been the case for some time. The issue of concern here is not about providing a sufficient level of protection, but that this ruling of the Court of Appeal could be unintentionally open to abuse. The concern that I share with the Minister is that without these changes, there is a risk that previous appointments of guardians ad litem may be invalidated where parties are not satisfied with the outcome of proceedings on the basis that their

guardian ad litem was not directly appointed by a court as per the most recent ruling, but through the previously established practice, which involved an administrative appointment from a pool of guardians ad litem.

Without this amendment, I fear that courts may impose an unintended but incredible burden on the system, particularly the Children's Court. This would not only be costly in respect of timely decisions, but also involve an enormous amount of resources, which are already scarce in the child protection system. I would not want the legislation to be used in this way, as I am sure no other member of Parliament would either. Without these amendments, there is serious risk that important child protection proceedings involving the most vulnerable could be disrupted with challenges to substantive decisions of the court. This is not in the interests of vulnerable children or judicial process.

I now turn to schedule 4, which introduces amendments to the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 to: (a) clarify that bail decisions for juveniles can be made by all magistrates, not just children's magistrates, even if the bail decision is related to a breach of parole; (b) provide the Children's Court with an express power to rescind or vary the revocation of parole; and (c) clarify that a child in custody on an unrelated charge is not at large for the purposes of calculating street time, but has been taken into custody for the purposes of the Act. These amendments will provide legislative clarity to current Children's Court practices and certainty to both the court and the parties to proceedings.

Whilst bail decisions can already be made by all judges in relation to children and young adults, section 41 of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 provides that the Children's Court, constituted by the President of the Children's Court or a Children's Court magistrate, has jurisdiction to determine matters relating to parole and conditions of parole, for juvenile offenders. The purpose of the amendment proposed to section 41 is to make clear that this section does not come with unintended caveats to prevent other judges from hearing bail applications and making bail decisions, even when the bail decision may relate to a question of parole or conditions of parole. That is the current practice and this amendment makes the intention of the Parliament as clear as possible.

This Act also deals with a recent decision in *Palizio v NSW Parole Authority*, which the Minister covered very well in his second reading speech. The Minister talked about time spent in custody on a matter for which parole had been revoked and had counted as street time and not towards the sentence for which parole was revoked. When children are taken into custody, the intent behind the system is always to ensure they never come back. This legislation seeks to ensure there are no unintended consequences as a result of that decision. I commend the Government for that. In this place recently I gave notice of a motion to establish a select inquiry into criminal responsibility and sentencing options. I ask the Minister—even though I know it is not entirely within his area—to examine that request. As we are talking broadly about detention centres, my view has always been that it is not necessarily an issue of the age of criminal responsibility, it is what you do when a young person commits a crime and how you use that opportunity as an intervention.

Raising the age of criminal responsibility might come from a good place to ensure young people are not turned into career criminals, but I think the better question is: How do you use that opportunity to provide an intervention that means that the young person does not continue through the system? That has been the approach taken by countries such as New Zealand, which have residential care facilities or residential detention centres. That is an option that should be closely examined by the Government to evaluate whether better outcomes can be achieved, as demonstrated by other countries.

The over-representation of Aboriginal kids in custody has been falling because of programs such as Youth on Track and initiatives that started under Their Futures Matter, such as the bail assistance line, which has had huge positive impacts. Recognising the value of targeted early intervention is important to reduce the number of young people in custody. By the time the young person is in the criminal justice system changes can be made that do have benefits, but often things have gone too far by that point. I encourage the Government to consider that inquiry and to consider any recommendations that might be forthcoming. Having said all that, I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Before I call the Minister in reply, I hope that all members of this Chamber can sleep well tonight. This topic is very challenging.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:03): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Dubbo, Port Stephens, Charlestown and Kiama for their contributions to the debate. I thought the member for Port Stephens and the member for Charlestown were right to give thanks to the foster parents of our State, the residential care workers, the Children's Guardian and her staff and the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] workers in the very important and sometimes very difficult work that they do. I also thank all members for their support for the bill.

The Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Children) Bill 2021 will make several amendments to legislation within the Stronger Communities cluster to address emerging issues, support procedural improvements, clarify uncertainty and correct errors in legislation. The bill includes amendments to strengthen the community by clarifying that at the time a court or tribunal appoints a guardian ad litem, it is not required to identify a specific individual appointed to that role, thereby reducing unnecessary delays in proceedings; expand the consideration of animal cruelty offences under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 Act to increase protections for children and young people, including by ensuring individuals with serious animal cruelty offences not being able to work with children; amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to exclude residential care workers from certain legislative provisions relating to authorised carers; and clarify several provisions under the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 relating to the granting and variation of parole to provide certainty to the court and those engaging in court proceedings. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

COMO RAILWAY STATION UPGRADE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:06): This evening I celebrate a project close to my heart: the incredible \$18 million Como railway station upgrade, which was delivered through the New South Wales Government's Transport Access Program and opened on 22 November 2021. By way of background, Como station was previously the last remaining station in the Miranda electorate without sufficient accessibility for patrons. To reach the platform, people had to climb approximately 30 steep steps, which was a difficult task for those with mobility issues, parents with prams, those with luggage, and many others. I am proud that the accessibility upgrade to Como station has provided two new lifts to connect the platform and commuter car park to the underpass, upgraded the station entry and accessible car parking spaces on Como Parade, and upgraded the ramp and stairs at the Railway Road entry.

The Como station upgrade is, in effect, a unique tribute to Como, and honours the history and natural beauty of the suburb whilst remaining modern and sustainable. It is aesthetically beautiful, with considered detail, and is such a fitting tribute to our community. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Transport for NSW and our delivery partner Degnan Constructions for delivering a project, which I trust our community will love as much as I do. The Degnan team used impressive blocks of natural sandstone to incorporate the surrounding landscape into the station design, and it subtly included the word "Como" within the tile panelling of the underpass. Additionally, the accessibility ramp was decorated with historical depictions of Como station over 100 years ago just south of the Georges River. In the 3D work, you can see a steam train entering the station, as a reminder of our community roots.

Looking over the Como railway platforms is a solar photovoltaic glass canopy, which is the first of its kind in the New South Wales rail network. This represents the Government's commitment to innovation, clean energy and future smart solutions. Additionally, the station upgrades include new accessible male, female and family amenities and improved CCTV, lighting and power supply infrastructure to increase security and safety for patrons. I especially acknowledge Degnan's senior project manager, Luke Smart, and the passion he brought to this project in his local community. I also recognise the outstanding team at Degnan, who worked so hard on this project. It includes Chris Degnan, David Fazio, Alex Carbone, Bridget Fazio, Andrew Rosier, Scott Washington, Andrew Nicholson and Makayla Kalcev.

Construction commenced in August 2020, with 14 months and 120,000 total hours spent to deliver the project by October 2021. Over 96 per cent of the construction waste was recycled, and over 1,000 new native trees, plants and shrubs were planted to support Como's local ecosystems. To capture the essence of the Como community, Merindah Funnell from the Kurrnnulla Aboriginal Land Corporation painted two thoughtful murals of *Sunrise* and *Sunset* in the station underpass to tell the story of the land. The unique nature of this project is further highlighted through the community involvement along the way.

I acknowledge the wonderful St George & Sutherland Community College [SGSCC], who were invited to give feedback on the designs and participate in site walkthroughs throughout the construction process. The SGSCC members participated in fortnightly Little Italy Cafe and Rail Safety Week briefings as part of their Life Skills Program. I recognise those involved, including Angela Kelly and SGSCC members Michael, Rodney, Andrew, David and Luke, alongside others. One of the most beautiful contributions of all was the work donated by Jarryd, Symeon, Andrew and Hadi, who helped build the Como station planter beds in their woodworking workshops. I note that plaques have been installed onsite at Como station to honour the involvement of the members from the St George & Sutherland Community College. Additionally, I recognise Civic Disability Services, who also supported the project by doing letterbox drops to our local community and catering and cleaning.

To commemorate the opening of the Como station upgrade, the Degnan team provided the official guests at the opening with keepsakes made out of sandstone offcuts from the site. The sandstone was fashioned into a cube and engraved with the year, location and teams involved, along with a germ symbol to remember the resilience shown throughout construction during COVID-19 and a solar power symbol to honour the exciting solar photovoltaic glass canopy technology. I am so incredibly impressed by the stunning, accessible and considered upgrade that has been delivered at Como station by the New South Wales Government. I thank all involved in its delivery and look forward to seeing the upgrade being embraced and enjoyed by our community.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:11): I feel duty bound to add my positive comments to those of the member for Miranda. Probably right at the top of the list of the projects that I have been able to deliver to my electorate—from parking at my local transport hub all the way up to the bus station at my major transport hub, the Edgecliff Centre—has indeed been the Transport Access Program [TAP] lift upgrade. It cost a lot of money because it was a complex construction. Degnan also undertook this construction and they worked so well with my local community over a long and protracted period.

The lift created a sense of amenity and had such a practical impact on the elderly and young mums with their strollers, who could traverse from the train station platform all the way up to the buses and in between to the shops. These simple projects in local electorates cannot be underestimated for the positive impact they have on local communities. I was so delighted to hear the member for Miranda talk about the way in which Degnan had worked with her community to build an upgrade that was unique to the area and incorporated the spirit and community sentiment in its design. I thank the Government for my elevator upgrade. It is still something that local residents compliment the New South Wales Government on, even though it was completed 18 months ago.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:13): This time last year many of us were happy to see the back of 2020 and the back of lockdowns, facemasks and COVID restrictions. But 12 months on and we are again looking forward to the back of restrictions. I am optimistic that next year will be better. We now have high vaccination coverage not just across Newcastle but throughout the entire Hunter region. There may have been a vocal minority against vaccination, but the numbers speak for themselves at almost 95 per cent double dose coverage in Newcastle adults. I am exceptionally proud of our city. Time and again, even when we were repeatedly let down by the Government with weak public health orders and vaccines directed away from the region, Novocastrians stood up to protect themselves, their friends and their families. They did not want to see businesses continue to hurt, their neighbours to feel isolated or anyone else to grieve a loss. For a while it felt like the lockdown was never ending, but when you consider that in the Hunter it ran for two months, it makes you wonder where the year went.

I will move on to wins. We love wins. I am thrilled for Fern Bay Public School. It is a little school with a big heart, but it was bursting at the absolute seams with only one permanent building. She took a lot of convincing, but the Minister finally came to the party and the school is enjoying four new learning areas, a withdrawal space, a practical activities area and something that has been missing for a long time—covered walkways. We have also been working hard on ambulance resourcing. I have spent a lot of time discussing with the union the frustrations of the staff with rostering and response times. Often the community has the same grievances as the workers.

One of the bigger issues raised with me is that ambulances and crews are taken from one station to cover a shortfall at another. On far too many occasions the Hamilton station, which is Newcastle's biggest station, was left with only one crew on an overnight shift. Their own officers were sent to Port Stephens or the Central Coast. This year, for the first time in a decade, an overdue change was made to the minimum number of ambulances rostered on per shift. For us in Hunter Zone 1, that is worth an extra 42 ambulances on the road each week. We also have an infrastructure boost coming, with the Stockton station to receive a much-needed refurbishment.

It has taken relentless pursuit, but we finally have progress on both the Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct and the Newcastle Education Campus. The business case for the education campus has been submitted

to Treasury, and we received the cash injection needed to prepare the sports precinct business case. Coming in to the shadow ministry a fortnight before the Greater Sydney lockdown began meant I did not quite get the start I was hoping for; however, the silver lining was that it granted me time to get up to speed with the great work the member for Lakemba did when he was the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE. As a result, when we were able to do so, I hit the ground running, prosecuting the Government's planned TAFE campus sales as well as the move to put more units of study online. There is still much more to come.

Despite the busyness of the year, it has been very rewarding. As much as I thrive on the big issues and wins, I also love the small wins. A social housing tenant and her son with autism were being evicted from their property. All she wanted was to stay in the suburb; she had friends there and her son was comfortable there. It was a process, but we fought for her and she moved into a property across the road from her old place. It is little things like that—fixing housing issues, securing COVID vaccinations for vulnerable people or even just helping people make sense of the ever-changing and ever-confusing restrictions—that make this job wonderful. It has been a long and tiring but wonderful year. I am ready to do it all again next year, minus the COVID outbreak.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE WINTER GRAIN HARVEST

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (20:18): Instead of its usual sprint, this year's record Northern Tablelands winter grain harvest has turned into a marathon, as our broadacre croppers contend with a deluge of wet weather. It is a far cry from the backbreaking drought of 2019, when the sky refused to yield a single drop of moisture and most paddocks remained completely bare and fallow. One farmer around Moree said to me the other day that the only positive of that year and the seasonal conditions was being able to tuck into Christmas lunch at home with his family, instead of being stuck on the header. I think things will be in reverse this festive season.

The wet weather across a large portion of regional New South Wales has caused major disruptions on and off the paddock. My heart goes out to growers in the Central West, particularly around Forbes, who are at this moment tallying their crop losses from flooding. By the end of this week many other parts of the State may join them. The situation experienced on the Lachlan River could easily have occurred at Moree and Boggabilla last week, and unfortunately may still occur in the coming fortnight or longer, where the Bureau of Meteorology predicted major flood levels that thankfully did not eventuate. Unfortunately for our growers, this week the weather has again deteriorated. With more than 60 millimetres of rain recorded at Moree and 80 millimetres at Inverell since last Friday, the paddocks are soaked and the rivers are at bursting point, having breached their banks in many locations.

The question is what does that mean for our record harvest? It was supposed to be one of the largest winter crop harvests on record in the State. The overarching commentary from industry and farmers is that until crops are off, it is hard to assess the extent of the damage caused by those weather events. However, the latest falls will definitely cause damage and therefore a degradation of the value of crop and potentially the yield. Cereal crops that copped the heaviest rainstorms will definitely suffer lower test weight, and there is a big risk at the moment of black tip fungus in the barley and wheat. The Department of Primary Industries has received reports that grain has shot and sprung around the State. Some crops that were graded prime initially will be downgraded to feed grain, which is worth less on the market. Nevertheless, with the commodity price in the beef industry so high and the feed lotters looking for grain, there will still be opportunities to sell direct to feed lots domestically.

Barley has been one of the most affected crops in the region. Despite not making malt quality, it should still make feed quality levels. Prices are still pretty good. The wet has not just bogged paddocks, but receivals as well. Receival sites have conducted a number of falling numbers tests, which tests the quality as well as the moisture content of grain. It takes around 15 to 20 minutes per truck, which is about four times the five minutes it would usually take in good conditions. The extra time is causing delays, line-ups and bottlenecks at receival sites, particularly the GrainCorp sites. To dodge the rush hour, many farmers are storing grain on farm using their silos and temporary sites and all the available tarps to cover the grain, instead of taking it directly to receival sites.

Many contract harvesters have moved south to meet their obligations where it is not as wet. Needless to say, we will need those contractors to come back north when things dry out, hopefully towards the middle of December. This harvest should have been huge, and one which restored optimism to the sector after the drought. Unfortunately, we cannot control the weather. It is the one thing we cannot control. The silver lining is as the old saying goes, there is money in mud and there is none in dust. While the winter crop will no doubt be heavily impacted, it sets us up for an absolute cracker of a summer crop. There will be enough moisture in the table to ensure the next winter crop is a belter as well. Farmers are optimists by their very nature. While the rain will affect yield and prices, it will keep farmers in the game. The next 12 months and the year after that should definitely be strong.

WESTERN SYDNEY WASTE INCINERATOR PROPOSALS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:23): For too long, the people of western Sydney have been in limbo over proposed incinerator developments at Eastern Creek, despite widespread opposition from the community. Years ago when Dial A Dump first proposed an incinerator at Eastern Creek, the people in my electorate and across wider western Sydney were united in their opposition. From day one, I was wholeheartedly opposed to an incinerator in western Sydney. Burning thousands of tonnes of rubbish just a few kilometres from heavily populated suburbs, schools and parklands just does not make sense. In the Sydney Basin, we already suffer from greater pollution than the rest of Sydney, and none of these proposals could adequately ensure that the incinerators would meet the rigorous environmental standards needed and keep the people of western Sydney safe. There were no appropriate safeguards in place to preserve our families' health and safety.

Over the years, the Independent Planning Commission, NSW Health and the NSW Environment Protection Authority all rejected the proposals put forward to build incinerators in western Sydney. The Independent Planning Commission ruled that the projects were not in the public interest and the uncertainty of the impacts on air, water quality and human health meant that the Dial A Dump incinerator was rejected. To make matters worse, Cleanaway recently put forward a proposal for an incinerator in Eastern Creek, despite opposition from the community to the Dial A Dump proposal. For many years there has been anger and frustration as our community have expressed their opposition again and again, only to have developers continue to push for incinerators where they do not belong. After many years of advocacy by my community, me and other members in this place, on 10 September 2021 the New South Wales Government announced a ban on large-scale energy-from-waste projects in the Sydney Basin.

The New South Wales Government's Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan makes it clear to both the community and industry where incinerators may and may not be established. This is fantastic news for the people of western Sydney. This plan ensures that large-scale energy-from-waste projects cannot be developed in western Sydney. Finally western Sydney has certainty and confidence that there will be no incinerators in our region. Finally, after many petitions, rallies, letters, representations, meetings, public consultations and much more, the people's voice has been heard. From the beginning, we made it clear that incinerators were not welcome in our backyard, and now they will never be built here. The plan makes clear where new thermal waste-to-energy facilities can and cannot proceed, identifying the West Lithgow Precinct, Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct and Southern Goulburn-Mulwaree Precinct as priority locations to host those operations.

The plan ensures that new thermal waste-to-energy projects are co-located with transport links and complementary industries, and kept away from high-density residential areas. The plan increases community confidence by mandating that where energy-from-waste centres are allowed, operators make emissions data available to the public online and in real time. The infrastructure plan will ensure that New South Wales has the most rigorous air quality and environmental controls for energy-from-waste projects in the world. This plan is about getting the balance right between supporting investment in New South Wales, driving a circular economy and reducing carbon emissions, while also respecting the concerns of local communities.

I thank the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, for his work in ensuring that the community of western Sydney can finally have the confidence that there will not be an incinerator in our backyard. I again thank Minister Kean because he took a significant amount of personal time and was really invested in this issue for my community. I say that not because I am a member of the Government; the Minister genuinely took an interest and worked hard to help my community overcome this massive challenge. I once again thank the people of Mulgoa and western Sydney. It has been a long, tiring and at times what felt like a hopeless fight against these behemoths, who are pushing these incinerators in our community. I thank my community for persevering and continuing to make their voices heard in this journey. I thank them for entrusting me to speak up on their behalf. Together, we have won.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:28): Time and time again, I have sat in this Chamber and listened to the member for Mulgoa fight for her community on the issue of incinerators. I say to all those large businesses that thought they could get away with putting in incinerators in Mulgoa or western Sydney that they should look at the tenacity and the fighting spirit displayed by the member for Mulgoa. There was no way in a million years that she was going to let an incinerator in her community. That is not what the community wanted, and she has been their voice tirelessly on this issue from day one. I congratulate the member for Mulgoa on her advocacy and her fierce tenacity when it comes to protecting her community in western Sydney and the electorate of Mulgoa from these sorts of inappropriate developments. I have sat in this Chamber multiple times and witnessed the member's tenacity on this issue. She was never going to let up, and she was never going to let the people of Mulgoa down when it came to the issue of incinerators. I congratulate her on the great work she has done supporting her community.

MACQUARIE FIELDS STATION

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (20:29): It is almost Christmas, and I like traditions. Traditions often reflect our values and provide an opportunity to focus on what is important to us. Take my Christmas wish list for example. Since being elected in 2015, I have developed an annual Christmas wish list for my electorate. You might ask why. It is because there is more chance of Santa delivering for my community than this Liberal Government. I just want the Macquarie Fields community to receive its fair share—our fair share. That is not much to ask. It has been six years since my first Christmas wish list and one wish that has sat consistently at the top of the list each year is a lift at Macquarie Fields station. Not surprisingly, at the top of this year's list—you guessed it—is a lift at Macquarie Fields station, and all because the New South Wales Liberal Government has consistently failed to fund much-needed transport infrastructure for my local community.

But what is worse is that the Liberal Government has engaged in blatant pork-barrelling and made a mockery of the Transport Access Program. Take Hawkesbury River station in a Liberal-held electorate, for example—station upgrade complete and lifts done. Recent statistics show weekly Opal trips at the Hawkesbury River station to be around 1,000—barely a fraction of Macquarie Fields, at around 10,000 weekly trips, with its 70-plus steps that make it difficult for those with mobility challenges. An accessibility upgrade is now underway at East Hills station—a Liberal-held electorate. East Hills is ranked 37, below Macquarie Fields' rank of 34. At Como station another upgrade is in progress in another Liberal-held electorate. While both East Hills and Como deserve their upgrade, despite having fewer weekly trips than Macquarie Fields, my community also deserve their fair share and for their hard-earned taxes to be treated with respect.

It would appear that the Liberal Government has its own traditions, one of which is pork-barrelling station upgrades. Last year a report by the New South Wales Auditor-General slammed the Liberal Government for politicising station upgrades. This Liberal Government has failed to abide by its own guidelines and assessment. To ignore its own transport data and engage in blatant pork-barrelling is simply wrong. Treating communities and allocating money differently based on where people live rather than the facts is financially and ethically wrong. It is time this old and weary Liberal Government forged some new traditions—new traditions that put fairness, integrity and accountability first and foremost. Will the newly minted Premier Perrottet be so bold as to banish pork-barrelling to the scrap heap forever? Or is the new Premier all talk and no action? Or is it just another obfuscation tactic to call for yet another inquiry with no follow-up or action?

Recently the Premier said, "Whatever community you are in, you should have access to the best health care, the best education, the best public transport." Really? Let us check the facts to see whether that is true. Recently it was revealed that a whopping 92 per cent of schools awarded grants as part of a renewable energy pilot program were in Government-held electorates. Some traditions are worth keeping; others are not. So entrenched is the Liberal Government's obsession with pork-barrelling that throwing money at Government-held electorates is totally passé. The former Premier, the member for Willoughby, boasted that she got \$170 million in five minutes for the former member for Wagga Wagga. On that basis, it should take barely less than a minute to fund our lifts at Macquarie Fields. The former Deputy Premier even earned the nickname "Pork Barilaro" and said he was proud of what it represents, referring to pork-barrelling as an "investment".

So the Liberal Government has some new faces at the top, but it is still the same at the core: more of the same spin and tricky accounting, putting its own political needs ahead of the best interests of the people of New South Wales. Nothing has changed. The Premier recently said, "It's important there is public confidence in relation to the expenditure of taxpayer funds". Absolutely. If only his actions matched his words. Now, instead of false promises, instead of tricky politics, instead of using taxpayers' money like its own personal piggy bank, the Liberal Government has a real opportunity to put those words into action. It will require transparency, probity and accountability—no doubt an uncomfortable trifecta of principles. So my message to the new Premier is this: Stop the spin, quit pork-barrelling and finally put your money where your mouth is and fund the lifts at Macquarie Fields station, because we are in dire need of this Christmas gift for our local area.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:34): I acknowledge the speech given by the member for Macquarie Fields and highlight that, with the Transport Access Program, the stations at Lisarow, Narara, Niagara Park, Point Clare, Ourimbah and Tuggerah are all receiving accessibility upgrades. Every single one of those six stations on the Central Coast is in a Labor electorate. The Opposition talks about pork-barrelling, but it is getting a very good share of the Transport Access Program on the Central Coast. Tuggerah station was built by Labor with no lift. The Government will not be lectured by members opposite about rolling out transport accessibility programs across New South Wales, especially when every station on the Central Coast getting those upgrades is in a Labor electorate.

KEIRA ELECTORATE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (20:35): I speak about the issue of housing affordability in my own community, which has simply become virtually impossible. I am really concerned about it impacting on future generations. Home ownership in my community is now the great Australian impossible dream. It is an impossible dream for our kids, youth and anyone who is trying to enter the housing market, unless they have large financial resources behind them. My community has faced many challenges and changes over a number of years. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates that the average deposit to secure a mortgage is approximately \$106,000. The median house price for an average three-bedroom home in the suburb of Corrimal, where my electorate office is situated in my electorate of Keira, is just over \$1 million. The median house price for the more northern part of my electorate in communities like Thirroul and other areas where members might go on holiday is \$1.68 million. That is clearly out of reach for anyone who wants to enter the property market.

Home ownership is now a deteriorating dream for many people I speak with; many of them are young people. Clearly, they are relying on the bank of mum and dad, but in my electorate the bank of mum and dad is not going to be good enough. We love where we live. Like many people in the State, I live in a coastal community. I have lived in the Illawarra all my life; it is where I grew up and all I know. We knew as kids that we would always be able to buy a house as we got older and live roughly where we grew up, or close by. That is no longer the case. I am fortunate enough to live in what I consider the most beautiful part of New South Wales. It is where the rainforest meets the sea. Kids ride their bikes on the escarpment and swim and surf in the ocean. They have a right to dream of staying, buying a house and raising their own family in the place they grew up. I recognise that there is no simple solution. I recognise that the issue is now so great that the financial divide within our community will continue to distribute increased wealth to the already asset wealthy and leave many behind.

The people of New South Wales are realistic; they do not expect State governments to address the enormity of the issue in its entirety. What they do expect are reasonable outcomes and sound policy, particularly around social and affordable housing. We have seen bold policy on social housing in Victoria from the Victorian Labor Government. The Big Housing Build was announced in the November 2020 State Victorian budget in which the Government pledged \$5.3 billion to deliver more than 12,000 new homes, boosting Victoria's social housing supply by 10 per cent over four years. As someone who lives in a community with a large amount of social housing and the challenges that go with that—and I am certainly not the only one—I think it is time we cross the political divide on the issue and make some real investments in both the maintenance and rebuild of social and affordable housing in our communities.

As policymakers we must do everything we can and work in a bipartisan manner to take immediate steps to try to address the challenges that those trying to access social and affordable housing face. I do not think it is good enough, and I do not think anyone in this Parliament thinks it is good enough. The issue is not about a Labor or Liberal view. I do not think any of us believe that people earning an income but being forced to live in cars or temporary accommodation for sustained periods of time because of a lack of social housing is good enough. I believe a community like mine has an opportunity to boost the economy and employment opportunities if we invest in social and affordable housing in a meaningful way. I hope that political parties of all flavours focus on the issue going forward. I still believe that housing is one of the most significant social and economic challenges that faces my children's generation. My generation is lucky enough to own a home. More and more people will need to access social and affordable housing. I hope that, in the spirit of bipartisanship, the solutions come from the Parliament.

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:40): I congratulate St George Community Transport, one of the most impactful organisations in my local area, on another great year. St George Community Transport provides transport services to some of the most vulnerable members in our community who would otherwise have difficulty transporting themselves. That includes the frail, elderly, those with a disability and their carers, and a wide range of others. St George Community Transport was instrumental to the wellbeing of our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that everyone had access to groceries and essentials. The organisation ran a drop-off service, while ensuring social distancing to deliver to seniors and vulnerable individuals. The team also assisted St George Meals on Wheels with its services to make sure that no-one missed out on what they needed.

St George Community Transport has grown to a team of 30 employees and more than 70 volunteers, something that seemed unimaginable after humble beginnings. It is now one of the largest community transport providers in New South Wales, and the demand for its service continues to grow. Its fleet has also grown to 27 vehicles, ranging from sedans to 24-seater buses. Many of the vehicles are custom modified to ensure comfort and accessibility for all clients. One of the great qualities of our local area is its cultural diversity. St George is home to many different ethnicities, faiths and languages. In fact, 20 per cent of the organisation's customers are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which includes people speaking 61 different languages.

St George Community Transport should be commended for its flexibility and efficiency in catering to that diverse client base. It now employs Mandarin-, Cantonese- and Arabic-speaking team members each Friday in order to assist with bookings and enquiries. That is proof of its person-centred approach to service delivery and a testament to its outstanding management.

St George Community Transport is not only making a huge difference in the lives of individuals but also creating a stronger community for all of us to live in. Importantly, it is one of many organisations in our local area that helps to maintain our strong sense of community. It is a family-friendly community which values selflessness. By ensuring that all members of our community have access to transport, the organisation is allowing residents to socialise and to continue to develop our large yet close community. It comes as no surprise to me, therefore, that figures such as kilometres travelled continue to increase by almost 10 per cent every year.

While we look forward to the bright future ahead for St George Community Transport, it is important to acknowledge the work of many individuals who got it to where it is today. At the end of 2019, Kate Young retired as CEO, ending a six-year tenure leading the organisation. Her leadership and skills were a huge reason that St George Community Transport grew so rapidly. Kate has been capably replaced by Carol Strachan, who has helped the organisation through a smooth transition. I look forward to continuing to see it grow under Carol's leadership. Credit must go to chairman Chris Tyler for overseeing so much of the organisation's success.

Last but not least, I thank the employees and many volunteers who work tirelessly to provide transport to those who need it most. We cannot understate the importance of St George Community Transport and the difference it makes in our community. On behalf of our community, I thank St George Community Transport. As always, credit must go to chairman Chris Tyler for overseeing so much of St George Community Transport's success. Last but not least, I thank the employees and the many volunteers of St George Community Transport, who work tirelessly to provide transport to those who need it most. We cannot understate the importance of the service and the difference it makes in our local community. On behalf of the community, I thank St George Community Transport.

ONLINE GAMBLING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:44): Tonight I speak about the increase and impact of online gambling since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 the Fairfield local government area was chosen to pilot a community-designed screening model for the detection and reduction of gambling harm. That was particularly necessary in Fairfield because it has a high number of poker machines in pubs and clubs. Losses to poker machines are recorded at \$1.4 million a day, which is an appalling amount. In everyday language that is equivalent to the value of buying an average Sydney house a day. The project was a collaboration between three levels of government: the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network, the South Western Sydney Local Health District and Fairfield City Council. The Government has clearly recognised that there is a great need for assistance in this area. That has previously been a challenge due to the fact that gambling harm does not form part of the mainstream health service and has relied heavily on funds generated by gambling levies.

A tool will improve the outlook of those identified as being at risk of harm through face-to-face interaction and screening. However, the Government must also acknowledge the increase in online gambling, where patrons are not as visible. In line with public health orders, poker machines were temporarily shut down at various times throughout the pandemic. Many New South Wales residents, including high-risk gamblers, turned to online gambling as a substitute, with operators doing their level best to convert those high-risk individuals into regular customers. Faster internet speeds, the convenience of betting via mobile phone, heavy advertising and new betting options are the drawbacks. These days people can literally bet on anything. Throughout the pandemic there was even the opportunity to bet on what colour the Premier's blazer would be at the 11.00 a.m. press conference.

The use of digital money in a virtual gambling setting is also a factor leading to increased losses, particularly with problem gamblers because people tend to not consider the money they spend as real. There is also the question of the authenticity of those sites. Some forms of gambling are legal in Australia, others are not. The lack of information regarding the legality of online gambling operators makes it difficult for everyday citizens to differentiate between what is allowed and what is prohibited, and which operators are authentic as opposed to those that are not. A raft of laws under the Gaming Machines Amendment (Gambling Harm Minimisation) Bill 2020 was introduced by the Government to tackle problem gambling on gaming machines in pubs, clubs and hotels.

In the current post-pandemic climate the Government must also consider the prevalence of online gambling in future legislative review. Current legislation surrounding online gambling seems to focus on infringements issued to operators who breach New South Wales gambling laws, with infringements to date mainly issued for breaches of advertising laws and inducements to gamble. TopSport, Sportsbet, Tabcorp, Unibet and Ladbrokes have all been fined for various breaches since the pandemic began in 2020, with some of those agencies being

repeat offenders. Therefore, it is clear that infringements are not enough to deter online betting agencies from continuing to induce gamblers to use their services, even those who are at high risk from gambling harm.

Revenue is obviously high enough to warrant agencies breaking the law and receiving an infringement. More needs to be done by the Government to curb their activities. Foreign betting agencies must also be addressed. The ClubGrants Category 3 Fund reinvests the profits from gaming machines at registered clubs into funding for large-scale community projects—the revenue stays here. That is not the case with online foreign betting agencies, with revenue gained from Australian patrons going offshore. None of it is being reinvested to the local community or into funding programs for problem gambling. It is essential that all levels of government work towards legislation to ensure that patrons know exactly where the revenue is going and that foreign betting agencies pay their dues and take some responsibility for high-risk gambling.

Local pubs, clubs and betting agencies form a relationship with their punters at the site. They are trained and have a moral obligation under the Responsible Conduct of Gambling code to identify and support patrons at risk of gaming harm. That does not happen in the virtual world. Problem gambling is the scourge of any community. It has a ripple effect of destruction, impacting not just the individual but also their family and the wider community. I am saddened by the prevalence of this in the Fairfield local government area. I call on the Government to introduce better regulation of the industry, particularly regarding the recent surge of online gambling.

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (20:49): In a year when students were excluded from their campuses for more than a term, it is with particular pleasure that I bring to the attention of the House the excellent achievements of Redeemer Baptist School students. Despite the lockdowns, the students have continued to excel in original scientific research. Year 5 student Karmichael Candra was selected as a national primary engineering winner in the BHP Foundation Science and Engineering Awards. Karmichael was also a prize winner in the STANSW [Science Teachers Association NSW] Young Scientist Awards, along with eight fellow primary and secondary Redeemer students.

Year 9 student Danielle Gibson represented Australia at the virtual Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair as the Broadcom MASTERS International delegate, and in 2020 year 12 student Antonio Rajaratnam was awarded a US\$40,000 University of Arizona renewal tuition scholarship. Demonstrating continuing social responsibility in Redeemer scientific research, Kush Dewan's winning year 12 STANSW project utilised surface oxygen vacancies on crystalline cerium(iv) oxide to promote catalytic ozonisation for the removal of bisphenol A, which is an endocrine disrupter, in wastewater. That is the level of HSC science extension research at Redeemer Baptist.

Redeemer students have excelled in mathematics and computational thinking. Year 7 student Christopher Herbert won a place on the 2021 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Bebras Australia Honour Roll for computational thinking. Year 9 student Anubhav Ammangi won the Australian Mathematics Competition prize, a University of New South Wales School of Mathematics and Statistics distinction award. He joined with year 9 colleagues Yoon Choi and Yemi Olaitan to win the Mathematical Association of New South Wales Investigating with Mathematics competition small group prize. Redeemer students have also continued to excel in literacy. Year 12 student Anaya Rajratoann won second prize in the Australian Christian Teen Writer category at the national 2021 SparkLit Awards. According to the judges, Anaya's story entitled *A Lesson in Murder* was:

An exciting, defiantly comical tale that confronts the true costs and rewards of imitating Jesus and letting the cycle of hurt end with you.

Redeemer was also the national primary award winner in the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards. In the secondary learning assisted category, year 10 student Nikolas Nissan won second prize. In visual arts, Redeemer year 4 students Allen Bineesh and Olivia Azzi won first and third place in the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's Shorebirds Competition, year 9 student Tyron Jung won a Harmony Day Poster Competition award, and year 7 student Felix Liu won a Young Australia Art gold medal award. This year Redeemer year 12 student Antonio Rajaratnam was selected as the 2020 Junior Citizen of the Year at the City of Parramatta Council Australia Day awards. Antonio was recognised not only for his scientific discoveries, for which he was proclaimed the STANSW Young Scientist of the Year, but also for his extensive community participation at school and in his local Catholic parish.

The Redeemer community must be commended for its great work. At the beginning of 2021, following the devastating floods in Honduras, the community garnered support for one of their past students who lives and works as an educational leader in an impoverished Honduras community. During the year another Redeemer alumnus, whose tertiary education in nursing was supported financially by the school community, has been an

Indigenous leader in Papua New Guinea's response to the COVID crisis in Port Moresby. As Redeemer students returned to learning on campus in term four, the entire Redeemer community, including students and their families, joined to contribute nearly 300 shoebox gifts for the Australian branch of Samaritan's Purse, which will be distributed to children living in vulnerable situations overseas through Operation Christmas Child. I say well done to them all. I commend all the students at Redeemer Baptist School for their efforts in the difficult circumstances of 2021 and acknowledge Russell Bailey, the headmaster, as well as Jonathan Cannon and all the teachers and staff for their hard work. Redeemer continues to give hope and the opportunity to achieve excellence to all its students. I commend Redeemer for its passion, for delivering great education and for earning a fantastic reputation in our local community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (20:54): I raise my very grave concern about the conduct of the NSW Electoral Commissioner in respect of the local government elections and his directions, which I consider to be unlawful and in breach of the implied freedoms in the Commonwealth Constitution. I have four councils covering my electorate. A direction has been issued by the Electoral Commissioner that party workers or the workers of candidates cannot hand out how-to-vote cards within 100 metres of a polling booth. I maintain that that direction is unlawful, improper and unconstitutional. I observe that for far too long the Electoral Commissioner has marginalised people working on behalf of political parties in an effort to be more efficient, and that has, in itself, impacted upon the fabric of our democracy.

In any form of election in our democracy the candidates, their political parties, their volunteers and those who work for them are all an active part of that democracy. They all play their part in an election. You cannot place yourself in a position of making it more difficult for the candidates, the political parties and their representatives, at the expense of the candidates and their volunteers, simply because it is convenient to the Electoral Commissioner. We have seen that joint polling booths make it very difficult to get the right how-to-votes in people's hands, which itself causes an increase in the number of informal votes. Whilst it might be more efficient for the commissioner, it is not so for the major political parties. In respect of the local government election campaign, this House enabled a law that provides the Minister with regulation-making power when:

- (a) The proposed regulations are reasonable to protect the health, safety of persons from risk of harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic ...

That is the only occasion when the Minister can make such a recommendation. Clause 356TB of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 provides that the Electoral Commissioner can give a direction if he:

... is satisfied the direction is necessary—

- (a) to comply with a public health order that is in force at the time of the election ...

It is not necessary to comply with a public health order because there is no public health order that adversely impacts upon the running of the election. It further provides:

- (b) to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19 where the material would be handed out.

Subclause (3) states:

- (3) Notice of the direction must be published on the election manager's website.

I have in my hand a printout of the Electoral Commissioner's website. I looked at it tonight before coming to the Chamber. I cannot tell whether anything has been published because it states:

The main NSW Electoral Commission website is experiencing performance issues which are being investigated.

Isn't that terrific? In terms of any proposed direction to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19, some 80,000 people can go into the ANZ Stadium if they are vaccinated, while 50,000 vaccinated people can go into the Sydney Cricket Ground. However, one vaccinated person who is outside at a polling booth with a mask on cannot hand out a how-to-vote card. That is absurd. I remind the House that in *Lange v Australian Broadcasting Commission* [1997] HCA 25 the High Court unanimously recognised an implied freedom of political communication as deriving from the text and structure of the Australian Constitution. Therefore, this Parliament and the Electoral Commissioner cannot act in a way that interferes with that implied freedom of political communication.

One can only burden that test, arising from the High Court's decision in *Palmer v Western Australia* [2021] HCA 5, if it be structured as a proportionality test, in that it is "reasonably necessary". The Electoral Commissioner's direction is not reasonably necessary and would fail that test. I can tell members one thing: If I feel it necessary to hand out a how-to-vote card and participate in a local government election, I will not be adhering to any 100-metre guideline because it is unconstitutional, wrong and improper.

GREG DAVIES

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade) (20:59): Tonight I do something a little bit rare and pay tribute and respects to a Labor politician. Greg Davies is a Penrith councillor who is to retire at the end of this council term.

Mr Ron Hoenig: He is a good mate of mine. A good guy.

Mr STUART AYRES: Yes, he is. He has been on Penrith City Council since 1995. I say that 26 years is a pretty fair stint in any form of public service. He has been lucky enough to be the Mayor of Penrith for 3½ terms over the time he has represented the community on the council. Greg will undoubtedly be proud of the long list of things he has achieved for his ward and our wider Penrith community during his time on the council. However, right at the top of that list would be the work he did around the foundation of the Erskine business park to ensure that job centre could be created. Bringing to life a new commercial centre with lots of opportunities around freight logistics and the principle of people working closer to home was something that Greg navigated through the bureaucratic quagmire that often exists with these things. Today Greg can look across the Erskine business park and see a thriving location close to where many people in the Penrith community live, which gives them a chance to work closer to home.

I know that Greg was also right at the forefront of the changing nature of waste services in Penrith. He was probably ahead of his time, with Penrith leading the way with a three-bin service that is now seen as world's best practice, making sure that we minimise waste and drive recycling. I know that is something he was pretty passionate about. He worked closely with me on the Yandhai Nepean Crossing design panel. We now have this wonderful pedestrian bridge over the Nepean River. I thank him very much for his work on that. As someone who has been a Penrith councillor for a sustained period, he has been able to work across a whole raft of local community organisations to improve footpaths, remove graffiti or put play equipment into those locations.

Whilst Greg and I might be on opposite sides of the political divide, the one thing I have come to respect the most is that we are both just immensely passionate people about the Penrith community. Greg has been privileged to represent his community on the Penrith council for such a sustained period, and there is no doubt he has left an indelible mark on the Penrith community. He is a pretty good bloke too. He drinks a bit of Jack Daniels and I do not mind a beer, and we are partial to having a punt together. Greg was lucky enough to marry the very good, beautiful, stunning Kerrie Davies, who is the editor of the *Nepean News*. At the time they met it was a little bit of "red and blue"—Kerrie's blue colours were pretty well known across the community—but it is fair to say that love got past all of those political discussions.

Some of my most enjoyable nights are the discussions between Greg, Kerrie, Marise and me. We are able to talk about our local community, our State, the direction of our country, who is going to win at Randwick on Saturday or how good the Penrith Panthers have been going. They are just good nights—the kind that only happen when good-quality people and strong friends come together. It has been said to me over my time in politics that whilst we might have different values and different political parties, people who come together for all the right reasons can develop an incredibly strong friendship. I consider Greg a good friend and a close mate.

I am somewhat disappointed to know that Greg is leaving the council because he has worked with me to achieve very good outcomes across the community. However, I will not be too displeased to see him leave because I have been a little annoyed about the vote in the east ward over the past 26 years, so having him off the ballot paper might allow me to get one extra councillor in that part of the world. Even though the member for Heffron said that Greg cannot hand out how-to-vote cards at this local council election, I might get a Liberal how-to-vote card in his hands at some stage in the future. Greg has been an outstanding representative of the community, having spent 26 years on the council. It is most appropriate that I acknowledge in the Parliament of New South Wales a friend who has provided a great service to our community. It is the simplest thing that I can do to recognise Greg's achievements.

NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (21:05): I support the NSW Teachers Federation in calling on the New South Wales Government to address its concerns about the teaching profession in New South Wales and in the Mount Druitt electorate in particular. Over the past few years I have had many meetings with Teachers Federation representatives from my area. The subject of teacher shortages and conditions has been at the forefront of all those meetings. Worryingly, those concerns are still ongoing and they are not being addressed by the Government. Instead of increasing wages and rewards, the Government proposes to lower the standard required to apply for teaching courses, which will only open the profession to those who would not have previously qualified.

The teaching profession has always been held in high esteem, and we expect those who educate our young ones to be highly qualified. It appears as though the Government is only considering quick-fix solutions that will have long-term detrimental effects on the education of our students. An "attraction to teaching" report that was presented to the education Minister on 30 August this year warned that, "Graduates see low potential for income growth and career advancement." The report warned that teachers feel unsupported. It stated:

We need to acknowledge that the current experience on some dimensions is not always compelling. These include the rate of salary progression, the complex views of the possible work-life balance, and limited in-classroom career progression.

That adds to previous warnings from the department that the demands and expectations on teachers are increasing while the current rewards, pathways and learning opportunities are not providing enough incentive. An August 2020 strategy briefing stated:

On average, teacher pay has been falling relative to pay in other professions and this makes it a less attractive profession for high achieving students.

The Government's newly released People Matter Employee Survey for 2021 found that only 38 per cent of teachers agree they are fairly paid, which is 21 per cent lower than the New South Wales public sector average. Only 35 per cent agree they have time to do their job well. Again that is 21 per cent lower than the sector average. The Government's denial of the seriousness of the current situation and its refusal to consider a comprehensive reset of salaries and working conditions, as recommended by the independent Gallop inquiry, is incredibly short-sighted. Recently released Department of Education figures show the number of vacant permanent positions in schools increased by over 80 per cent between July and October to over 1,800 positions. Department of Education documents show that more than 100,000 students are being taught by teachers outside their area of qualification. The department's conclusion for those shortages was explicit:

Shortages exist due to more attractive alternative careers and salaries.

In August this year the department estimated that 4,100 extra teachers would be needed by the end of 2022. As outlined above, the evidence shows that resetting salaries to make them competitive with other professions and increasing the amount of time teachers have for collaboration and lesson planning is an essential part of the solution if we are to ensure that no child continues to miss out due to a lack of teachers.

OPEN SPACES AND FORESHORE ACCESS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (21:09): I speak on the importance of open space and improving foreshore access for public use. The extended restrictions and stay-at-home orders during the coronavirus pandemic emphasised the value of open spaces and viable public amenities. My electorate is home to the Bay Run, which is one of the great walking, running and cycling paths in the State—I would even argue it is the best one. The seven-kilometre trail around Iron Cove bay has magnificent scenery and views, and the wide open spaces and cafes that line the path make it a very popular destination. The Bay Run has become the benchmark for other areas seeking to improve foreshore access and develop new open spaces and walking tracks.

The Bay Run attracts thousands of visitors each week and people travel from all over Greater Sydney to complete the walk. It is great to see so many people using the path. However, in recent years the feedback that I have received is that the Bay Run can sometimes get very crowded, especially at peak times. That demonstrates the absolute need for more walking trails in my area. The beauty of the Bay Run is that it does not cost users a cent. It encourages a healthy lifestyle through sport and fitness in a way that is both accessible and inclusive. I believe now is the time for vision and to begin planning a second Bay Run in my electorate. The new trail could help to promote foreshore access for residents who live at the western end of my electorate in suburbs such as Concord and Canada Bay.

Parts of the walk have already been developed. Continuous walking tracks around Breakfast Point, Cabarita, Concord and Massey Park Golf Course connect with Bayview Park. However, there is a missing link between the western and eastern parts of my electorate. In October the City of Canada Bay Council voted to unanimously support a motion to examine opportunities for a second Bay Run connecting Concord and Cabarita to Five Dock via Canada Bay and Kings Bay. The intent is to further examine the possibility of constructing a formal foreshore path or boardwalk to connect with existing services, parks and amenities. The Iron Cove Bay Run is an excellent example of the wonderful outcomes that council and the State Government can achieve for the community when they work together productively and collaboratively.

There is a great opportunity for the New South Wales Government to listen, take action and assist the council by providing funding to improve foreshore access for constituents of the Drummoyne electorate. The council is now examining options and opportunities for a new shared foreshore path and trail, which means that important planning work can begin. The project is not only about improving public amenity but also about ensuring that the growing population in the council area is supported. There is more than 25 kilometres of

foreshore along the edge of my electorate, and the public should be able to access as much of that as possible. Canada Bay council and the State Government are making very strong improvements to foreshore access in other areas, such as at Iron Cove bay and also by making Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025 with new swimming spots and destinations for splash and water activities. Further, additional kayak and launch facilities have been built over the years.

The community values being outdoors and by the water. State and local governments should do all they can to improve public amenity and foreshore access. A great precedent has been established with the Bay Run. I look forward to the second Bay Run continuing to evolve because I believe it would be a great legacy project for the growing community to enjoy for years to come. Runners, dog walkers, cyclists, families and people pushing prams could enjoy their active lifestyles at another magnificent facility by the water's edge.

BANKSTOWN CITY PLAZA

BANKSTOWN STATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (21:13): On perhaps my last private member's statement for the year I raise the issue of a fire that took place at Bankstown City Plaza in December 2020. I have asked the Minister for Transport and Roads a couple of times for clarification about the future of this particular site. By way of background, on 17 December 2020 a 59-year-old man doused the office of a law firm above the train station with petrol. I will not name the law firm. The man was a former client. As a consequence of the fire that site was burnt, as was a number of other properties surrounding the law firm. There was significant smoke damage and water damage to the site. That man handed himself in, and has since been charged and convicted. Putting that aside, it is now almost 12 months since the incident. The area that was impacted by the fire is still cordoned off, which is causing some concern to the local community, to the business community and commuters. It is a significant site at Bankstown City Plaza and the entrance to the train station at Bankstown. It is a site that had a number of businesses.

A number of adjoining businesses were also alight as a result of the fire and were forced to close due to extensive damage. They include Catwalk Nails & Beauty, Hire Shop Store, the Bankstown pawnbroker, Cubic Real Estate, George Nasser Optometrist, Harmony Thai Massage, Uncle Sam's Fast Photo Service, Dr Gary Nguyen dentist, Jasmin Noir clothing and Trinh Tu CPA, consultant. All of these businesses have been forced to relocate. To this day I am not sure whether they were compensated, whether there was any guarantee made by Transport for NSW that they could relocate them, or whether they could return to the site at a future date. It is a significant site in Bankstown.

I understand that the Government is proceeding with the Sydney Metro upgrade and will subsequently start work on Bankstown station. It has awarded a \$45 million contract to John Holland to upgrade Bankstown train station. That work will coincide with the upgrade to the interchange to prepare Bankstown for the Sydney Metro as we start to connect the heavy rail from the west of Bankstown Station to the metro, which will come in from Sydenham. As the member for Bankstown, I have had very little information as to what stage the metro is at. Nice flyers come around every now and then. I had a flyer in November that gave some update about Dulwich Hill station. There are regular updates about other parts of the metro, but very little detail has been provided to the public about what stage the upgrade to Bankstown Station is up to, which is causing some angst in the broader business community and also the commuters who rely heavily on this station. There will be a number of station closures and a subsequent reliance on bus services.

It is a significant station for my electorate. It connects residents from the electorate of East Hills, from the broader western part of Bankstown and other parts of Sydney, who come to Bankstown to connect to other services on the CityRail network. It is one of only two stations in my electorate that provides an easy access lift. It is a significant station that will shortly shut. I remind the House that shops have been shut and a large area was cordoned off because of the fire. No information has been provided to my community as to whether there will be an immediate upgrade or any maintenance to improve the site. It has been 12 months of a significant eyesore for the business community in Bankstown City Plaza. It reminds everybody in my community that we are not given the same consideration as other parts of Sydney.

ORANGE ELECTORATE FLOODS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (21:18): Dorothea Mackellar's famous poem *My Country* sums up perfectly the extreme conditions we have experienced in the past few years. The dusts of the worst drought in living memory have now well and truly been washed away by flooding rains. Forbes and other communities along the Lachlan River have endured the extremes of mother nature. Since the 2016 flood they have experienced the worst drought in living memory, then the mouse plague and now another flood. Communities along the Lachlan have been inundated, as have those along the Belubula to a lesser extent: 800 houses have been subject to flooding

and 1,800 people have been evacuated from the flood zone. I note that Bedgerabong is about to be isolated for up to five weeks due to the flooding of the Lachlan.

However, it is not just about townsfolk who have suffered. Farmers' fences have gone, stock animals have drowned and crops have been lost. Even those crops that have escaped flooding have been affected by relentless rain. Farmers along the Lachlan are still assessing the flood damage. Last week, a market gardener east of Forbes lost 10 hectares of watermelons, 3.2 hectares of pumpkins and 30 hectares of barley to the flood and estimates the loss of income to be over \$600,000. That is just one example of what are expected to be huge losses this year, given that this is a great cropping year and it is so close to harvest. In the 2016 flood the estimated crop losses were \$270 million, but it could well be more than that this year.

With more rain predicted, I am concerned that the conditions will prevail. The damage to property is yet to be calculated, but I am pleased to hear that the flood event at Forbes has been declared a disaster, which will trigger funding to assist in the recovery. I visited Forbes last Saturday to personally survey the situation and recognise those helping in the flood zone: the SES, RFS, Forbes Shire Council and the many volunteers who have turned out in the hundreds to help. Forbes is resilient community that knows how to roll up their sleeves and do what has to be done. But they are certainly appreciative of all the help that has descended on them. Thank you to all who have helped out.

Several flood rescues have been undertaken by emergency services, and one notable rescue from the Lachlan River at Condobolin warrants recognition. Last weekend Sergeant Joel Hunter from the Central West Police District placed himself in danger by entering flood waters in the swollen Lachlan River to rescue two 11-year-old boys who were clinging onto a tree branch in the swift-flowing stream. I commend Sergeant Hunter for his act of heroism. Since being elected I have pushed for the Government to flood-proof the Newell Highway and to raise the Wyangala Dam wall. The Liberal-Nationals Government promised to raise the wall, but it remains to be seen whether it will ever deliver on that promise.

Raising the wall is not a silver bullet that will prevent the Lachlan River from flooding, but it would significantly help mitigate the occurrence. That will not help with this flood, but both the current flood and the relatively recent drought make this topic a very contemporary issue. In 2014 the State Infrastructure Strategy identified that the Lachlan River had both low flood management capability and low drought security. There is a pressing need to raise the Wyangala Dam wall, not just to create the necessary air space to capture and control flows to mitigate flood damage to farming enterprises and communities downstream of the dam, but to necessarily increase water storage and security before the next drought. The Lachlan River has experienced high variability inflows over the past 50 years, and over the past 20 years we have seen ever greater variability, such as major flooding in 2016. However, the region then went into drought very rapidly and by July 2019 access to 43 per cent of the water in the general security accounts was suspended.

This project is not about issuing new licenses. It is understood that the Murray Darling Basin Plan sustainable diversion limit must be complied with. Increased storage is about providing greater security for all licence holders, towns, stock and domestic, irrigators and the environmental water managers. The cost of the wall-raising project has been at the centre of the anti argument, but the cost has to be balanced against the cyclical and cumulative flood damage that will eventually exceed that of the project if it does not proceed. Everyone soon forgets the need for increased water storage and security when a drought ends, but inevitably, as per Dorothea Mackellar's poem, there will be another drought; nothing is more certain. If the Wyangala Dam wall is raised 10 metres as proposed, it would provide an additional 53 per cent storage equating to 650 gegalitres, which is greater than the capacity of Sydney Harbour. That is a substantial increase in water security necessary for the future of growing communities and vital agricultural production along the Lachlan River, which depends on reliable access to water.

PITTWATER ELECTORATE COMMUNITY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (21:23): Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once observed words to the effect that the world seems empty if all we consider is the landscape, but if we think of people who feel and share with us, and who are with us in spirit, then the world becomes an inhabited garden. That is very much the way that I feel about my community of Pittwater. It is a beautiful sylvan place, an Edenic garden surrounded on three sides by water, an emerald gem toward the northern outer metropolitan area of Sydney, and with only one road in and one road out it often feels very much like a country town.

The past couple of years have reminded the Pittwater community just how important the concept of community and supporting one another truly is. There are many people to thank for the incredible service they have provided over what has been a difficult 2021, and a difficult 2020 before it: The staff at our local hospitals—I am thinking particularly of Jennifer McConnell and her team at Mona Vale Hospital, but also the great team at

Northern Beaches Hospital—who have served our community so incredibly well during the pandemic, staff at local general practice clinics, pharmacies and vaccine hubs who did a mighty job surging our vaccine delivery. Also, the Pittwater community who have rolled up their sleeves in their tens of thousands to surpass a vaccine rate of more than 95 per cent double dose. Thank you to everyone for this incredible team effort.

I thank our local emergency workers, our invaluable police under the brilliant leadership of Superintendent Pat Sharkey, our local fire and ambulance paramedics, our volunteer emergency workers, Rural Fire Service, Marine Rescue, surf life savers, State Emergency Service—many have had a very busy year—essential workers who kept our community going during lockdown such as local supermarket workers, bus drivers, cleaners, care workers and hospitality staff. Our community simply does not function without you.

I thank the local school principals, like the wonderful Jane Ferris who retired this year after many years of service to Pittwater High School, teachers and staff who have had to modify how schooling was delivered and so astutely adjusted to rapidly changing situations during the pandemic; local parents, many of whom had to juggle working from home and assisting with remote learning; and school students who have had to adapt to the many challenges of the pandemic. The resilience you have demonstrated will stand you in very good stead in your future careers.

Thanks also to the Northern Beaches Council for maintaining great local services despite COVID restrictions and the myriad challenges thrown at it. I particularly thank the outgoing Northern Beaches councillors for their service, Ian White and in particular Kylie Ferguson of Pittwater ward, who have been the epitome of effective and compassionate councillors; my Federal colleague, Jason Falinski, for being a tireless campaigner for the Beaches in Canberra; and Lynleigh Greig, the well-deserving 2021 Pittwater Woman of the Year, renowned as Pittwater's expert snake wrangler.

I thank local organisations like the Avalon Youth Hub led by the wonderful Justene Gordon and great organisations like One Eighty, founded by Avalon local Paris Jeffcoat, Gotcha4Life and the irrepressible Gus Worland, Lifeline and the wonderful John and Lucy Brogden, Beyond Blue, Zonta, the Be Centre with Deb Killelea and her incredible team there, and volunteers at local churches like Link at Narrabeen and Narrabeen Anglican who generously put together food hampers for struggling local families. They have all played a particularly important role during a tough couple of years. I give a special mention to John and Jenny Reid who are moving on after more than 20 years' service at the Mona Vale Anglican Church, which turned 150 this year.

Thanks go to all of the locals who have passionately put their time into helping to run community sporting groups through the challenges of lockdowns and those who selflessly volunteer in local community organisations like Meals On Wheels, Sailability, Manly Warringah Pittwater Care—and the list goes on. There are so many wonderful people whose ambitions are greater than themselves and who are practically demonstrating the love that they feel for their fellow citizens, and particularly the vulnerable in our community. My admiration could not be deeper.

I also pay particular homage to my staff—Andrew Johnston, Jane Zietsman and Robert Johnston—all of whom have worked tirelessly through very challenging times to support the community of Pittwater. I also thank Bridge Housing, our local housing provider, which does such a great job identifying and supporting tenants in need. The sum of our community and the strength of our civilisation is not based on what we acquire for ourselves; it is based on our capacity to serve one another. That is what sustains each of our communities in this place. It is so humbling and such a privilege to thank the people of Pittwater who do it on behalf of my community.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (21:28): On 25 November we will observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. This important day is the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which is coordinated by the United Nations Centre for Women's Global Leadership. Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today. Our outstanding community leaders, such as Rosie Batty, Grace Tame, Nina Funnell and many others, have used their public platforms to focus our thoughts on the violence, and survival and recovery from that violence. They have also encouraged us to own our complicated place within systems of domestic and gender-based violence. This thought unsettles us—and it should. It should deeply unsettle us.

If we shift our thoughts from the words of outstanding advocates and bring ourselves back to our own groups, our own communities, our own social circles and our own families, what are we doing on these levels to challenge gender-based violence? How do we stop the violence? The research tells us that around the world nearly one in three women aged 15 years and older has been subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner or both, at least once in their lifetime. It also indicates that levels of violence against women have remained largely unchanged over the past decade.

In New South Wales, adult victims of domestic and intimate partner violence are overwhelmingly female, at just over 69 per cent of reported cases, but what of the legions of cases and incidents that are not reported? We can only imagine the actual breadth of these issues, how far this violence reaches into our lives and into our communities. This is unacceptable in a civil society that recognises our intrinsic value as individuals, but it keeps happening and it does not appear to be improving. In fact, intimidation, stalking and harassment have increased by 10 per cent over the past two years. With all of our forms of communication and with all of our ways of being exposed to news and new ideas, this age-old problem continues to damage us and to reduce us. Gender-based violence, violence against women and interpersonal violence reduce all of us.

The theft of someone's sense of emotional wellbeing and physical safety damages not only that individual, but all of us. I often hear the phrases, "It is un-Australian" or, "It is not the Australian way" thrown around these halls when the argument is hot and the moment fits. Can we use those phrases more positively to declare that gender violence and violence against women, is indeed truly un-Australian and against what we believe to be our shared values? We should not have to reframe narratives of violence, to consider, "What if it was my daughter" to develop understanding or empathy.

We hope to grow as a society to a point where we can understand that these experiences are not only unacceptable on the surface of polite conversation, but also at a very deep level where control-based violence and gender-based violence are truly seen as entirely unacceptable behaviour of the perpetrator. We must work to dismantle the cycle of violence. We must decide to resource more programs that work to change men's violent behaviour. Here in this place and in the other place we must listen to our communities, to people who have lived through this violence and survived. We must listen to them and use that information to develop real and effective disincentives, and real and effective consequences for those who perpetrate this violence.

I hope that someone is able to stand in this place in 10 years' time and declare that secondary school pupils are actively participating in pro-social programs that address these issues head-on, with consequences and outcomes laid bare; that service providers are adequately resourced; that victims are supported in their survivorship; and, critically, that incident rates in our community have significantly reduced.

At the commencement of these 16 Days of Activism I am very happy to congratulate Maitland's own Carrie's Place Domestic Violence and Homelessness Services upon being awarded a \$20,000 grant as part of the New South Wales Government's 2021 Community Building Partnership program. These funds will be used to create the Carrie's Place Community Hub, which will be a trauma-informed, inclusive, client-centred safe space. It will be welcoming and comfortable. The space will provide access to technology and printing. There will also be a space that will enable the delivery of group programs to help build knowledge and connection. But this service should be funded by far more than a simple Community Building Partnership grant.

I commend the work of every single worker at Carrie's Place, and each service that works in these complex and challenging matters to provide support, assistance and encouragement for our community members who are experiencing domestic or gender-based violence. I commend those professionals for their continuing excellent work through the challenges brought by COVID and the ever-tightening housing situation in our region. I encourage these workers and their clients to stay strong. I encourage the representatives gathered in this place to return to their constituents and work mindfully, to strive to gather and deliver the resources needed to provide safety and encourage recovery and, most of all, to stop the violence against women.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE STUDENT LEADERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:34): Today I welcome the newly elected student leaders for 2022 who will demonstrate by example and advocate for improved student outcomes in their final years of primary and secondary schooling. I have been known to say on numerous occasions that our students are the future leaders of tomorrow who are the building blocks that mould and shape our country into the free, prosperous and inclusive nation we are proud to call Australia. The NSW Department of Education defines student leaders as a student voice that actively participates in decision-making at school on things that shape their educational experiences. "Student voice" is more than just students having a say and being heard. To be successful, schools must value the perspectives and opinions of students and act on them in a way that genuinely shapes learning and decision-making at the school. Furthermore, student leaders are positive and caring representatives who promote fairness, understanding and advocacy on behalf of the student body in the whole school community.

I congratulate the following student leaders on their election and appointment to this significant role: from St Joseph's Regional College, school captains Amelia Stubbs and Leo Hunt, vice captains Olivia Montgomery and Dom Bittu; Camden Haven High School, school captains Jasmine O'Brien and Mia Bales, vice captains Sascha Arnberger and Lloyd Marquett; Heritage Christian School, school captains Kirsty Day and Ben Champion, vice captains Mikaylah Day and Aston Grohs; Heritage Primary School, school captains Hannah McGregor and

Tim Grittins, vice captains Josiah Fowler and Jasmine Hulbert; Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus, school captains Kayley Edwards and Ethan Ferrett, vice captains Maddison Simpson and Ben Stevenson; Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus captains, Jorjabelle Munday and Kayle Enfield, vice captains Carly Cocking and Tom Marks; Mackillop College Port Macquarie, school captains Hugh Turnbull and Dominica Toohey, vice captains Hudson Harmer and Phoebe Minogue; and St Columba Anglican School, school captains Laura Reynolds and Dylan Chin, vice captains Chelsea Taylor and Sam Stewart.

From St Agnes Primary School, we have school captains Torah Wehlow and Baxter Allison; Westport Primary School, school captains Erica Newton, Freya Turner, Harley Beck and Kayden Day; Kendall Public School, prime ministers Indiana Cook and Benjamin Thomas and other representatives including Nate Bucknell, Hayley Crowle, Lillyth Buxton, Laila Bell, Izzy Heslop and Aidan Nosworthy; St Joseph's Primary School Port Macquarie, school captains Willa Corless-Brown, Annabelle Hicks, Charlie Holloway, Isabella Russell, Jackson Coleman, Oliver Hanks, Joseph Hunt and Riley Tattersall; Herons Creek Public School, school captains Deon Meager, Riley Branch and Addison Schmidt; Harrington Public School, school captains Isabelle Aitchison and Bailey Martin, vice captains Calista Elmer and Stephanie Ashe, and sports captains Mia Wells, Keiara Williams, Kaitlyn Fullford and Chevy Stankovski.

My message to each student is that they can be anything they want to be—the next firefighter, solicitor, nurse, teacher, plumber, mechanic, chef, bus driver, entrepreneur, real estate agent, public servant or even parliamentarian. The opportunities are endless because they have the most dedicated teachers who tirelessly invest their time and energy to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve their career aspirations. I thank our teachers for leaving a lasting imprint on our next generation of leaders. I wish our student leaders every success in 2022.

COVID-19 AND LAKEMBA ELECTORATE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (21:37): Like so many other members, this will likely be my last chance to deliver a private member's statement. I sum up the year, and what a year it has been. It has always been about the people, the spirit, the love, the generosity, the hope, the aspirations and the privilege that members have to tell their stories in this place. When Delta hit, locally we got smashed but every single one of us came together to do the very best we could. Through the difficulties we achieved some good outcomes, including high vaccination rates and a community that supported one another. The community got to shift the narrative. Many leaders like me and community leaders had the opportunity to showcase the diversity and the magic of the special nature and fibre of our people.

Our schools have been amazing. Kids have been through a very difficult time. This year's year 12 students have had it unlike any other when we consider what they went through in year 11 as well. The teachers have been phenomenal and in many cases in electorates such as mine where remote learning is difficult they found other ways to connect with their students. I also give a special shout-out to parents. I am lucky, I am trained as a teacher so I could help my kids. But most parents are not trained as teachers. It was very difficult. We managed to get through it and schools are slowly but surely going back to normal. In a community such as mine, small businesses—and particularly family businesses—are a feature. Many of them may not bounce back; I hope they do. They are starting to open up but they still have not bounced back fully. Even amongst all the hardship, people found a way to grow and a way to be generous.

Sport is a favourite pastime in my electorate. The local sports clubs were not able to operate the way they normally would but they still managed to keep a community connection. I thank all our local community sporting clubs for the work they did in keeping the community together, including collecting and dropping off donations. We worked with different sporting organisations to put food hampers together for families in need. It maybe was not the kind of year that the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs wanted. We will have a better year next year, but apparently 2023 is going to be a great year. The Bulldogs maybe did not have a great year on the field, but they have had an enormously important year in the community. I thank the chair, John Khoury, CEO Aaron Warburton and all the players.

This year we also did a lot of work with the Greater Western Sydney Giants. They have been phenomenal. Their GIANT Hand project provided 1,000 meals per week to hand out to the community. These were quality cooked meals. The Greater Western Sydney Giants worked in tandem with the Canterbury Leagues Club Community Care Kitchen, which the member for Canterbury and I were involved in. That is the community spirit. That is the thing that got us through. At the very heart of the community are its community groups. One of the greatest things for members is that we have an opportunity to help those community groups through Community Building Partnership grants. Every member feels better after visiting community groups, regardless of which electorate we represent. They are the heart and soul of the community. Like so many other MPs, I am very proud of the community groups in my electorate who are run by volunteers pretty much on the smell of an oily rag. But their connection to the community is absolutely phenomenal.

Every time we asked them for help, they were there. Whether it was OzHarvest with food hampers, whether it was Addi Road, where I would go on a regular basis to collect food and hand it out in our local community; or whether it was the religious, community and sporting groups that facilitated the mass vaccination or local vaccination hubs when we struggled to get people vaccinated, they helped us with translations and with donations. We could not keep up with the donations that we received. Then there is my dear friend Dr Jamal Rifi, who is an incredible person. He was featured on *Australian Story*. He is the bloke who set up a vaccination clinic in his front yard. Everyone did what they could. I knew our community was special. I was incredibly proud when only last week Ms Abba Kadous, President of the Islamic Women's Welfare Association in Lakemba, was named the 2022 NSW Senior Australian of the Year. She is an outstanding person. That award could have gone to so many people, but it went to her. That makes me proud because I saw the things she had been doing.

I know some people may not agree with me. We may have been pilloried, we may have felt that we were treated unfairly, we may have suffered much more than we needed to and we may have been battered and bruised, but our spirit was never broken—and our spirit never will be broken. It is a great honour to be an MP, but my great luck is to be the MP for such an incredible community. We learnt a lot about ourselves over this past year. We all hope every one of our electorates has a much better 2022.

Bills

TEACHER ACCREDITATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for tomorrow.

Community Recognition Notices

UOW HIGHLY CITED RESEARCHERS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong)—I would like to acknowledge the hard working researchers at the University of Wollongong recently recognised as leaders in the field as part of the 2021 Clarivate Highly Cited researchers list. Among them were my former colleagues at the Australian Institute of Innovative Materials Distinguished Professor Zaiping Guo, Professor Jung Ho Kim and Professor Jun Chen. Others listed were Professor Shunjun Zhang, Distinguished Professor Yoshio Bando and Senior Professor Anthony Okely. I would like to give particular acknowledgement to a University of Wollongong research power duo – Professors Sji Xue Dou and Hua Kan Liu. Professor Dou was listed twice in the fields of chemistry and materials science while Professor Liu was listed for materials science. Professors Dou and Liu have been leading researchers in the field of energy storage for years undertaking innovative work of their own and also guiding and honing some of the sharpest materials science and energy technology research students in the Institute for Superconducting and Electronic Materials. When we look for technology solutions that will help address climate change we need look no further than the first class research that is underway on the Innovation Campus of the University of Wollongong.

ALISON SCIBERRAS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Everyone is familiar with the morning rush before school, the struggle of getting the kids out of bed and ready for school is real. But then there's the lunches to make and for this reason I wish to acknowledge local mum and business owner, Alison Sciberras, on launching her small business, Lunch Box Kidz. Lunch Box Kidz began in June this year to cater for busy, caring parents or guardians who want to give their kids the very best lunchbox for everyday of the week. For over 10 years, Alison had been a Childcare Cook and as a mother she knows the challenges of making lunches on the run every day. She wanted to create a service that would help parents but also something that would give kids the opportunity to have food that is nutritious, well balanced and home-made. Congratulations to Alison on this new endeavour. I look forward to hearing of your small business' future success and I wish you all the best!

ANOWAH COMMUNITY LIVING INC.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge Anowah Community Living in my electorate of Mulgoa. Chief Executive Officer and the team at the organisation who continue to create a community that supports the authentic social inclusion of people with a disability so they are active and engaged citizens. I wish to congratulate Anowah Community Living on their recent success in the 2021 Community Building Partnership program where they received \$51,160 in funding for the purchase of a new Kia Carnival people mover, which will assist the transportation of their clients to various programs. They also received another \$60,000 to upgrade and repair an existing building. Congratulations to Anowah Community Living!

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge Penrith City Council on their recent success in the 2021 Community Building Partnership program. This program provides funding to successful applicants to deliver positive social and recreational outcomes while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion. I wish to congratulate Penrith City Council on receiving \$30,000 for the Surveyors Creek softball facility dugout and diamond upgrade which is located in the Mulgoa electorate. Congratulations to Penrith City Council!

DAVID BAMFORD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge Deputy Principal of Regentville Public School, Mr David Bamford, on his service to the local community for the last 15 years. He began teaching in 1981 as a casual teacher before commencing with the Department of Education in April 1984. Mr Bamford is proud of the school's achievements and its long history of providing public education. Mr Bamford is inspired by the many people in the school community that he works and has worked with. Regentville Public School will always have a special place in his heart. Having taught hundreds of students, there are a few favourite memories of his time at the school. Mr Bamford has enjoyed building strong working relationships with students and their families and meeting new students and parents every year, helping them to feel a part of the school community. The 150 Year Celebration Day on 26 September 2018, Year 6 Canberra and Snow Trips, Year 5 Deer Park Camps, Year 4 Yarramundi Camps and P&C Discos are all standouts in his time at the school. Congratulations to Mr Bamford on his incredible achievements over the years, I wish him all the best!

YAGOONA PUBLIC 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 Meaghan Wilson and her staff at Yagoona Public School for their terrific work in assisting their school community throughout the Pandemic. Despite most students learning from home, Yagoona Public 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 Yagoona Public 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 Meaghan Wilson, teachers, staff, parents, students and indeed the whole Yagoona Public School community for their exceptional efforts in navigating through these most challenging times.

VILLAWOOD MEDICAL CENTRE

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

CHEMIST DISCOUNT CENTRE BASS HILL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Since March 2020, New South Wales have been coping with the challenging outbreak of coronavirus. Over the last few months, my electorate of Bankstown has particularly been impacted by the devastating effects this pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the health personnel for their tremendous efforts during this period and in working hard to keep our community safe. In particular, I wish to recognise and pay tribute to Chemist Discount Centre Bass Hill for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Tracy Alexakis, Chi Nguyen, David Tam and Narmine Daniel for their tireless efforts in helping our community stay safe and vaccinated. I am pleased to see that Electorate of Bankstown and South West Sydney has surpassed a 90 per cent first dose vaccination rate. I commend the Chemist Discount Centre Bass Hill on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

HECTOR STREET FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE

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

HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—Seniors play a vital role in local communities as volunteers, carers and grandparents, so I am pleased that Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport has received a \$1,000 grant for the 2022 NSW Seniors Festival. Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport is a not-for-profit community care organisation in Turramurra providing transport services to veterans and their families, people with disabilities and chronic illness, and adults aged 65 and over for food, medical and social purposes. Their winning project is titled 'Aloha Fun' which involves a planned outdoor luncheon at the Turramurra Seniors Centre for the 2022 Seniors Festival. The festival will run from 25 March to 3 April, providing seniors with cultural, creative, sporting and recreational opportunities as they re-connect in the local community. I thank the NSW Government for its financial support and commitment to our valued seniors, and I congratulate Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport and the General Manager, Miss Helen Crouch, for their service to the community, as well as all other grant recipients.

WYONG NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—Wyang Neighbourhood Centre has been working hard to keep our community safe during the COVID -19 Outbreak. During the lockdown the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre continued to service the community with; Orange Sky Laundry a drop off laundry service as well as a food delivery program for anyone experiencing any hardship to obtain food during isolating periods for one of the following reasons; if they had a positive COVID test result or a close or if they were a casual contact waiting for a COVID test result. The program was supported by the Department of Communities & Justice, the Department of Social Services as well as the following organisations and businesses; OzHarvest, Foodbank NSW & ACT, SecondBite, Coast Hands, The Glen Rehab, La Carta Art Gallery, Cafe and Handcrafted Gifts. Thank you Wyong Neighbourhood Centre for all you are doing in our community. I wish you all the best in 2022 and Merry Christmas.

PRINCIPAL JANE DENNETT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Jane Dennett was the Principal of Killara High School from 2014 to 2021, and retired in October this year. Jane has an absolute commitment towards public education and has always been passionate about sharing the history and culture of First Nations peoples. She demonstrated throughout her career in education an unwavering belief in the quality of teachers and staff, and leaves a legacy of strengthened public education, especially at Killara High. With funding from the NSW Government, a \$15 million upgrade was completed in the last year. The renovation work added substantial extra permanent and specialist teaching spaces, and upgrades to existing facilities. It provided 17 new classrooms, new staff areas and new toilets at this highly ranked school. An earlier \$7.9m upgrade, in 2014, delivered 22 permanent classrooms, shared learning spaces, a replacement sports court and removed demountable classrooms. I plan to attend the School's upcoming Annual Awards Ceremony for 2021 and congratulate everyone who has met the challenges of a difficult year. I would like to thank Jane Dennett for her wonderful service and welcome Robin Chand as the new permanent Principal.

AJCA R U OK

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—It was wonderful to join the Australian Jordanian Community Association on 11 September for their first R U OK? online event. I was pleased with the success of the event, having been joined by over 150 attendees. I commend the Association for taking the initiative to raise awareness on mental health and the significance of reaching out to one another especially during a time which had been difficult for everyone. Mr Mohammed Alqadi, President of the Association has since, run several R U OK online sessions for the local community with guest hosts to update the attendees on COVID-19. It is a great way to bring people of the community together and continue the conversation on helping others and forming informal support networks.

The association also created a YouTube channel to educate the community in Arabic about COVID-19 and worked to deliver supplies to people in need around the area. Well done to the Australian Jordanian Community Association for all that they do to assist and support the community.

WENDY HARRISON

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to acknowledge and congratulate Cr Wendy Harrison on her retirement as a councillor from Lake Macquarie City Council after 17 years of service. Wendy was first elected in 2004 as an Independent under the umbrella of a group of independents who ran as an alliance. She was truly independent and worked with great integrity, care and work ethic. She served as Deputy Mayor on four separate occasions and I was lucky enough to have her twice in that role while I was mayor. When you make decisions which affect others there's an obligation that goes beyond the requirements of the law or the code of conduct. There is a moral obligation to listen, understand and make difficult decisions, not for the loudest voice, but for what you believe to be in the best interests of the community. Working through an issue and objectively considering all the matters can be difficult, but anyone who knows Wendy is fully aware that was what she always did. Wendy has made a significant positive impact in West Ward as well as the city of Lake Macquarie and deserves the heartfelt thanks of her community.

BIRABAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Learning to love nature and finding new ways of protecting and nurturing our natural environment is something I believe is very important for our younger generations. So it's with great pleasure that I congratulate the staff and students at Biraban Public School in Toronto on winning the 'Encouragement Category' in the 2021 Lake Macquarie School Environment Awards. For the past five years the school has worked tirelessly to improve its environmental sustainability by reducing waste and improving Biraban's three big gardens. Under the guidance of teacher Elli Leonard and general assistant Jeff O'Connor, students have been collecting their food scraps and turning them into compost to help fertilise the gardens and young fruit trees. Students have planted and tended to native trees to help create habitat for local wildlife, and have also built worm farms. The school has also strived to reduce its waste through promoting low waste lunches and 'Waste-free Wednesdays', along with highlighting the importance of recycling. I congratulate Biraban Public School on all of the environmentally sustainable work that has been done so far and I look forward to seeing what our future community leaders will do next.

COORANBONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to congratulate the staff and students at Cooranbong Public School on their big push towards making the school environmentally friendly and sustainable. Their impressive efforts were recognised in the 2021 Lake Macquarie School Environment Awards, with the school winning the 'Natural Environment' category. Under the guidance of the school's environmental officer Pam Hosken, all the students have become budding eco-warriors. Students have transformed what was a barren patch of playground into a thriving frog pond where a proud population of amphibians and their progeny can both be found and regularly heard. Through diligently rehabilitating the land and building bug hotels, they have brought nature back to the school. Beyond that, students have taken a keen interest in recycling and are making sure that paper and cardboard are separated and going into the appropriate bins. Students also collect fruit scraps daily and use them to create compost and feed the school's worm farm population. The compost is then used to fertilise the school's gardens and crops. I also commend the students who spend each lunch time distributing mulch throughout the school's grounds and gardens. My congratulations to everyone involved.

ST JOHN VIANNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—It's always pleasing to see young people taking active steps to improve our natural world, so I'd like to extend my congratulations to the staff and students at St John Vianney Primary School in Morisset who were named the winners of both the 'Innovation' and 'Ongoing Commitment' categories in the 2021 Lake Macquarie School Environment Awards. Under the guidance of assistant principal Nicki Graham, students from the school's Caring Actions and Respect for the Environment [CARE] Club have tirelessly toiled to make their school an environmentally friendly and sustainable place to learn. The club consists of 20 students from years 3 to 6 who have implemented several innovative ideas such as Meat-free Monday, Waste-free Wednesday and have built a frog hotel. The CARE Club also executes weekly audits of soft plastics in students' lunch boxes in a bid to reduce waste in the school. Moreover, they've also created a native garden, a vegetable garden and a compost area which they care for. St John Vianney Primary may be a little school with just 120 students, but it certainly achieves some great things. My congratulations to all involved.

REBEKAH BEER & REID HITCHENS OF NARRANDERA HIGH SCHOOL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I extend my congratulations to Rebekah Beer and Reid Hitchens on being awarded the role of School Captains of Narrandera High School for the year of 2022. I applaud you both for stepping up to the mark and taking on this role. It's a fantastic opportunity that will provide growth and development within your leadership skills. I wish you all the very best in your role as School Captain, I am sure you will do a wonderful job. This path that you have embarked on will open up many opportunities for you for many years to come within areas of your life such as your career, community presence and adult hood. This moment is one you will cherish. Congratulations once again on this wonderful achievement! I hope that you enjoy this role, I have no doubt that you will make a fantastic leader for your fellow peers and school community.

MOTORCYCLE TOY RUN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am excited to welcome back the annual Motorcycle Toy Run to the streets of Cootamundra very soon. For the over 17 years the run has been made possible through a joint partnership between the Salvation Army and Ulysses Club. The group is very eager to get back out into our region to raise awareness and drive support after the run was cancelled last year due to COVID-19. Held in early December, motorcyclist from all around the state join the procession on their bikes through the streets of Cootamundra to remind residents to donate toys to the Salvation Army store on Hovell Street. It is done at an important time of the year with donations providing hope and happiness throughout the festive season to those less fortunate. Thank you to all the volunteers and the general public who contribute to this good cause.

SNAKE GULLY CUP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate President of the Gundagai Adelong Racing Club, Michael Crowe, and his committee who managed to pull off a great day of horse racing at the annual Snake Gully Cup in Gundagai. The race day is one of the biggest country racing events on the spring carnival calendar which usually attracts a cast of thousands. Although it was another year of restricted crowd numbers, the event still managed to draw over 2,000 keen race goers. Whilst the day was plagued by rain, it didn't dampen the spirits of the crowd with people travelling from near and far to attend. People out in our small communities thrive at events like these. They give the chance to catch up with friends both new and old whilst also offering a great day out. The event was a much-needed break from reality for many to relax and refresh after another tough year. Once again thank you to the Gundagai Adelong Racing Club for holding a fantastic event and thank you to those who attended. I look forward to seeing the event at a much bigger scale next year.

EMMA WHITECHURCH OLLIE BUTTONS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I would love to give a shout out to Emma Whitechurch of Young and her son Oliver, 2 for their fundraising of Ollie's Buttons. Emma and Oliver, raised \$1,650 selling Billy Buttons for the charity Are you Boggled Mate? Thousands of Billy Buttons were picked and bunches were sold in Young, Wagga Wagga and Sydney. Are You Boggled Mate? aims to boost awareness and start a conversation with the broader community about the rising issue of depression and suicide rates among men in rural areas. Mental health remains a top priority for me having just commenced 12 mental health forum evenings in my electorate, proving beneficial information for vulnerable people in our communities. Thank you Emma and Oliver for all your fundraising efforts and keeping mental health at the forefront of people's minds. I'm sure the team at Are You Boggled Mate are grateful for these much-needed funds.

JAMISON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

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 Jamison High School for the 2022 school year. The leadership team for 2022 includes, Captains: Tiana Harrison and Joshua Sabaten, Vice Captains: Mikayla Becroft, Chelsey Marteene, Selene Neville, Alexander Hale, Laine Johnston and Riley Jones. Student leaders play an important role and I have no doubt these students will make positive and valuable contributions across their school community.

NEPEAN AREA DISABILITIES ORGANISATION

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and Minister for Industry and Trade)—I congratulate and recognise Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation Limited [NADO] who were selected as an Employer of Choice in The Australian Business Awards 2021. NADO, founded in 1980 is a community-based charity that supports people with disabilities, their families and carers in the Nepean, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas. I commend Denise Heath and her outstanding team for their commitment and service to our community.

PRAISE FOR STAR PANTHER – 2021 MORRIS MEDAL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Maddi Lloyd of Lavington, who has been awarded the prestigious Toni Wilson Medal at the Ovens & Murray Morris Medal 2021 Event, which was held at the SS&A Club in Albury on Friday 12 November 2021. Maddi is the third Lavington netballer to earn the medal and is a talented mid-court player who has been amongst the competition's highest vote scorers. Maddi praises her brother as being her inspiration, and respects the good friendship and bond shared amongst her team members who all "have each other's back". I would also like to acknowledge runner up Grace Senior, and North Albury's Nat Heagney and Albury Tigers Club which claimed the club award. Well done to the teams, players, officials and sponsors who make these regional sports awards a resounding success and a great source of motivation in our communities.

JOHN MONKS FORSTER TUNCURRY LIONS CLUB.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I recognise John Monks from the Forster Tuncurry Lions Club. John helps to run the mini putt and trampolines in Forster which raise money that goes back into the community. John also helps with outdoor maintenance and works closely with other Lions Club members to maintain the area. John was recently recognised as a 'Star Volunteer' by local media so I congratulate him on this recognition and thank him for his efforts with the Lions Club and for helping to raise money for the local community through his voluntary work.

MICHELLE BAMFORD FORSTER LADIES CHRISTMAS DINNER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I recognise Michelle Bamford who has organised the Forster Ladies Christmas dinner for the last three years. Michelle organises the event to bring together women in the community while also raising funds for the Great Lakes Women's Shelter, which provides support to women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence. The event benefits many locals, while raising money for a worthy cause. Michelle has been referred to as the 'fundraising queen of the Barrington Coast' as a result of the support she has generated from her fundraising efforts. I thank Michelle for her hard work and dedication to helping others through her fundraising and wish her success with her upcoming event.

MATER DEI SCHOOL – MRS JEN TWINE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The Australian Association of Special Education National Conference provides a number of opportunities for educators, families, community members and key stakeholders to come together to collaborate, share knowledge and learn. Mater Dei School is a coeducational setting for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with a Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disability. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Mater Dei School teacher, Mrs Jen Twine who presented at the 2021 Australian Association of Special Education National Virtual Conference on Universal Design for Learning and Problem Solving and how this is implemented within the school. Jen's learning technique includes three main ideas; Representation, Action and Expression, and Engagement and how they all work together. It is pleasing to see schools and teachers within Camden sharing research, knowledge and expertise with other educators across the country which will lead to more positive experiences for students.

WILL SALZMANN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I congratulate 17 year old Campbelltown-Camden Ghosts fast bowler, Will Salzmänn who was announced as one of the Basil Sellers Scholarship recipients. The Basil Sellers Scholarship program welcomed eleven promising young cricketers in 2021/22, continuing the rich tradition of finding elite cricketing talent in NSW. The Scholarship awarded by Cricket NSW also offers a two-year Team Kookaburra equipment sponsorship. Twenty of the previous Basil Seller scholars have progressed in their career to represent Australia in numerous test matches, one-day matches and Twenty/20 matches. Congratulations Will and I wish you all the best in the coming season and a potential future cricket career.

CHRISTINE HUCKEL AND JUDY MORLEY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I acknowledge Turning Point Camden volunteers Christine Huckel and Judy Morley. Throughout the lockdown, Christine and Judy have managed Turning Points crisis pantry food program, processing hundreds of bags of donations and preparing hampers for their clients via a contactless method. Christine and Judy have both coordinated collection rosters, evaluated estimated grocery needs and directed other volunteer team members. The work they have contributed to is very physical and demanding; and they still managed to go above and beyond meeting the community's needs in a way that remained personal and with dignity. Our community is very grateful for the work that Turning Point Camden do for our Community and thank Christine and Judy.

BRIANNAN EGGERT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The Nanga Mai Awards ceremony celebrates and recognises Aboriginal students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers, other departmental staff, Aboriginal community members and schools that demonstrate excellence across a diversity of areas. I congratulate, Elderslie High School Year 12 student, Briannan Eggert for receiving the Department of Education Nanga Mai Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Speaking. Briannan has been a prominent member of Elderslie High School debating team since Year 7, and has also participated in many events across the school and region. Congratulations again Briannan and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

ADVOCATES FOR ARMENIA

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge those people who are urging our Australian Government and Foreign Minister to follow others internationally in addressing Azerbaijan's recent hostile incursion and helping protect recognised borders. Recent reports of an Azerbaijani attack on Armenia have raised grave concerns from people in my electorate and beyond, for the people in Armenia and Artsakh. The incursions and use of armoured vehicles, artillery and mortars have resulted in casualties and Armenian servicemen captured. I commend those people of Armenian heritage now in Australia who are advocates in the cause of peace.

MOSMAN CROQUET CLUB SECURES CBP2021 FUNDING

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I congratulate the Mosman Croquet Club for their successful application to secure funds through the Community Building Partnership program 2021. This funding will allow the club to construct a northern boundary for croquet court number 2. Mosman Croquet Club is a much-loved local club for our community to come together and have some fun. The members are actively involved and commit considerable time and energy to maintain the grounds and support club programs. The funding will assist with constructing concrete footings, brick wall, and steel fence required for the northern boundary of court 2. I look forward to seeing the club get back into full swing with social and competitive games and continuing with the renowned camaraderie amongst the members. Congratulations to new club President Cali Craig, the outgoing president Mary Gibson and the rest of the committee and members for their successful application and well-deserved funds. I wish the club success with their new project, which will help improve the current playing area of four championship-standard croquet courts and a half-sized practice court.

SENIORS STORIES 2021

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to acknowledge the terrific work of the one hundred seniors who have contributed to this year's edition of Seniors' Stories Volume 7. The theme of the 2021 edition is What's age got to do with it, and there are two entries from my electorate of North Shore. Peter Gill of Kurraba Point's story 'The Spinster' describes a family acquaintance who passed in 2004 but who has stayed in his thoughts. A woman who lived through the war shared insightful tales from the past and left an enduring impression. Paul Tavuzzi of Mosman wrote 'A Timeless Journey', a story of an artist who ponders the past, present, and future through his work. Who sees his life journey without a timetable. His engagement with and focus on his work allow him to look beyond age, reminisce, revel in his current achievements, and feel the thrill of what the future might hold. I encourage everyone to get a copy of the book, listen to the audio files, and engage with the many unique experiences and memories from seniors in our local community.

1ST NORTH SYDNEY SCOUTS CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to recognise the 1st North Sydney Scouts for their work in harnessing the Christmas spirit in my electorate of North Shore with their sales of real Christmas trees. The trees are pre-ordered online and can be collected at the North Sydney Demonstration School. The tree sales are an annual event that is the biggest fundraiser for the club. The funds are used to support the Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, and Ventures to learn new skills and have fun in the safe and friendly environment of Scouting. 1st North Sydney scouts were established in 2009. Youth from Neutral Bay, McMahons Point, Kirribilli, Milsons Point and North Sydney come together for a varied program to build self-respect, confidence, leadership, and teamwork throughout various fun and engaging activities. This group has built a cohesive and robust base for young people to grow and flourish, and I thank the Manager, Robert Blayney, and the other Scout Leaders for their time and commitment to our young people. I wish the 1st North Sydney Scouts the best of luck with their fundraiser and continued work into the future.

SHARE THE DIGNITY 'IT'S IN THE BAG' CAMPAIGN

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to acknowledge the generous spirit of the people of North Shore for rallying together in support of Share the Dignity 'It's in the Bag' campaign. My community has shown tremendous generosity in the past, and I know they will once again get behind this

year's campaign. This initiative aims to get everyday Australians to put together bags filled with daily necessities, personal care and sanitary items, as well as a thoughtful note or a Christmas card to donate to someone in need for Christmas. This Christmas, there will be thousands of homeless women, many experiencing extreme poverty and many having fled domestic violence. Through Share the Dignity 'It's in the Bag', we can make a huge difference in women's lives. I will be taking part in this year's drive, and I encourage everyone in my community to do the same. My office in Neutral Bay will serve as a collection point for the community in the lead-up to Christmas, along with Bunnings stores across Australia.

DOUG WICKENS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate local Oatley resident, Doug Wickens, for celebrating his 100th birthday on the 30th of April 2021. Doug is an inspiring man with a youthful heart who is full of humour, compassion and wisdom. Doug was born in Bankstown in 1921. He was a proud student of Belmore Technical College which he left in 1935 to pursue his interests in woodwork and national service. In 1938, he joined the Australian Navy and was stationed in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as well as in the convoys to Russia. In 1944, he returned home and a year later he married his wife, Betty Wickens, who has remained by his side for the past 75 years. A key to Doug's success and his long and healthy life is his beautiful family. His wife Betty, his children Colin and Rhonda and his four grandchildren have always kept him busy but he has loved every minute of it. Congratulations again to Doug Wickens on 100 years of outstanding service to your country, community and wonderful family.

GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH AND COMMUNITY OF KOGARAH

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, it was my absolute pleasure to visit the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah which is one of the largest Greek organisations across our region. It was an honour to announce to Father Kyriakos Michael and the team that their organisation was successful in receiving \$20,000 from the NSW Government to provide new front doors to their church. This funding will revitalise the façade of the building and it will further enhance the intricate architecture of the precinct. I also want to congratulate the entire organisation for hosting a number of fantastic events as part of their Greek Orthodox Easter celebrations. Between Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the organisation had hundreds of individuals join together in faith to celebrate the importance of Holy Week within the Greek community. These celebrations reunited our local Greek community after the difficult past 12 months that we have had and it was great to see so many people involved in these local services. Well done again to the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah.

CLASSIC COACHWORKS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, the St George region is home to a diverse and unique range of manufacturing services. These companies do not just provide outstanding products, they also provide employment opportunities to thousands of local residents. Local manufacturing is a leading component in the stimulation and continued growth of the NSW economy. I rise to acknowledge local Mortdale business, Classic Coachworks, who provide a range of safety products as well as interior components for trains, cars, buses, boats and even aerospace vehicles. It was fantastic to tour the Classic Coachworks precinct alongside Managing Director, Jim Kolesnyk, to obtain a greater understanding of the important role of their business throughout the State. Classic Coachworks has undertaken a variety of large scale projects including fitting and ongoing repairs to train interiors across the network. They have also been influential in providing more accessible seating across the Tangara fleet. The work of Jim and the team at Classic Coachworks in Mortdale is truly impressive and it is great to see that local manufacturing is thriving across our region.

TIMMY THE TURTLE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, earlier this year I had the pleasure of co-hosting the launch of Timmy the Turtle alongside the Member for Coogee, Dr Marjorie O'Neill, right here in NSW Parliament. Timmy the Turtle has been created by local organisation, Autism MATES. It is a valuable educational resource that is designed to share a powerful and embracing message about employment opportunities for individuals with autism. The animation was created by a team of young people with autism who have utilised their creative talents to share their message within local schools and the community. Autism MATES is an outstanding organisation that is driven towards fostering friendship and inclusion within education, the workplace and wider society. I want to thank the Founder and Director of Autism MATES, Randa Habelrih and her team for putting together this incredible initiative. Your team is doing an amazing job at providing inclusion for individuals with autism and reducing the stigma surrounding developmental disabilities. Congratulations again on hosting this successful launch event for the Timmy the Turtle initiative.

JANET BRENTNALL OF BERRY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges and congratulates Janet Brentnall. Janet Brentnall of Berry is being recognised with an Outstanding Local Citizen Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards at The Kiama Pavilion on Monday 29 November 2021 for her amazing contribution to the Berry community. Janet retired from teaching with the desire to get involved and make a broader contribution via Berry Uniting Church where she has extended care and support to social group attendees, patrons of the library, associates of the Men's Shed, the elderly in retirement homes and those recovering from ill health. As part of the library service, Janet manages the staffing, shelving of books, social book group, and the monthly conversations group 'Coffee and Friends'. Janet also transports the elderly to appointments and organises zoom meeting morning teas. On behalf of a grateful community, the Parliament thanks you for all you have done and continue to do. Your efforts make a region a better place to live.

KELVIN MILNE OF CURRAMORE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges and congratulates Mr Kelvin Milne. Kelvin Milne of Curramore is being recognised with an Outstanding Local Citizen Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards at The Kiama Pavilion on Monday 29 November 2021 for his outstanding contribution as a Duty Operations Manager with NSW Ambulance. Kelvin commenced in 1994 and has spent the past 27 years working to save lives across a number of challenging roles. He moved to Kiama in 2001 and has never looked back, taking on the role of Station Officer in 2014 and now Duty Operations Manager since 2019, overseeing multiple stations. During the COVID pandemic, Kelvin played a leading role at the Incident Management Team in Sydney, assisting the COVID-19 Controller and Senior Executive as incidents arose across our State. On behalf of a grateful community, the Parliament thanks you for all you have done and continue to do. Your efforts make a region a better place to live.

BELINDA BROOKS OF KIAMA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges and congratulates Belinda Brooks. Belinda Brooks of Kiama is being recognised with an Outstanding Local Citizen Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards on Monday 29 November 2021 at The Kiama Pavilion for her tremendous involvement with a number of various activities and organisations in the Kiama community. An End of Life Educator, she has worked tirelessly providing education sessions to community and not-for-profit groups, and participates on panels educating the community in regards to end of life options. Belinda has also been active and led training in the Compassionate Communities initiative in Kiama and also played a key role in the establishment of the NSW Government's post suicide support program. On behalf of a grateful community, the Parliament thanks you for all you have done and continue to do. Your efforts make a region a better place to live.

PAUL BERRY OF GERRINGONG

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Paul Berry of Gerringong is a fantastic local teacher at Kiama High School – He is receiving the Conservation Champion Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards on Monday 29 November 2021 at The Kiama Pavilion for his fantastic commitment to educating students about environmental issues. Paul has been responsible for the planting of many thousands of trees in the Kiama Municipality through his organisation of the Year 7 tree planting day held in August each year for over 24 years around National Tree Day. This involves the coordination of students, Kiama Council staff, Landcare volunteers and Kiama High School staff to supervise the days' activities. Paul also initiated the Year 8 Elective Course on Environment Studies which has been expanded into a Year 9 Enrichment Course. This course enables students to learn from Paul's extensive knowledge and units in the course compliment Kiama High School's war on waste initiative. Paul is a highly valued and respected member of Kiama High School and our local community. On behalf of a grateful community, the Parliament thanks you for all you have done and continue to do. Your efforts make a region a better place to live.

FIVE LOAVES BALLINA

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the charitable work of Five Loaves Ballina, a group who provide much-needed food and support to vulnerable people and people experiencing homelessness in the Ballina area. Inspired by compassion and service to those in need, founders Di Thompson and Julie Love formed Five Loaves Ballina in 2016. After being gifted a van to deliver food to people in the community the project took off, and together with their team of volunteers Di and Julie have helped many people in our community get a warm meal and much-needed support. Strongly supported by local Aboriginal man Noel Young as their key volunteer in the early days, five years on Five Loaves Ballina has grown significantly. Today the project has a team of volunteers and delivers more than 60 meals a week. Their resilience and dedication to our community

was demonstrated by volunteers continuing to deliver their vital service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, and providing takeaway meals to the many people in our community doing it tough. I commend and thank Five Loaves Ballina for their service to our community.

KIRSTEN GOLDSMITH

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise a wonderful initiative organised by Kirsten Goldsmith known as the 'Thong Drive- Northern Rivers to Kimberly'. A project that aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people living in remote communities in Western Australia. After being offered the opportunity to work as a teacher in Western Australia's Kimberley Region, Kirsten reached out to her new employers asking if there was anything she could bring that the communities needed: the answer was thongs. During the wet season hookworm can make its way into the bodies of unknowing passers-by, generally through the soles of feet, causing serious health issues such as anaemia. However, the affliction is completely preventable by protecting the feet. Kirsten rallied the community to donate used thongs through a GoFundMe and Facebook page and was so inundated with donations that there were enough pairs of thongs for several Aboriginal communities throughout the Kimberley. I congratulate Kirsten on the success of 'Thong Drive- Northern Rivers to Kimberly', and thank her for her innovative project that directly benefits people's lives.

RYSS YOUTH WORK AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is my absolute pleasure to congratulate Regional Youth Support Services, or RYSS, for their nomination in two categories in the Youth Action 2021 Youth Work Awards. The categories, Outstanding Youth Participation and Outstanding Work with Regional Young People, acknowledge the work RYSS does through 'The Youth Collective' in collaboration with local schools. In the last year, RYSS has engaged with 2,476 young people across 12 Central Coast high schools. These Youth Work Awards acknowledge the fantastic work of youth workers across NSW and allow their stories to be shared with the Government and wider community, Mister Speaker. I was also pleased to be joined recently by Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Alister Henskens, to open the new RYSS centre in Gosford, from where intervention services, NDIS Disability Support services and other youth support activities will be run. I would like to thank Kim McLoughry and the entire team at RYSS for all their work and wish them the best of luck at the upcoming awards.

ERIN JACOB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Mister Speaker, earlier this year Central Coast local Erin Jacob was honoured as NSW's Vocational Education Teacher of the Year at the 2021 Annual NSW Training Awards. I would like to congratulate Erin on this wonderful achievement which recognises Erin in addition to the rest of the team at Central Coast Community College. The college, which is located at Ourimbah, assists Central Coast students who face barriers to education such as unemployment, risk of homelessness and escaping domestic violence. Erin designs both accredited and non-accredited horticulture programs to engage and motivate students at risk. Additionally, she has initiated innovative programs such as 'Step Forward' and 'Keep on Stepping' designed to engage students in learning and facilitate pathways toward employment. Congratulations to Erin for her recognition as one of the state's top teacher and ongoing commitment to helping people across the Central Coast gain qualifications and employment.

BRAD ASTILL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Mister Speaker, I would like to thank Brad Astill who was Central Coast Local Health District's Acting Chief Executive between May and October 2021, leading the Central Coast's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have had the pleasure of working closely with Brad and the rest of the team at Central Coast Local Health District during an incredibly challenging year. Brad's extensive expertise in health management across NSW meant the health and safety of residents across the Central Coast were in great hands. I am looking forward to working with the incoming Chief Executive Scott McLachlan who is now taking over the reins. Mister Speaker, it is also my honour to sincerely thank all of the healthcare workers across the Central Coast for their hard work in such a difficult time. My wife is a nurse so my admiration and appreciation for our healthcare workers is very strong. Once again I wish Brad the best of luck in his future roles and extend a huge thank you on behalf of the Central Coast community.

ANDY – TERRIGAL SURF CAFE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the fantastic sense of community in the Terrigal electorate. In particular I would like to today recognise Andy Johnson, a Coastie who owns and operates the famous Surf Cafe at Terrigal Beach. Andy and his team generously provide lunch and a drink to all patrolling members of Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. Terrigal locals will know that the Surf Cafe is a great place to get delicious food and coffee and is always a hub where locals as well as visitors will regularly

come and meet. I am glad that coming into the summer season, the Surf Cafe is now able to welcome patrons for dine in as well as take away following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. This sense of community spirit enables the dedicated surf lifesaving volunteers to keep Terrigal beachgoers safe. Once again, a big thank you to Andy and his team of hard working staff at the Terrigal Surf Cafe.

ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL NETBALL CLUBS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity acknowledge netball clubs in my community as it has been an incredibly challenging year for their volunteers, participants and parents. Netball clubs play an important role in the community. Netball helps to build self-confidence and resilience, learn teamwork and leadership whilst overall supporting wellbeing. I commend all volunteers at the Netball clubs in my electorate for their contribution and hard work throughout the pandemic and beyond: Engadine Eagles Netball Club, Helensburgh Netball Club, St. John Bosco Netball Club, Heathcote Football Netball Club, Loftus Zircons Netball Club, Sutherland Shire Netball Association, Menai Hawks Netball Club, St Patricks Netball Club. I join with these clubs to look forward to a better year in 2022 and wish them all success in their competition.

MORRIS IEMMA INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE LOCAL VACCINATION HUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I commend local community centres and places of worship for facilitating the rapid vaccination in western and south-western Sydney. In particular I acknowledge the Morris Iemma Indoor Sports Centre. This year has been like no other and I am blessed by ample community courage and resilience that was tested by the COVID Delta variant. My community knew that the safest way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 was and still is through vaccination. We owe a debt of gratitude to community centres and places of worship that facilitated and encouraged mass vaccination. Localised vaccination clinics were and still are the best way to make vaccines accessible to communities. I am extremely proud of the thousands of people who came out to keep our community safe and get us out of lockdown as safe and soon as possible. I want to thank the Morris Iemma Indoor Sports Centre as an example of an organisation that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

GREENACRE COMMUNITY CENTRE LOCAL VACCINATION HUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I commend local community centres and places of worship for facilitating the rapid vaccination in western and south-western Sydney. In particular I acknowledge the Greenacre Community Centre. This year has been like no other and I am blessed by ample community courage and resilience that was tested by the COVID Delta variant. My community knew that the safest way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 was and still is through vaccination. We owe a debt of gratitude to community centres and places of worship that facilitated and encouraged mass vaccination. Localised vaccination clinics were and still are the best way to make vaccines accessible to communities. I am extremely proud of the thousands of people who came out to keep our community safe and get us out of lockdown as safe and soon as possible. I want to thank the Greenacre Community Centre as an example of an organisation that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE LOCAL VACCINATION HUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I commend local community centres and places of worship for facilitating the rapid vaccination in western and south-western Sydney. In particular I acknowledge the Riverwood Community Centre. This year has been like no other and I am blessed by ample community courage and resilience that was tested by the COVID Delta variant. My community knew that the safest way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 was and still is through vaccination. We owe a debt of gratitude to community centres and places of worship that facilitated and encouraged mass vaccination. Localised vaccination clinics were and still are the best way to make vaccines accessible to communities. I am extremely proud of the thousands of people who came out to keep our community safe and get us out of lockdown as safe and soon as possible. I want to thank the Riverwood Community Centre as an example of an organisation that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH LOCAL VACCINATION HUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I commend local community centres and places of worship for facilitating the rapid vaccination in western and south-western Sydney. In particular I acknowledge the All Saints Church Belmore. This year has been like no other and I am blessed by ample community courage and resilience that was tested by the COVID Delta variant. My community knew that the safest way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 was and still is through vaccination. We owe a debt of gratitude to community centres and places of worship that facilitated and encouraged mass vaccination. Localised vaccination clinics were and still are the best way to make vaccines accessible to communities. I am extremely proud of the thousands of people who came out to keep our community safe and get us out of lockdown as safe and soon as possible. I want to thank the All Saints Church

Belmore as an example of an organisation that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

SERENA MANGAN – NORTH COAST NATIONAL SHOWGIRL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate Serena Mangan on an outstanding and historic 3 year term as the North Coast National Showgirl. Due to the North Coast National being cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 – Serena is one of the longest serving Showgirls in Lismore history and she did so willingly. It is clear to all in our community that Serena has performed this role with distinction and is a credit to community, family and the North Coast National. Serena went to Richmond River High School and now works locally as a registered nurse. As well as being our Showgirl she has been on the frontline of the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also volunteered at the Our Kids Melbourne Cup raffle and at the fire evacuation centre during the bushfires. Her reign is truly defined by her commitment to community service. She recently told the Lismore News that she participated in the competition because she saw it as an opportunity to increase her confidence and get involved in community. Serena says that she has loved going to other towns to showcase Lismore and particularly our local agricultural industry. Congratulations Serena.

COUNTRY CURTAINS AND SOFT FURNISHINGS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate Kay Coughran-Little on 14 wonderful years running her Country Curtains and Soft Furnishings retail shop in Tenterfield's Rouse Street. Kay is shutting up her shop on Rouse Street before Christmas and is moving her business to operate from home. I am pleased to read in the Tenterfield Star that this move isn't goodbye from her trusted business, just simply moving to a new phase. Kay moved to Tenterfield over 3 decades ago with her young children to be closer to her sisters. Even before she started her business she was making dresses and curtains from home. Kay promises she's still there to serve the community. Country Curtains and Soft Furnishings is a trusted, loved and respected business in Tenterfield, attracting a large customer base from the local community and interstate from Stanthorpe, remembering that Tenterfield is part of a border community. Kay has used her skills to create and sell a wide range of fabulous hand crafted products from clothing, curtains, blinds, Manchester and did clothing alterations. Kay says she's moving the business home to downsize so she can spend more time doing what she loves. I congratulate Kay and wish her well.

TENTERFIELD WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SUPPORT GROUP

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate the Tenterfield Westpac Helicopter Support Group on raising a mind blowing \$95,000 for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. This stellar effort brings the total of donations to \$460,000 in the past five years. Simply outstanding. I'd like to thank President John Landers, affectionately known as Dodge and his wife Margaret who do a lot of the fundraising through their op shop in town. Dodge told my office recently that everyone needs to know about 'little Tenterfield' and the generosity of the town. For a town of just over 3,500 people - little Tenterfield punches way above its weight in donations to the rescue helicopter. Not only do they punch above their weight in donations but in their community spirit. Tenterfield is truly a wonderful town full of caring and compassionate people. I would like to acknowledge Michael Towns who heads up organising the donations and the entire committee for their work. I also acknowledge Carlton United Breweries who donated hundreds of cartons of beer to the group for their golf day. The annual golf day is the group's major fundraiser attracting 186 golfers and raised over \$55,000. Dodge you have done it again.

LISMORE ANGLICAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS SHOP

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I acknowledge the fabulous volunteers of the Lismore Anglican Church and their annual Christmas Shop which this year is in Molesworth St Lismore. Every year the volunteers from the church put on this much loved and anticipated event. Coordinator Bev Carroll says that everything is handmade, hand cooked. The plants are locally grown and everything else is donated by the community. They buy nothing new and give pre-loved goods a new life instead of them ending up in landfill or in rubbish. When you walk into the store it is clear that everything is lovingly handmade and local. They are truly wonderful gifts to give a loved one each Christmas. The store creates such a buzz in Lismore each year. Bev says that as it gets closer to Christmas every year there are always people coming into the church asking when the shop is going to open. The volunteers spend 10 months of the year preparing stock for the shop and this year they made over 100 cakes and 150 bottles of jams and pickles. The money goes toward maintaining the Lismore Anglican Church - a lovely Lismore heritage building and to local mission charities.

CURLWAA FRUITGROWERS

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise The Curlwaa Fruitgrowers' Association. Formed in 1907, the Association has undertaken many projects in the

community, including oversight of the first school which opened in the Curlwaa Hall in 1917, before relocating to a school building in 1919. Decades on, the Association played an instrumental role in obtaining funding for the modernisation of the district irrigation infrastructure, including a fully pipelined 'water on demand' system. More recently, a grant for \$300,000 was secured for the construction and replacement of Curlwaa Memorial Hall. So dedicated to realising their goals, the small 24-member organisation, also supplied internal fittings for the Hall. The work of the Association also extends into the holding of an annual Anzac Day ceremony at the War Memorial, and this year they refurbished the War Memorial Honour Rolls, relocating them to the new Memorial Hall. I thank all members of the Association, including the past and current executive of Alan McKenzie, Noel Whitchurch and Brad Pike, for their active involvement in maintaining a strong, well-connected community.

BOB DOUGALL

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Bob Dougall for his outstanding efforts to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Hay community members. Since his retirement as a Corrective Services Officer, Bob has pushed for more mental health services in the town and surrounding areas. In his role as former President of the Community Action for Suicide Elimination, Bob has worked tirelessly to improve suicide awareness and prevention awareness in Hay, including fundraising for training, and taking an active role in mental health days at the local high school. Both of which aimed to increase people's understanding and knowledge on the topics of anxiety, depression and mental health services. Bob has given much of his time and energy for benefit of the town and those who have struggled to maintain good mental health. He is highly regarded in the community, and his years of service have had a real impact on many. I thank Bob for his service and willingness to put others first.

MICHELLE LAWSON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Michelle Lawson of Caringbah South on 20 years' service with the NSW Parliament. This recognition is extra special for me as the MP for Cronulla, as I have been fortunate that much of Michelle's service has been as the Senior Electorate Officer in my office. Michelle is one of those people upon whom you can always rely. In over seven years in the Cronulla electorate office, she has been extremely hardworking, professional and organised, always being focused on getting the best outcome for constituents. If you talk to any of Michelle's colleagues, they usually say she's one of the hardest workers they've known. Over the 20 years her journey has included serving the member for Coffs Harbour, a Legislative Council member, the member for Miranda and the member for Vaucluse, before she came to Cronulla in 2014. With her vast experience, the constituents of Cronulla benefit from her wealth of knowledge of government as we work to provide support and assistance on the matters important to them. I recognise Michelle Lawson as a quiet achiever and thank her for her dedicated and tireless service for the people of New South Wales.

MUDGEES ARTS PRECINCT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker ... I want to commend the entire community on the completion of the long-awaited Mudgee Arts Precinct. I was proud to help officially open the amazing new facility recently alongside Minister Harwin, my federal counterpart Andrew Gee, Mid-Western Regional Council Deputy Mayor Sam Paine and of course, the man of the hour, Guido Maestri. The Mudgee-born artist won the 2009 Archibald Prize, for his portrait of Indigenous singer Dr G. Yunupingu. He's now painting under his birth name, Guido, and has come full circle, returning to the town of his birth to open his exhibition 'Stories from Homedale', the first exhibition at the Mudgee Art Precinct! It's a full circle moment for Mudgee's art community as well - this precinct has something a lot of people have been campaigning for a long time. The dream started to materialise first with the sale of the former Cudgegong Shire Chambers site to Mid-Western Regional Council for \$1. Collaboration between all three levels of government finally turned the dream into reality. Congratulations to everyone who has been involved in this project over the years - this is for you!

ROSBY WINES ARCHITECTURE AWARDS.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker I want to congratulate the team at Cameron Anderson Architects, along with Kay, Amber and Gerald from Rosby Wines Cellar Door and Gallery, who have together created a modern, functional, and award winning new building. In 2019, \$150,000 was awarded to Mudgee's iconic Rosby Wines through the Regional Tourism Fund, for the development of a cellar door, art space and event venue. That funding was matched by Rosby Wines, and the result is a stunning building that "exudes timeless modernity" and whose "exceptional cohesion and connection to the land anchors it to its robust surroundings". Those aren't my words - that's according to the judges of the 2021 Australian Institute of Architects NSW Country Division Architecture Awards. Cameron Anderson Architects took out the prestigious James Barnett Award as well as the Commercial Architecture Award. Not only does the building enhance the already spectacular food, wine and artistic offerings Rosby and the wider Mudgee region has to offer - it has also become an attraction in

its own right. Congratulations to everyone involved – and to Destination NSW for its investment in this iconic project.

WELLINGTON CAVES REDO

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker ... I'd like to congratulate everyone involved in the new Wellington Caves Visitor Experience Centre, which opened in February 2020. The caves complex has been transformed into a fantastic modern tourist attraction, after receiving \$3.8 million from the State Government towards the \$4.23 million project. There was also \$400,000 from the Stronger Country Communities Fund for the \$700,000 Ancient Landscapes Gallery, which was developed in partnership with exhibition developers 'Thylacine', and scientists from Flinders University and the Australian Museum. The interactive education centre tells the 400 million-year-old history of a region that was once covered by ancient oceans. Receding waters eventually uncovered fascinating caves and jaw-dropping mega-fauna fossils – the gallery now brings these creatures to life! Opened in May 2021, the Gallery recently took out the Judges Choice Award at the 2021 Interpretation Australia Awards of Excellence. Congratulations to everyone involved – especially the staff at Dubbo Regional Council who I know are incredibly passionate about this facility. It truly is a credit to Wellington.

VANESSA ERICKSON AND VERYAN MCALLISTER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Vanessa Erickson and Veryan McAllister who were made Life Members of the Thornleigh West Public School P&C Association. I have worked with both Vanessa and Veryan over the years as they each have held the role of P&C President. I have attended their Movie Nights and Spring Fairs and always been impressed with the level of professionalism that is required to run this type of large scale event. Not only have they run these impressive fundraisers but also been part of many mini events at the school from the World's Biggest Morning Teas to Teacher Appreciation lunches, science fairs and mufti days. There are too many to name here today but both Vanessa and Veryan have been responsible for raising tens of thousands for Thornleigh West Public School. The money they raised has helped the school purchase laptops, electronic whiteboards, air conditioners and a whole range of equipment which has benefited each and every student at Thornleigh West. Not just raising funds but the community spirit they inspired at the school will never be forgotten. Thank you Veryan and Vanessa for your contribution and for this well-deserved honour.

TED NABUNG

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Ted Nabung who this month has stood down as Principal and CEO of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community College. Ted, who has over 25 years' experience in post-secondary education, has been at the helm of the college since 2015 ensuring the success and continued growth of the college. As a member of their board I have seen first-hand the wonderful work he has done at the college. The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community College provides adult learners with education and training to qualify for better employment, personal growth or wellbeing. There is a class or program and it is under the leadership of Ted which has ensured they are not only affordable but a supportive learning environment for all. I wish him all the best as he and his wife look to the next chapter. Thank you Ted for your contribution to education in the Hornsby community.

MACARTHUR FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, today I would like to recognise Macarthur Football Club for their impressive effort this A-League season, as it was their inaugural season. The team made it to the semi-final, and although lost two nil to Melbourne City FC, it is such an achievement to have made it that far. What an inspiring effort for their first ever season. The score was nil all going into the second half, and they gave it a good fight! The Club should be proud of their incredible effort and determination. Macarthur FC is the twelfth team in the national A-League competition, and proudly represent the south west Sydney region. The Club is quickly accumulating a large fan base, and the community was very impressed with their efforts this season. It's fantastic to see the local community get behind Macarthur FC, and I am looking forward to seeing them progress in the future!

JAYDEN DAO AND SYDNEY DUONG

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Jayden Dao and Sydney Duong, students at Newbridge Heights Public School, for being shortlisted for the Poem Forest Prize. Both students wrote poems which were chosen as part of 108 that made the shortlist, from more than 5,000 poems submitted by teachers and students from right across Australia. The Poem Forest Prize Competition was created by Red Room Poetry and The Australia Botanic Garden and asks students to create poems that focus on positive

climate action and the natural world. For every nature poem that was received by the competition, a tree was planted. More than 5,000 entries were received, so 5,000 seedlings have now been planted in Western Sydney Dry Rainforest and Cumberland Plain Woodland. I would like to congratulate Jayden and Sydney for making the shortlist with their fantastic poems, and also commend them for showing their interest in helping to protect our local natural environment.

LIVERPOOL SOUTH ANGLICAN CHURCH

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Liverpool South Anglican Church for receiving \$20,000 in funding from this year's Community Building Partnership Program. These funds will go towards replacing their wooden fence with a more permanent and secure metal fence around the property. Liverpool South Anglican Church are a very giving congregation and do incredible work for the community, particularly with the Anglicare Mobile Community Pantry. This service continued right throughout the COVID lockdown, and provides grocery items to local families who are vulnerable financially, and have been doing it tough. The Community Building Partnership Program provided \$400,000 worth of funding for projects to deserving organisations and community groups, across the Holsworthy electorate, to enhance local facilities and provide much-needed improvements to the local area. From schools, to sporting clubs to volunteer groups, the successful organisations' projects will make a real difference for residents across the area. I am looking forward to seeing the finished projects once completed.

TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Turbans 4 Australia for receiving \$15,000 in funding from this year's Community Building Partnership Program. This funding will go towards their Western Sydney Cultural Project. Specifically, it will assist in funding the purchase of a second-hand refrigerated truck. The NSW Government helped purchase the first a few years ago and it has provided support and assistance right across the State, from their home base in the Holsworthy electorate. They do phenomenal work in times of need, and are mobile on a moment's notice, so another truck will definitely go a long way in serving many more vulnerable members of our community and right across NSW. The Community Building Partnership Program provided \$400,000 worth of funding for projects to deserving organisations and community groups, across the Holsworthy electorate, to enhance local facilities and provide much-needed improvements to the local area. I am looking forward to seeing the finished projects once completed.

JOSHUA PHILLIPS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to extend my congratulations to Wollondilly Anglican College year 11 student Joshua Phillips on his successful selection into the Nationals Youth Science Forum Year 12 Program 2022. The National Youth Science Forum [NYSA] is a not-for-profit organisation that runs an annual Year 12 residential program in January for students about to enter year 12. The program aims to encourage young people in their passion for science, technology, engineering and maths [STEM] and open their eyes to the wide and varied range of career options available to them in STEM fields. Rotary is the Founding Partner of NYSA and local clubs conduct the selection for the NYSA Year 12 Program. Josh has been endorsed and sponsored by Picton Rotary Club, and was invited to attend their committee members' dinner earlier this month. He had the opportunity to speak to the Rotary members about his education, intellectual interests, and outline his career and university aspirations. Josh, you represent yourself, your school, and our region very well. I wish you the best of luck going forward and am sure you will gain valuable knowledge and experience through the National Youth Science Forum Program.

BOWRAL CLASSIC

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Local cycling fans have something to celebrate as the Bowral Classic is back this year for its 5th iteration after COVID-19 forced the 2020 event to be cancelled. The Bowral Classic, which is scheduled for the 11-12 of December in the Southern Highlands, expects to see 3,500 cyclists from all across the country participate. The main events are four Gran Fond loops running on the Sunday: the 150 km Maxi Classic; the 120km Challenge Classic; the 85km Rulers Classic; and the 35km Social Classic. This year two new events will be added to the event. 'Dirty Bowral', a 50km gravel ride through Belanglo State Forest and 'The Crits', a criterion race around Bowral. The race courses showcase the best of the region, rolling past scenic hills in Bowral, Berrima, Sutton Forest, Robertson and Kangaloon. All loops commence and conclude at Lose by Park in Bowral where the riders can enjoy Event Village providing gourmet food stalls, bars, cycling exhibitions and live music. The Bowral Classic brings not only participants to the region, but also their families and spectators, providing an economic benefit estimated at over \$2,500,000. Get yourselves to Bowral for a fantastic weekend!

CHRISTMAS IN THE GARDENS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Spreading joy and Christmas cheer is more needed than ever this year, and I am very pleased to see that Wollondilly Council's annual Christmas in the Gardens will be going ahead on the 10th of December in Picton Botanic Gardens. When the council held the inaugural event in 2019, it proved hugely successful, with large crowds of locals enjoying the great food and market stalls, carols, and festivities. This year the event will feature twilight markets, a family-friendly outdoor movie, Christmas carols and even a visit from St Nick. The winner of the annual Wollondilly Christmas Lights competition will also be revealed on the night in a special presentation. Thank you to Wollondilly Council and all the stall holders, organisers and volunteers who are making this event possible. I am sure it will bring the Wollondilly community together in a happy celebration to end a tough year.

GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—This year, generous Southern Highlanders are once again bringing Christmas cheer to the disadvantaged in our community through GIVE and the 'Give Where You Live' initiative. The Southern Highlands Foundation has joined forces with GIVE to provide locals a simple and effective way of helping those in need on a weekly basis. The Give Where You Live program has been running since September and has already raised thousands of dollars and donated much-needed items to locals in need. As part of the Christmas appeal, residents can donate items, fund for items to be purchased by charities, or volunteer their time to help people doing it tough over this festive season. The past couple of years have seen our community go through a lot with storms, bushfires, droughts, and loss of tourism revenue and jobs through COVID-19 lockdowns. I know that the Southern Highlands residents have been able to make it through these difficulties because of the strong sense of community that makes our region so special. I thank both the Southern Highlands Foundation, and all those individuals giving so generously of their time and money through the Give Where You Live appeal.

TAREN POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding team at Taren Point Public School for the exciting online initiatives they provided for students during COVID-19. When learning routines were disrupted, the incredible teachers created opportunities for students to remain engaged and connected. This included a virtual disco, talent shows, 'Creative Arts Week', zoom cooking classes, mini Olympics and Olympic trivia, guided drawing sessions, zoom bingo, book week kahoots and science week activities where students made their own lava lamps. Additionally, the Student Representative Council led a program called 'Walk and Talk' that focussed on helping students start conversations during the transition from remote learning. The amazing teaching and support staff led 'Practical Parenting in a Pandemic' seminars to support families during lockdown. I especially recognise Principal James Nobbs for his leadership during this difficult time, alongside his team including Erin Stephens, Tim Yock, Danielle McMahon, Clare Guthrie, Angela McNally, Isabelle Carleton, Ludivine Robbins, Ingrid Harris, Diane Marr, Amy Jamieson, Petra Thomsen, Anyes McLean, Lorraine Sabbagh, Peter Stanes and Terence Connor for their ongoing dedication to our students. I commend the Taren Point Public School team for continuing to keep students excited about education during the remote learning period.

KAREELA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful teaching and support staff at Kareela Public School for providing exciting learning opportunities for students during COVID-19. When learning routines were disrupted, the teachers ensured that students remained engaged through online initiatives. These included cooking classes, craft and games to celebrate 100 days at school with Kindergarten, a wellbeing video from the Year 6 students, the 'Masked Dancer' guessing challenge, a virtual excursion to Symbio Zoo, a Lego Masters Competition, Art Imitation and "Living World" science tasks. For Book Week, the students dressed up and Kindergarten read "The Small Blue Dot" together which was shared via YouTube for the community to enjoy. I especially thank Principal Nicole Arnold and Assistant Principals Andrew Matthew and Michelle Coulombis for their leadership during this difficult time. I also recognise school mascot TK the Turtle for being an amazing ambassador for the school and keeping students interested during lockdown. Like so many in our community, TK rolled up his sleeve to get the COVID-19 jab and shared his activities through lockdown on social media including dancing, macramé, baking, barbecuing and even household chores. I commend the Kareela Public School team for continuing to inspire our local students.

SYLVANIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful teaching and support staff at Sylvania Heights Public School for finding innovative ways to keep students connected during COVID-19. Although the community were physically distanced, the amazing teachers kept students and families connected

through online initiatives. During the remote learning period, the teachers streamed their school assemblies to celebrate the students' achievements. Soon after, over 700 people were tuning into the live streams with family members across the world being able to participate in the assemblies for the first time. The teachers provided further online opportunities for students including 'Friday Fitness' and 'Groovenation' activities, "A Day in the Life" videos from students learning remotely, online National Science Week events, a teacher's pet guessing competition, an "Iso-Archibald" art competition and Zumba. The outstanding teachers helped Stage 2 piece together a 'Lockdown Recipe Book' to share with the Sylvania Heights Public School community. I especially recognise Principal Clint White, Deputy Principals Margot Jacobs and Jennifer Davis, and Assistant Principals Rachel Ingram, Bonita Hawkes, Alex Keith and Rachel Blevin for their leadership during this difficult time. I commend the incredible Sylvania Heights Public School team for supporting local students and families during this difficult time.

MIRANDA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding team at Miranda North Public School for their incredible dedication to keeping students excited about learning during COVID-19. During the remote learning period, the teachers provided innovative online activities for students to remain engaged and supported. This included virtual Book Week activities with dress ups, an Education Week video created by the students, an encouraging video created by the student leadership team to inspire their peers, a Remembrance Day commemorative service online, and a pet guessing competition where students connected the teachers to their pets. I recognise Principal Karen Andrews and Assistant Principals Jennie Lawson, Lisa Butterfield and Kim Carrol for their leadership during this difficult time. Through the remote learning period, the school adopted the motto "together apart connect by heart." The wonderful teachers encouraged students to decorate their driveways and footpaths with chalk drawings, and displayed artwork on the school fence as part of their 'Rainbow of Hope' initiative. Additionally, the 2022 Kindergarten received a warm welcome from their 'buddies' with chalk drawings in the school playground. I commend the incredible Miranda North Public School team for their dedication to local students.

HUNTER BUSINESS AWARD 2021 – UPPER HUNTER WINNERS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—The Upper Hunter electorate is the powerhouse of the NSW economy and has again proved to be home to some of the Hunter Valley's highly regarded businesses. Congratulations to Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aussie Ark, Steven Fordham of Blackrock Industries and Youth Express for their success in the 2021 Hunter Business Awards organised by Business Hunter. The Muswellbrook Chamber, which has over 180 members across a broad section of the local business community, named the Outstanding Local Chamber of the Year. Australian threatened species conservation organisation, Aussie Ark, which has its sanctuary in the Barrington Tops collected two awards. Aussie Ark recognised with the Excellence in Small Business title and Aussie Ark Supervisor, Kelly Davis, named the Outstanding Employee of the year. Steven Fordham, co-founder of Muswellbrook's Blackrock Industries which is an Indigenous owned and operated business, was recognised with the Kristen Keegan Young Business Leader Award. The Excellence in Community Enterprise title was awarded to Youth Express, the organisation which operates programs in Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone to assist young people to engage confidently in education, community and work. Again, congratulations and enjoy your well-deserved recognition.

SINGLETON HALL OF FAME 2021 INDUCTEES

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I congratulate the latest inductees into the Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame. Aunty Jean Hands, Fred Turner, Singleton Golf Club, Singleton Theatrical Society and the Singleton Support Group of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service have been honoured for their community service. Aunty Jean Hands is chair of the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council and was Hunter New England Local Health District's first Aboriginal Liaison Officer. Fred Turner has devoted 38 years to the Rural Fire Service including the Carrowbrook and Glennies Creek brigades and the Hunter Valley Team covering the Muswellbrook and Singleton council areas. Singleton Golf Club was formed in 1922 and continues to maintain and develop the nine-hole parkland course in Howe Park for over 500 members. The Singleton Support Group for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service is a driving force for the organisation's advocacy and fundraising having contributed more than \$1 million over the past 25 years. Singleton Theatrical Society has been highlighted for fostering local talent on-and-off stage since 1980, participating in local events and assisting local schools and other organisations with sound and lighting equipment over the past 40 years. Thank you all for your contribution and service.

DALWOOD SPILSTEAD SERVICE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I wish to acknowledge the incredible work done by the Dalwood Spilstead Service. The DSS is an internationally renowned program of intervention for vulnerable families and

children who have experienced disrupted development or trauma in the early years. Led by the indefatigable Kerry Gwynne, families are able to access a comprehensive range of programs for both parents and children from the one organisation and the one team. It's been challenging times for the service but they have still managed to provide the full range of services over the past 18 months in a COVID safe way. Remarkably, they have still managed to assist over 100 families in need – often with very young children – throughout the pandemic. I thank this unique and successful service and it's dedicated and wonderful staff for their amazing work.

CHRISTINE ADAMS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Councillor Christine Adams has served on the Broken Hill City Council since 2013. She also previously served as a Councillor from 2009 to 2012. Councillor Adams is a dedicated historian, author and is one of the driving forces behind the Broken Hill Migrant Museum which is housed in the Sulphide Street Railway and Historical Museum. Councillor Adams' champions the volunteers in the Broken Hill community and believes they helped to shape its heritage and will be vital to its future. Councillor Adams has been a volunteer and board member for the Far West Home and Community Care Transport and Home Services and was awarded a Broken Hill Citizens Award for services to the community in 2013. I thank Councillor Adams for her service to the Broken Hill community and wish her well with her future endeavours.

JIM NOLAN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Councillor Jim Nolan was first elected to the Broken Hill City Council in 2012. For nine years, Councillor Nolan was the Broken Hill City Council's delegate for the Association of Mining and Energy Related Councils NSW and was serving on its executive at the time of his retirement. During this time he assisted with policy changes and securing funding benefits for Broken Hill as a historic mining city. During his two terms as a Councillor, Jim Nolan has been passionate about the provision of adult education and training, mining resources and Broken Hill's involvement in the renewable energy sector. I thank Councillor Nolan for his integrity and commitment to the community of Broken Hill.

SERGEANT JOEL HUNTER – CONDOBOLIN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—On Saturday 20 November 2021, two boys were swept away by the flooded Lachlan River at Condobolin. The boys were able to grab hold of a rope, clinging on for their lives while emergency services raced to the scene. Sergeant Joel Hunter would become the boys saviour that day. Donning a lifejacket and grabbing a floatation device Sergeant Hunter swam out to the boys at great personal risk. Through his heroic actions Sergeant Hunter was able to bring both boys safely back to shore and to their families. Sergeant Hunter's actions last Saturday were above and beyond what is expected of our serving Police Officers. His selflessness and courage are worthy of the highest honour and recognition.

BRITTNEY FINN – BOURKE NSW

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—There's a retired racehorse resting in a paddock in Bourke with a very big story to tell. Gus, also known as Pullman Brown, when he was on the track, was half of the team competing in a unique event Race to Ranch, with rider Brittney Finn. The inaugural 100-day Race to Ranch Challenge started on 1 June 2021 giving competitors 100 days to train a horse from racetrack competition to cow-work, roping, reigning, obstacle course and freestyle events. Each competitor had to train on their own and hook up via zoom and video. Brittney Finn and her horses Gus and Darlene took out co-winner of the event which was held on 9 October 2021 at Kilkivan near Gympie in Queensland. There were about 1,200 spectators and about 9 riders in the Race-to-Ranch. This was the first time competitors had met in the 100 day challenge. Brittney said, "It was the most supportive, life-changing experience, with no judgement and so much comradeship". Gus now lives with Amanda Bell of Bourke along with their other retired racehorse Roy. I would like to congratulate Brittney on her achievements in the Race-To-Ranch competition.

GEOFF LEWIS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Mr Geoff Lewis, of Orange. Geoff has faithfully and diligently served as the representative of the Office of the Member for Orange on the Orange Road Safety Committee the past 35 years. In that time, Geoff has represented Gary West MP, Russell Turner MP, Andrew Gee MP, and me. Geoff was one of only four voting members on the committee, the others being representatives of NSW Police, Transport for NSW and Orange City Council. The committee are responsible for assessing contributing factors for reported motor vehicle collisions and, where appropriate, recommend traffic safety enhancements. They are also responsible for reviewing every development within the Orange Local Government Area, ensuring traffic safety is adequately addressed. Over the past 35 years, Geoff highlighted the committee's achievements, which include the implementation of the 40 km/h school zones and safety lighting, major road safety enhancements around schools, and the speed limit reduction to 80 km/h along the Cargo Road, which was,

at the time, a contentious issue. I sincerely thank Geoff for his extraordinary representative service to the office of the Member for Orange, and to his community, for the benefit of public road safety for the people of Orange.

PETER LLOYD – PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIP

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Armidale Rotarian Peter Lloyd for his commitment to the values of Rotary International leading to one of Rotary's highest honours, the Paul Harris Fellowship. Peter's decades long membership to the Rotary Club of Armidale has given him the opportunity to be involved in many projects, such as the club's partnership with Backtrack Youth Works and a drought appeal which raised around \$120,000 for drought affected farms. Lately Peter is involved with Ezidi families and the Armidale club's Ezidi Agricultural and Horticultural Program. Peter has served on the executive of the Rotary Club of Armidale and has dedicated many hours of service to the Armidale community. Earning the Paul Harris Fellowship pin is a recognised symbol internationally for service to humanity. I congratulate Peter on receiving the Paul Harris Fellowship. I commend Peter for his loyal commitment to the Rotary International values of Service Above Self, carried out through the Rotary Club of Armidale.

LEIGHA MCELROY – GUYRA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Guyra Central School Visual Art students for their submissions into the NSW Department of Education's Cultural Diversity Calendar competition. I would like to point out, Year 8 student, Leigha McElroy who has been successful with her submission 'My Yorta' which has been shortlisted for inclusion into the 2022 Calendar for Cultural Diversity. Each year, the calendar promotes a different theme relating to cultural diversity in the Australian context, with 2022 being 'in my language' and is the Lunar Year of the Tiger/Tasmanian Tiger. I congratulate Leigha on her submission into such an illustrious competition, with only twelve artworks selected from across NSW. I commend Visual Arts Teacher, Mr Simon Hanly for being instrumental in providing such a great opportunity for students to participate in.

JO CAMERON – GLEN INNES SHOWGROUND LAND MANAGERS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Mrs Josephine (Jo) Cameron of Glen Innes for her selfless commitment to the Glen Innes Showground Land Managers. For 21 years Jo has been a staunch supporter and Trustee for the showground, taking on the financial responsibility as Treasurer and oversight of the upgrades and maintenance of the property. Jo was instrumental in securing funding for the restoration of the significant 130-year-old Showground Pavilion, a new kitchen for the historic Yarraford Hall, and the many costs associated with a safe Showground. Jo's energetic force of influence is totally targeted for the benefit of the District, retaining the best of the Australian show traditions and promoting the communal use of the Glen Innes Showgrounds. I congratulate Jo on her selfless service to Glen Innes Showground Land Managers and the Glen Innes District. I commend Jo on maintaining her enthusiasm and dedication to community service for 21 years through the Glen Innes Showground Land Management.

ARMIDALE REGIONAL COUNCIL LIBRARY – SIX OF THE BEST 2021

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Armidale Regional Council Library for running the annual 'Six of the Best' short story competition which aims to expand its connection with the community and encourage the pursuit of literacy. 'Six of the Best' is a popular community event. It includes all school students in the local government area, proving useful in engaging students in writing and storytelling. Assistant Martin Mantle said that the competition is a community effort and that the Friends of the Armidale Library support the competition and sponsor prizes for each of the winners and runners-up. I congratulate Winner Amber Fleming in the Adult Class with Runner-up Johanna Garnett and Commended Jess Cochrane. Winner of the student Year 7-12 Class is Blake Whitehill with Runner up Asher Milne and both Emma Noah and Noah Brown Commended. In Student Years K-6, I congratulate Winner Dana Ezra with Tom Bragg as Runner up and Matthew Hapimiraki Commended. I commend the competitors for their enthusiasm and inspiring stories, Library Manager Aimee Hutton, and Friends of the Armidale Library for their continued support.

ADITI HAIR

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Peta Duncan is the proud owner and operator of Aditi Hair in Wallsend. As a young hairdresser, Peta worked for Jenny's Hair Fashion in Wallsend and went on to purchase the salon about 18 years ago. The salon was severely damaged by flood in the 2007 Pasha Bulker storm. Peta reopened the salon after the storm, but in 2008 she moved into the main street of Wallsend and renamed the salon, Aditi Hair. Peta has 34 years' experience in the hairdressing industry. Her longevity in the business is a testament to her skill, interaction with clients and business acumen. Along the way, Peta has mentored a number of staff and has been

active in local fundraising events. As an example of Peta's generosity, to celebrate her 30th Anniversary in the business, she held an event that raised over \$3,000 for Hagar Australia, which raises much-needed funds for women and children. It's great to see that the hairdressing industry is now recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, after a tough couple of years. Congratulations, Peta, on your success and we wish you well into the future.

GRAHAM BATTEN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation was created in 2003, with the aim of providing funding to eligible not-for profit organisations and community groups. The Executive Officer of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Graham Batten, has announced he is resigning from the position in December, after 5 years of successfully leading the Foundation. Graham's achievements with the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation have included the oversight and approval of 153 projects, funding their 500th community grant; an amazing milestone, evolving the Foundation's strategic plan and mission, delivering an enhanced grant making model, and progressing the Foundation's investment strategy to ensure its continued support and impact across our communities. Graham has been a part of the review and refining of the Foundations' core values, ensuring they continue to create community partnerships that make the greatest impacts. This includes funding projects that directly benefit those most in need in the community, focusing on improving health outcomes, lives of young people and social wellbeing. Thank you, Graham, for your efforts and support to our local communities. I wish you all the best with your future endeavours.

NEWCASTLE NAVRATRI

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Navratri is a festival celebrated in the state of Gujarat. A dancing festival where all the community members gather for nine nights and celebrate the victory of good over evil. A festival dedicated to the worship of the Hindu deity Durga. In Newcastle, Navratri is celebrated with a lot of fervour with the true spirit of festival, bringing the community together for a good cause. Community events have been organised since 1998 and from 2012 charity events were organised and to date have raised \$34,582 for various charities, such as Variety, The Children's Charity, New Gokula Farm, Ronald McDonald House, Hunter Medical Research Institute, International FOXG1 Foundation and NSW Farmers Drought Appeal. The 2021 Navratri event raised \$3,604 and the following donations will be made: \$1,651 to Ronald McDonald House; \$1,651 to New Gokula Farm; \$151 to Newcastle Vedic Samiti; and \$151 to Newcastle Gurudwara. Thank you to the following volunteers who assisted in bringing this worthwhile event together - Neeti and Satish Pandya, Piyush and Kirti Jogia, Varun and Suvarna Agashe, Nanki Singh, Ravi Singh, Chirag and Sejal Modi, Monil Pandya and Neelam Bhala.

SHORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group is a not for profit Aboriginal organisation that provides advice on all matters relevant to education and training. They promote respect, empowerment and self-determination and believe the process of collaborative consultation is integral to equal partnership and is fundamental to the achievement of equality. They also advocate for cultural affirmation, integrity and the pursuit of equality to ensure that the unique and diverse identity of Aboriginal students is recognised and valued. Recently, three members of the Shortland Public School community were recognised in a virtual ceremony by the Muloobinbah Local AECG "Make a Difference" awards for their hard work and contribution to Aboriginal Education. Congratulations to Aboriginal Education Officer Mr Heath Gibbs, School leader Abbie Jones and volunteer dance coordinator Carly Powell, who were all awarded for their significant contribution to Aboriginal Leadership at Shortland Public School. Congratulations on your awards and also a massive thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for the School. Also, a special mention to Carly who received the top award overall for a parent volunteer across all schools in the area for her work with the dance groups.

ALBURY REGENT CINEMAS UPGRADE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the operators of Albury's Regent Cinemas who have used the period of COVID restrictions to complete a multimillion dollar refurbishment of the iconic Dean Street Albury cinema centre. Having opened in 1927 as a single theatre, the Regent has a history of keeping in touch with what patrons want. Having introduced Gold Class in 2006 and extended in 2015, the latest set of renovations have updated the complex with upgrades to the main entry foyer, the upper heritage foyer and Cinema One. Elements of the historic architecture have been highlighted. Some seating has now been replaced with new comfortable, premium, glide lounge chairs, adding to the 'cinematic experience' for patrons. I congratulate the operator and Manager Kelly Davis and her team for creating a world-class experience here in Albury and delivering a COVID-safe environment for the benefit of customers and staff.

RIVERINA RATES IN STATE AWARD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Congratulations are in order for The River Deck Cafe which has once again featured prominently amongst finalists in the NSW Tourism Awards for 2021. The awards are run by the NSW Tourism Industry Council, alongside the NSW Government and Destination NSW to acknowledge excellence and to promote awareness of businesses which are performing exceptionally in our state. Reaching the group of finalists is in itself a demonstration of the resilience and innovation of businesses over this challenging time which has impacted significantly on our tourism and visitor economy. I congratulate Alex Smith, owner and operator of The River Deck Cafe, head chef Ludo Baulacky and all the staff who have made this restaurant such a successful part of the Albury community. I wish you all the very best at the upcoming award announcements on February 3rd.

SCHOLARSHIP TO HONOUR MATHEW

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I wish to acknowledge St John's Lutheran Primary School Jindera for establishing a scholarship in honour of Mathew West. Matthew was a very popular and kind student who, at the age of 10, tragically lost his life in October this year. The scholarship, which was created with the support of Matthew's parents David and Emma, recognises the beautiful and energetic qualities Mathew portrayed at school, pushing through challenges, living positively, speaking words of encouragement, and placing the needs of others first. It is certain that Matthew is missed by his friends and teachers at St John's, and I applaud the efforts of family, staff and the St John's community as they honour the memory of Matthew West and the positive qualities he displayed.

SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' LOCKDOWN ARTS FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The Sydney Catholic Schools Lockdown Arts Festival took place during the 2021 lockdown, providing Catholic school students with the opportunity to have some fun and get creative by expressing themselves through various mediums such as visual arts, literature, drama, dance and music. The theme was "Looking outwards from a life in lockdown" and the Sydney Catholic Schools community responded positively to this break in the monotony of the stay-at-home orders, with entries flowing in. The winners were recently announced, with some schools from the Fairfield Electorate receiving first place in their chosen categories. Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield won 1st place in the Staff Division with The Va Singers' performance of 'Thank you Lord for your blessings'. Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School Fairfield also won 1st place in the Family Division with Yalan Tiffany and Yaqian Chanel Zhao performing "Flourishing Age" (Sheng Shi Guo Yue). I congratulate the winners of their categories and commend the efforts of all entrants who participated in the arts festival.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Every year at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we take some time to remember those members of our military forces who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we all could live a better tomorrow. This year local schools in the Fairfield Electorate each commemorated this day in their own special way. Patrician Brothers College students made a Remembrance Day video. The video featured students who gave heartfelt speeches, prayers and a playing of "The Ode". Mary MacKillop College students laid wreaths for all who fought and gave their lives for our country. Old Guildford Public School Stage One students worked collaboratively to make a poster featuring red poppies and decorated letters spelling out 'Lest We Forget'. It is now proudly displayed in the school's foyer. Stage 2 students also learnt how to make ANZAC biscuits with the help of their teachers Mrs Crump and Mrs Serhan.

SALVATION ARMY CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The Salvation Army Fairfield City recently launched their Christmas Appeal to support those doing it tough during the festive season. This year is especially relevant as the recent lockdown has increased financial stress and impacted the mental health of many individuals and families within the community. From providing meals to delivering hampers, gifts, toys and vouchers, the Fairfield Salvation Army has shown a long-standing commitment to the people of Fairfield. I commend the efforts Lieutenant David Delany the team at Salvation Army Fairfield, who have continued to do great work prior, during and now post lockdown.

JANE AWAD – 2021 ARCHBISHOP AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mary MacKillop College captain Jane Awad who recently received the 2021 Archbishop Award. Jane Awad is a parishioner of the Parish of St Gertrude's, Smithfield and participates as a reader, volunteer and in youth group events. Jane also assists with a range of parish initiatives and supports the parish priest by promoting these initiatives with the

youth. As College Captain, Jane actively encourages students to be involved in the faith formation and social justice initiatives of the College. She leads her fellow students with compassion, generosity and commitment to others. As a true MacKillop woman, Jane leads more by example than word. She attends morning Mass, Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy weekly and assists in the set-up for these liturgies. Jane is a regular participant in the College's Courage, Bible Study, Faith Q & A, Lenten and Advent programs, and actively involved in the St Vincent de Paul Society, Refugee Week and Project Compassion initiatives. I commend Jane on her award and for her continuing efforts to be an inspiration to her fellow students.

DARCY ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL DIAMONDS 2021

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge the terrific effort of Wentworthville's Darcy Road Public School's Diamonds for becoming the 2021 debating zone champions in the Premier's Debating Challenge. These Seven Hills electorate students are set to debate in the New South Wales final series where they have been successful in their last three knockout debates. The Darcy Diamonds are a member of the final sixteen teams vying for the final prize as State champions. Soon, the Darcy Diamonds will take on Lambton Public School in the fourth knockout debate of the State finals. The Darcy Road Public School debating team are one win away from making the quarter finals. This is a tremendous achievement for these local students from Constitution Hill, Pendle Hill, Wentworthville and Westmead. I congratulate every member of the Darcy Diamonds for making it this far through the New South Wales Premier's Debating Challenge. The Darcy Road Public School community and the entire Seven Hills electorate are backing you to become the champions.

TOONGABBIE SEVEN HILLS LIONS CLUB DONATIONS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge the Lions Club of Toongabbie Seven Hills for their efforts in running charity events throughout the Electorate of Seven Hills over the past month. Many community organisations across New South Wales have been eagerly awaiting the easing of restrictions from the most recent COVID-19 lockdowns to resume normal business throughout their local areas. The Lions Club of Toongabbie Seven Hills have wasted no time in actively living out their club's moto "Where there's a need, there's a lion". Over the months of October and November the club has held a number of events and donation drives through the local community. With help from charity organisation Good360Australia, the club was able to donate hundreds of boxes of B-Fit drinks to local facilities and groups in need. These included donations to St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church at Winston Hills, Blacktown Hospital, Bert Oldfield Public School in Seven Hills and Toongabbie Public School. I thank the club for their selfless efforts through these donations and events over the past few months. Thank you to the committee including president Peter Touzel, secretary Jen Touzel and treasurer Nidhi Thapliyal.

BLACKTOWN CITY COUNCIL GARDEN COMPETITION 2021

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I take this time today to acknowledge participants and winners of the recent Blacktown City Council annual Garden Competition. Well done to all who entered from the Seven Hills electorate from Blacktown, Lalor Park, Kings Langley, Seven Hills and Toongabbie. For many households across the electorate of Seven Hills, the recent COVID-19 lockdowns were an opportunity to put on their gardening gloves and do some amateur landscaping work. The Blacktown City Garden Competition runs across multiple categories, seeking to find the Council's best front gardens, back gardens, commercial gardens, native gardens and a range of others. For one hardworking residency of Kings Langley, their efforts were rewarded with four separate category wins. The Dharmaratne family of Leigh Place, Kings Langley won best sustainable residential garden, best edible residential garden, best Ward 2 garden and were picked as winners for the guest judge category. It is fantastic to see hard work and quality of this nature being recognised by Blacktown City Council judges. Congratulations to winners of this competition, I look forward to seeing how these residents and community groups make additions to these master-pieces throughout the year.

DAVID BRUCE – NSW LITTLE ATHLETICS COACH OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I take this time to congratulate local athletics coach David Bruce on receiving the Little Athletics New South Wales Coach of the Year Award. The annual Little Athletics New South Wales awards presentation is an opportunity to recognise the hard work and dedication of local individuals and their commitment to others. This selfless commitment is displayed by David and each coach at Winston Hills Little Athletics in the Seven Hills electorate. The Coach of the Year Award is given to a coach who demonstrates exemplary leadership, mentoring and education capabilities. All of these traits help develop a healthy culture for young, growing athletes. Mr Bruce has been an active member of the Winston Hills Little Athletics Centre for an incredible 45 years. The value and role of supportive coaches cannot be overstated – individuals like David have the unique opportunity to positively influence young lives. I thank David for his work in the Winston Hills little athletics centre and am pleased to see a worthy acknowledgement his commitment.

ROB AND KIM POWELL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—I would like to acknowledge and share my farewell and best wishes to Rob and Kim Powell of the management and owner ship team of Milton IGA, as they have decided to sell the Milton IGA plus Liquor supermarket. Rob and Kim Powell have been a huge part of Milton and have supported the local community for over 30 years having owned the supermarket since 1990, the longest connection with the Milton Supermarket. Both Rob and Kim Powell have been part of local organisations such as the Mollymook Turf Club where Rob was President and Kim was the Secretary and organised many Milton cup's. As owners of the Milton IGA plus liquor supermarket they donated fruit and vegetable boxes to the Mollymook Women's Golfers to go to research into motor neurone disease. They will be missed at the Milton IGA Plus Liquor supermarket and I wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

2021 HUNTER BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Business Hunter on holding the 2021 Hunter Business Awards. I would also like to congratulate this year's award recipients. Business Hunter is a not-for-profit member organisation dedicated to connecting people in business with what they need to succeed. They are the largest regional peak business group in Australia and represent members across all business and industry sectors. Business Hunter hosted this year's Hunter Business Awards at the Civic Theatre, which celebrated the successes of businesses from across the region. Several local businesses have done their best to thrive this year despite the challenges they have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local businesses from many industry areas were recognised on the night. They will go on to represent the region at the state final on 26 November. I commend Business Hunter on facilitating the awards ceremony and for acknowledging the hard working businessmen and businesswomen of the Hunter. I also congratulate the 2021 Hunter Business Award winners and wish them all the best at the state final.

GATEWAY CHURCH AND BELMONT LIONS CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club on their collaboration to provide a mobile shower and laundry service to the people of Swansea. Both Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club are renowned in the Swansea area for their dedication to the local community through the support and services they provide. There are many people within the local area that do it tough and I know that the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this issue. Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club partnered to establish and run the mobile shower and laundry service for those in the Swansea community facing homelessness or a lack of clean amenities. Gateway Church have also been distributing non-perishable food items to not-for-profit organisations across Lake Macquarie and Newcastle throughout the duration of the pandemic to assist those in need. I thank Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club for partnering to offer the community shower and laundry service and commend them for their efforts in continuously supporting the local community.

NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Newcastle Airport on being named the Major Airport of the Year 2021 by the Australian Airports Association. The award is presented annually to an airport with over 500,000 annual passengers which displays excellence across all aspects of airport operations and development. Newcastle Airport is dedicated to delivering a quality service to the region and has worked with a number of stakeholders to achieve outcomes such as the Code E runway upgrade, regional inbound partnerships and the Williamstown Special Aviation Precinct. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, Newcastle Airport has continued to provide a quality experience and accommodate the needs of travellers. This is the third Major Airport of the Year award that the airport has won, with it taking out the 2011 and 2018 title for its commitment to community engagement and attracting international services. I commend Newcastle Airport on their achievement and thank them for their efforts in providing a quality service to the people of Swansea and the Hunter, as well as visitors to the regions.

PELICAN FLAT RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Pelican Flat RSL Sub-Branch on their Remembrance Day ceremony and planting of a Lone Pine. Pelican Flat RSL Sub-Branch ran a moving Remembrance Day service that commemorated 103 years since the signing of the Armistice between the Allies and Germany. Pelican Flat RSL Sub-Branch president David Blair said that he was proud to see in excess of 100 people attend this year's ceremony to remember the Australian and New Zealand service men and women who have served the two countries and paid the ultimate sacrifice. President Blair and fellow Pelican Flat RSL Sub-Branch member Colin Spitzkowsky, Group Captain Retired, also planted a Lone Pine at the end of the service. The Lone Pine acts as a memorial and represents the bond between Australia and New Zealand. I commend

Pelican Flat RSL Sub-Branch on holding such a special service. I also thank them, along with President Blair and Colin Spitzkowsky for planting the Lone Pine to commemorate Australian and New Zealand service men and women.

DIWALI

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Happy Diwali 2021! I would like to wish our Australian Indian Community a joyful and prosperous Diwali. Diwali carries a powerful message, symbolising the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Referred to as the 'festival of lights', Diwali is celebrated by Hindu's, Sikh's and Buddhists across Australia and the world, lasting for five days, during the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika. Diwali is an important occasion for many members of our community, and is a celebration that demonstrates what Australia is truly about. As a multicultural, pluralistic and diverse society we must always be tolerant, respectful and loving, and welcome a variety of celebrations. This year, the celebrations of Diwali arrive with an even deeper meaning. We have experienced challenging time as a result of the spread of COVID-19, yet we have collectively overcome one of the darkest period in our states history and can now once again enjoy life's great opportunities. May the warmth and splendour of festivities bless you and your loved ones with good health, happiness and all success in your lives. Happy Diwali.

P&P QUILTERS WYONG

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—Central Coast Kids in Need held a presentation in November with the generous talented ladies from P&P Quilters Wyong who presented to Central Coast Kids in Need, quilts from their Christmas Wish list. For the last 3 years P&P Quilters Wyong have donated 203 quilts to Central Coast Kids in Need to distribute to sick kids. Every quilt is created and sewn uniquely for sick and disadvantaged children from the Central Coast. I would like to thank the P&P Quilters Wyong for contributing to the community and for doing such an amazing job with making these amazing quilts for the children.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—In October this year, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society celebrated its 60th anniversary. I would like to pay tribute to this remarkable incorporated association of some nine hundred volunteer members who strive to conserve the World Heritage Blue Mountains region. The Society was born in October 1961 under the name Katoomba and District Fauna and Flora Protection Society, when a group of residents met to determine the action they would take to help protect the local environment. In 1996 it merged with the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society to become the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Incorporated. One of the key goals of the expanded Society was to obtain World Heritage status for the Greater Blue Mountains area of 1.03 million hectares. This status was ratified in 2000, a fantastic achievement. Other key activities of the Society include a native plant nursery, bush care, plant study group and bushwalking. Its significant advocacy work continues. Congratulations to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society on 60 years of steadfast passion and commitment to preserving our natural heritage in the Greater Blue Mountains. I am proud to be a member!

CYNTHIA HALLAM

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—I extend my warm congratulations to Springwood writer and poet, Cynthia Hallam for being awarded a Writing Fellow Degree by the Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW. The Fellowship of Australian Writers Blue Mountains branch celebrates 50 years in 2023 and Cynthia is the first member to receive this prestigious award. Cynthia has an impressive body of work, including eight volumes of poetry published by Ginninderra Press. Her ninth volume has been accepted for publication in 2022. Her poems, short stories and articles have appeared in magazines and anthologies and her poems have been read on ABC radio as well as performed on stage. Cynthia's poetry has been described as 'gentle acute and frequently wry observations on the foibles of contemporary life'. She has been an active and integral member of the Blue Mountains Fellowship of Australian Writers since August 2012. Cynthia is always willing to share her expertise and in 2019 conducted a mini poetry workshop for the group which members found inspiring. When Cynthia has a new publication she generously gives every member a copy. Congratulations Cynthia on this hard-earned award and thank you for sharing your gift of observation, poetry and storytelling with others.

CLIFF HORSLEY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—I congratulate Caringbah South resident Cliff Horsley on the remarkable achievement of turning 100 years old. Mr Horsley's story is one of generous and selfless contribution to his country and local community. He enlisted in the army in 1941 at 19 years old and found himself a corporal in the wilds of Papua New Guinea during World War II. He was recognised for his service last December when he was presented with a World War II medallion by Prime Minister Morrison. Since his service in the army he has been an active

member of the Cronulla RSL Sub Branch and a strong supporter of many community organisations. Mr Horsley was the founder of the Lilli Pilli Football Club and he was well known for his untiring efforts during the early 1960s to get the 'Berries' off the ground. He is much loved by the organisations he's served with and I know he holds a special place in the hearts of everyone at Lilli Pilli Football Club and still lives only a stone's throw from the clubhouse. I acknowledge Cliff Horsley on his innings of 100 not out and for his contribution to Australia and our Sutherland Shire community.

KEVIN BETTS STADIUM MOUNT DRUITT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Congratulations to WSNSW and Kevin Betts Stadium in Mt Druitt on your "Renew and refresh"! This visionary stadium was our ahead of its time in social inclusion, and changed the lives of so many people with disabilities in New South Wales. It was where I was first introduced to wheelchair basketball on Thursday nights – I'd catch the train every Thursday night from Lake Macquarie to play, watching and aspiring to one-day make it from the B court to the A court. Errol Hyde played defence so tough it made me cry, and yet prepared me for a huge career on the international stage. If I missed the 10 pm train from Strathfield I'd catch the 12:08 pm and push home from Fassifern Station arriving home approx. 3am. Kevin Betts was a birthplace of many wheelchair basketball careers, home of profound skill development and very important friendships. Thanks ever so much to everyone involved in the stadium upgrade and our celebration – looks great, feels fab, more sport!

UMINA MEN'S SHED

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—A huge and mighty thank you to the team at the Umina Men's Shed, for the amazing work you continue to do for the community. I acknowledge the wonderful service you provide and love how the group involves itself in suitable projects that will benefit the wider community. The Umina Men's Shed operates a community garden for the benefit of both members and the general community, they have provided the labour to local primary school Umina Beach during the refurb of their sandpit, they have built penguin boxes to help protect declining numbers. Members frequently undertake their own projects and utilise the facilities provided at the Umina Men's Shed. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn from those around who may have expertise in a particular field, as well as make new friendships and connections. Connection is vital for our health and the Umina Men's Shed do this in spades. The Umina Men's Shed have recently been successful in a round of the CBP and are planning a new building development to expand their facilities, and I look forward to the brand new building and all that it will offer our community.

KEN FERGUSON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Men's Sheds provide an invaluable service to local communities, ensuring that men have access to productive opportunities for socialising and connection. The Redhead Men's Shed is an integral part of the Charlestown electorate, achieving a lot in what could sometimes be a very difficult environment, and much of that is due to the contributions of Ken Ferguson. Ken will be stepping down as president of the Redhead Men's Shed this month, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Ken for all of his hard work. Ken is a quietly spoken, thoughtful man – but also tenacious. He advocated hard for an access ramp at the Men's Shed, and it was my pleasure to join him and Men's Shed volunteers when it was unveiled in June 2017. The Shed's achievements under Ken's presidency included more than 60 members building beautiful handmade toys for local preschools and charities. The Shed is also the proud home of a refurbished disused heritage poppet head. I have always enjoyed working with Ken, and I want to salute him for his work on behalf of the Men's Shed. I wish him all the best.

TOTAL TENNIS MOUNT HUTTON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The Charlestown electorate is home to a number of extraordinary sporting organisations, and it's always fantastic when this is recognised. At the recent Tennis NSW Awards, Total Tennis Mount Hutton was named the Most Outstanding Tennis Club or Venue—Country, sharing the honour with Bonny Hills. The event, conducted virtually in 2021 because of COVID-19 concerns, recognises clubs, organisations and individuals in the NSW tennis community. Total Tennis head coach and owner Matt Abbott told the Newcastle Weekly he was ecstatic with the win. He said "It's the greatest honour an organisation like Mount Hutton can win." Matt told the Weekly that the past eighteen months have been tough for Total Tennis, as it has been for many organisation and businesses in a similar situation, but they have seen a steady rise in program participation even with the pandemic's impacts. Allowed to operate at restricted capacity, Total Tennis found a way to allow people to exercise during lockdown, which was essential for many of their physical and mental health. My congratulations to Matt and the Total Tennis Mount Hutton team on their well-deserved win.

ALAN ROBERTS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Charlestown electorate local Alan Roberts is a world-leading researcher and consultant in the field of bulk solids and, at the age of 91 and twenty-eight years after his retirement, his resume is extremely impressive. Professor Roberts' field covers the handling and processing of materials in powdered or bulk form across a range of industries. He first joined the university as professor of industrial engineering in 1974, becoming Dean of the Engineering faculty and Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering before the year was out. He later served as director of the School of Engineering and Architecture. In 1975, he founded TUNRA Bulk Solids Handling Research Associates in 1975. A not-for-profit company, TUNRA operates a unique model and has completed around 5,000 projects in more than 40 countries. TUNRA tests samples and evaluates how material should be handled, which informs the design of equipment, storage bins, stockpiles, conveying equipment and processing. He retired in 1993, received his honorary PhD in 1995, and has worked with every single one of the university's vice chancellors. He is now Emeritus Professor and was recently awarded UON's Convocation Medal for Exceptional Contribution.

KU KAHIBAH 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The first provider of early childhood education and care in Australia, KU Children's Services was founded in 1895—six years before the colonies federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia! 2020 marked the 125th anniversary of the organisation, which celebrated with the theme "making a difference through 125 years of social impact and early education". KU Kahibah Road in the Charlestown electorate had a special way to mark the occasion: the children painted 125 rocks in bright colours and placed them around the community. The rocks have been marked with the name of the centre, and the hope is that the public will be able to find them and share in the joy of the children who participated. The children gained ownership by bringing their own rock to paint, says centre director Charlotte Ashton. "They also developed a partnership with the world around them, by choosing places they frequent to place their rock." What an excellent way to celebrate such an important milestone! My thanks to Ms Ashton and the whole KU Kahibah Road community for brightening up our local area with this project. I'll certainly keep my eyes open while I'm out and about.

ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL RFS VOLUNTEERS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—As we approach the impending height of the fire season I take this opportunity to acknowledge our local RFS volunteers. I commend all volunteers for their continued protection of our community and thank them for their courageous work during the toughest of times. Bundeena Rural Fire Brigade, Darkes Forest Rural Fire Brigade, Sutherland Communications Brigade, Engadine Rural Fire Brigade Station, Heathcote Headquarters, Helensburgh Rural Fire Brigade, Loftus Rural Fire Brigade, Maianbar Rural Fire Brigade, Menai Rural Fire Brigade, Otford Rural Fire Brigade, Scarborough Rural Fire Brigade, Stanwell Park Rural Fire Brigade, Waterfall Brigade, Woronora Bush Fire Brigade.

GEORGE STEPANOVICH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Galston High School student George Stepanovich who has been awarded the Youth Community Service Award for exceptional service or engagement with their local community. He is one of only 25 students across Australia to receive the award. George has been a member of the St Albans Rural Fire Brigade since he was 12 years old and has served as the Cadet Captain since 2014. Over this time he has become an integral member and during the 2019 December bushfires instead of celebrating the end of the school year he was fighting the Gosper Fire. In 2021 when floods hit he was back out supporting and assisting the community with the clean-up. This year he received a Premiers citation for his work with the RFS. As school captain he has always encouraged the students at Galston High School to get involved in school activities and give back to the community. I would like to thank George for his commitment to keeping our community safe and on this very well-deserved award.

JACOB FARRELL

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)—I rise to acknowledge young Jacob Farrell of Lisarow for his recent sporting achievement, being selected for a place on the Central Coast Mariners first soccer team. 18-year-old Jacob has been promoted to the Mariners first team after 6 years of training within the Mariners Academy, having been accepted into the Academy program from under 12s. Dedication to his training over this period has paid off for Jacob, who began his first week of training with the first team last week. I'd like to congratulate Jacob on his place in the Mariners first team, and wish him good luck as the competitive soccer season commences. Our community is cheering you on. Well-done! Thank you.

BRONWYN AND ELLA SANDEMAN

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)—I rise to acknowledge mother and daughter, Bronwyn and Ella Sandeman of Mount Elliot, on the release of their book, "The Christmas Story with Daisy and Ziggy". The mother daughter duo collaborated, utilising each other's creative talents to release the children's book just before commencement of the Merry Season. Bronwyn penned the book, and daughter Ella composed the illustrations. The book describes the origins of Christmas from the perspective of onlooking insects, and includes a poem for older readers written by Bronwyn's Aunt, Lesley Anderson. I'd like to thank Bronwyn and Ella on the years of work producing this book, as well as congratulate them on finishing the project. I look forward to purchasing a copy, and wish you and your artistic family a very Merry Christmas. Congratulations. Thank you.

WORLD TOILET DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I recognise World Toilet Day was celebrated on November 19th. This is an import day: as in this place, in most of this city, in most of this state, our citizens have access to toilet facilities, however, 4.2 billion people across the globe are living without access to safely managed sanitation. This fact may rarely cross our busy minds, and we often entirely take it for granted. Facilities are easily and safely accessible in the safety of our homes, in our workplaces, in public recreation areas, shopping centres and the list rolls on. However billions of people live without this easy availability and health protecting sanitation. Sustainable sanitation, alongside clean water and handwashing facilities are vital to help protect and maintain our health security and stop the spread of deadly infectious diseases such as COVID-19, cholera, and typhoid. I acknowledge and commend the important work of the citizens of Maitland involved in safeguarding our sanitation, from pump out technicians to those working in wastewater management, as well as those who represent them such as the United Services Union, the Health Services Union and the Australian Services Union. Thank you for your ongoing work to support our community.

SOCIAL INCLUSION WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Social Inclusion Week spans from the 20th to the 28th of November. This week focuses on engaging individual and communities to build connections that are inclusive of all abilities, age groups, cultures and outlooks. As we move through the pandemic we may also be focusing on rebuilding connections that have changed form and purpose as we dealt with several challenges that shifted how we connected with others. The theme of Social Inclusion Week 2021 is Connect, Collaborate and Celebrate! I strongly encourage the people of Maitland to consider how they might engage with this week and this theme: Perhaps a coffee with an elderly neighbour; a working bee to revitalise the garden at the pre-school; a phone call to someone to check how they are travelling. Our actions to connect don't have to be grandiose or in huge groups, just authentic and open. Some groups within our community who can often feel excluded are young people, jobless families with children, people with a disability or mental illness, those who are homeless, the elderly and Indigenous Australians. I encourage Maitlanders to engage as they are able as we are, indeed, all in this together.

WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—World Children's Day and is celebrated on 20th November each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare. November 20th is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Today I acknowledge and celebrate the commitment of Maitland community members as they foster and enhance safe and encouraging spaces for our children. I celebrate the parents and carers, educators, health professionals, religious and community leaders who work each day to improve the lives of our children, particularly as we build new connections and ways of being in light of the many challenges brought by the pandemic. I celebrate our children who are growing up in an age unlike anything previously experienced as they face the challenges of building positive connections with others across an ever increasing number of platforms. World Children's Day provides an opportunity for a deliberate moment of thought about how we can advocate, promote and celebrate children's rights, and choose to build a better world for our children.

THE LORN SURGERY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Today I rise to acknowledge the team at The Lorn Surgery who work to promote and maintain the health and well-being of our local community. They provide a wide range of services ranging from general medicine to podiatry to lactation support. The Lorn Surgery is a team of over 20 individuals who have worked hard to increase their positive community impact during the pandemic. Mr Trent Williams, a Clinical Nurse Consultant and long term Maitland resident contacted me to highlight how much good will and genuine kindness underpins the work of this team. To quote Mr Williams "they have saved many lives by their sense of decency, hard work and community spirit. I am in awe of their contribution and good will". He

particularly asked that I acknowledge the work of Sally Richards, Midwife and Lactation Consultant, and Dr Craig Richards General Practitioner. I commend all members of the Lorn Surgery team from the valuable first contact Reception staff, to the medical professionals. I commend them on working throughout the pandemic to re-enforce and encourage our health, well-being and safety. I wish them ongoing success as a vital part of our broader health network.

CR JUDITH RUTHERFORD AM – RETIREMENT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Willoughby Councillor Judith Rutherford AM has been representing the people of the Middle Harbour Ward for 26 years, and will be retiring from her duties in Council at the upcoming Council Elections. Judith has been a tireless worker for the Willoughby Council and Castle Cove community for over 30 years. Her active participation included Neighbourhood Watch, the Castle Cove Progress Association and the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations. Judith was awarded the Special Achievement Award in the 2017 Ministers' Women in Local Government Award for her contribution to the community. I would like to thank Judith Rutherford for her wonderful service and wish her well in retirement.

CHRISTMAS CASH APPEAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge today the Camden Haven Community at 3 Christmas Cash Appeal hosted by the Kew Corner Store which aims to raise funds for our most vulnerable locals. The Christmas season is a special time of the year for reuniting with family and friends and giving thanks for our blessings regardless of your religion or beliefs. However for some, Christmas is a cruel reminder of poverty and the inability to provide adequately for family. Acknowledging the assistance needed for our homeless to enable enjoyment at Christmas, Chairperson Theo Hazelgrove and Kew Corner Store owner Staffan Andler are again partnering to spread some joy and happiness to those less fortunate in the community. Visitors and locals are encouraged to donate a cash gift card which is selected under the stores Christmas tree and for every donation raised there is an acknowledgement with a paper crane decoration. Camden Haven Community at 3 is a welfare organisation on the Mid North Coast supporting our struggling families doing it tough with essentials including food, transport and temporary accommodation. Donations accepted at the Kew Corner Store and online through Community at 3.

BRADEN CLARKE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Another success story in education I am proud to bring to the attention of the House is Hasting Secondary College Westport Campus student Braden Clarke for his recent acceptance into the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2022. Described as a natural born talent and music protégé, the former Year 12 student from Hastings Secondary College will attend the prestigious Sydney Conservatorium of Music recognising his commendable achievements in music and the arts. As a student at Hastings Secondary College, Braden's musical abilities were realised through his involvement in numerous College bands and Campus ensembles, HATCH Big Band and Hatchlings. Put simply, if there was ever a performance to be showcased, you could bet Braden's segment would steal the show and have audiences applauding and reminiscing during the days following. An exceptionally talented instrumentalist, Braden is experienced in playing the guitar, flugelhorn, trumpet and bass guitar. He was a leader and mentor at Westport Campus and former school captain in 2018. A role model to all his peers, congratulations Braden on your successful application to the Sydney Conservatorium and best wishes for the future.

F.A.W.N.A 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to the local members from For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid [F.A.W.N.A] who have excelled in service and volunteerism particularly over the past 12 months. This year F.A.W.N.A celebrated 30 years of caring for sick and injured wildlife on the Mid North Coast following its formation in 1991. To mark the significant milestone the following members were acknowledged with Citations: Nola Williams, Boris Lovriha, Jodie Isaac, Wendy Bawn, Pat Davey, Anke De Reuver, Warwick Madden, Carol Riley, Eileen Gleeson, Barbara McLaren, Amanda Boardman OAM, Cheyne Flanagan, June Le Pla OAM. All of these volunteers have gone above and beyond to provide special care and attention to our native wildlife who would otherwise struggle to survive. Often members incur out-of-pocket expenses to treat and nurse our beloved animals back to good health with recent droughts, bushfires, floods and land clearing causing devastating impacts to populations. As is tradition, the Bryce Laut Member Award was presented to Amanda Boardman and Jill Eagleton recognising their outstanding contribution to F.A.W.N.A over many years. You are all an inspiration to so many and we truly thank you for your service.

PORT MACQUARIE ART SOCIETY CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise the Port Macquarie Art Society end of year exhibition showcase to be held on Thursday 25th November at the Manor House at 198 Hastings River

Drive, Port Macquarie. This year the Port Macquarie Art Society will be host to over 100 stunning pieces of artwork from all over the Mid North Coast comprising an eclectic mix of different styles and realistic abstracts that promises to mesmerise and impress the lover of fine art. Some of the local artists include Lesley Sargent and Kerry Wheeldon who will have on display for viewing and sale a few of their personal collections for audiences to appreciate and purchase. Formed in 1971, the Port Macquarie Art Society was established to promote the advancement of fine art and artistic development for those passionate and interested in learning more about refining their skills and talents. I congratulate the committee led by President Michael Marsh, Vice President Rob Moorehead, Secretary Maureen Cooke, Treasurer Robyn Richardson and Tutors Muriel Gartland, Judy Jelsma and recently retired Marina Dick for their passionate involvement in promoting the arts industry in the Hastings.

**The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 21:44 until
Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 09:30.**